

The National Old Trails Road

Series: FHWA Highway History Website Articles



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The original format of this document was an active HTML page(s) located under <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/history.cfm>. The Federal Highway Administration converted the HTML page(s) into an Adobe® Acrobat® PDF file to preserve and support reuse of the information it contained.

The intellectual content of this PDF is an authentic capture of the original HTML file. Hyperlinks and other functions of the HTML webpage may have been lost, and this version of the content may not fully work with screen reading software.

The National Old Trails Road

Part 1: The Quest for a National Road

by
Richard F. Weingroff

The idea of a transcontinental highway had been around since the 1890's. General Roy Stone, head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Road Inquiry (first ancestor of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)), suggested combining existing roads into a network and recommended that ". . . the most effective lines that could be adopted for this purpose would be an Atlantic and a Pacific Coast line, joined by a continental highway from Washington to San Francisco." The transcontinental route should link highways along the East and West Coasts. The League of American Wheelmen *Bulletin and Good Roads* magazine (November 19, 1987), quoted General Stone as referring to the idea as "The Great Road of America." He knew his idea was too bold to be adopted at the time, but he explained:

The whole scheme would carry with it something that would inspire the entire Nation. It not any new scheme; it is not any new idea. It was the idea of Jefferson and Madison and Gallatin and many other great men who helped to start the national Road which led through Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana, and reached as far as the Mississippi River.

General Stone's successor, Martin Dodge, had endorsed the idea of a transcontinental highway shortly after taking office in 1899.

On March 4, 1902, nine auto clubs met in Chicago to combine forces in a new organization called the American Automobile Association (AAA). The new Board of Directors was instructed to begin immediate consideration of a transcontinental road from New York to California. The board chose a more northern routing than General Stone had proposed. The AAA proposal was for a macadamized road north out of New York City along the Hudson River and the shores of the Great Lakes passing through Albany and Buffalo, New York; Erie, Pennsylvania; Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Omaha, Nebraska; Denver, Colorado; Salt Lake City; Utah, and Sacramento, California.

An editorial in the May 1902 issue of *Good Roads* magazine considered the proposal an improvement over General Stone's idea because "it passes through many large and enterprising cities over a route a large portion of which already has improved roads and over which there will be

an increasing volume of travel." Nevertheless, the editor, H. W. Perry, could not heartily endorse the plan. "The reason why a New York to Sacramento or San Francisco wagon road will not appeal to the public is because there is no need for such a road." The editor added, "The plan of a transcontinental highway is spectacular; but Congress cannot be induced to support a spectacle." Perry concluded:

Let the States and the counties be the judges of where those improved roads shall be built. They can be depended upon to act wisely in the matter, and, if the course of travel and commerce demands that the roads from city to city between New York and San Francisco need macadamizing all the way, or that the necessities require the building of expensive roads from the capital of each State to the capitals of every neighboring State before the shorter roads tributary to the shipping points are made passable, we may be sure that the long roads will receive attention.

On June 23, 1905, James W. Abbott, Special Agent (Mountain and Pacific Coast Division) for the U.S. Office of Public Road Inquiries, told the Fifth Annual National Good Roads Convention in Portland, Oregon, "We ought to have established one or more good through wagon roads from the Atlantic to San Francisco, and to the Northwest." He cited the proposal by Martin Dodge at a Good Roads Convention in Denver 5 years earlier:

[Dodge] delivered a memorable address, of which the controlling thought was this great need for such highways. A short time before that a wild and visionary article had appeared in one of the magazines, advocating a boulevard 200 feet wide from ocean to ocean, with its separate divisions for vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, trees, grass, flowers, and I don't know what else. Senator Dodge's address was practical and timely.

In August 1906, *Good Roads* magazine published an article about a proposal to build an "American Appian Way." This "latest proposition in this land of big schemes" was routed from "Washington, on Atlantic tidewater, following the trail of the historic National Pike through the passes of the Appalachians and across the Ohio, through the great middle west to St. Louis, and then into two great boulevards on to the Pacific, one of which will cross Montana to Puget Sound and the other through Denver and Salt Lake over the Rockies and Sierras to San Francisco." The article describing the proposal stated:

Automobile associations and good roads folks all over the country are pledged to the support of the bill. "Honk! Honk!" is the war cry of the new movement.

Early advocates of good roads, while advocating long distance roads, soon adopted the idea of naming highways and forming associations to support the route. In early 1902, the Jefferson Memorial Road Association began promoting construction of a memorial road from Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, the university he founded. The New York-Chicago Road Association formed on June 17, 1902, to advocate an improved public road between the two cities of its name. The July 1902 issue of *Good Roads* explained that ". . . the plan is to connect the present good roads along the route with new ones to be built by the states, counties and municipalities along the line."

By the 1910s, local organizations, chambers of commerce, towns, and good roads advocates throughout the country began to select old roads for improvement and to give them names as a rallying point. One of the earliest was the National Old Trails Road, which was an outgrowth of two movements in Missouri. The first was the drive for a cross-State highway from St. Louis to Kansas City. The second was an effort by the State chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D. A. R.) to mark the historic Santa Fe Trail, the old trader's route to New Mexico.

The Missouri Cross-State Highway

In the summer of 1907, Governor Joseph W. Folk of Missouri expressed an interest in a cross-State macadam highway. The Highway Department of the State Board of Agriculture identified three feasible routes. The northern route passed through St. Charles, Louisiana, Bowling Green, Mexico, Moberly, and Liberty. The central route passed through Columbia, crossing the Missouri River at Arrow Rock on the way to Kansas City. It incorporated Boon's Lick Road and part of the Santa Fe Trail. The southern route approximates modern U.S. 50.

The State Board and Governor Folk met on August 5, 1907, to designate the cross-State highway. Instead of choosing one, though, they designated all three routes. While this decision encouraged local initiative by keeping competition alive, it did not result in construction of a cross-State highway. The "idea slumbered," according to the State Board's September 1911 bulletin, until 1911:

Various newspapers gave space in helping keep alive the movement. The Kansas City Star and Kansas City Post especially are to be commended for the stand taken and for

being consistent "boosters" for a cross - state highway. During this time the lovers of history and admirers of romance joined in the fight. This was on account of the historic route, over which Daniel Boone and pioneers of the West blazed their way and around which linger many pleasing tales of pioneer times, being one of the practical routes for a state highway. This brought the Santa Fe Trail and Boone's Lick Road Association, the Kansas City Historical Society, the Missouri Historical Society, and the Daughters of the American Revolution into the fight. The work of the latter was directed, however, more towards the placing of markers along the historical trail.

By 1911, the idea of a transcontinental highway was receiving increasing attention. The Fourth International Good Roads Congress, meeting in Chicago, endorsed a transcontinental route from New York City through Chicago to Kansas City, thence over the historic Santa Fe Trail to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and continuing to Phoenix and Los Angeles. Dozens of good roads bills were introduced in the 62nd Congress (1911-12). Some involved a specific road proposal, such as S. 6271, which would have authorized construction of a national highway from the Canadian border south of Winnipeg to Galveston, Texas, or the bill that would have authorized \$10,000 to build a road through the Medicine Bow Forest Reserve in Colorado.

Among the more ambitious bills was one introduced by Senator Shelby Moore Cullom of Illinois on August 11, 1911, to create a National Interstate Highways and Good Roads Commission to build seven named national highways radiating from Washington. The plan included a road from Washington to Seattle, Washington (Lincoln National Interstate Highway) and two roads to California (Jefferson National Interstate Highway to northern California and the Grant National Interstate Highway to southern California) as well as shorter routes to Portland, Maine (Washington); Niagara Falls, New York (Roosevelt); Austin, Texas (Monroe); and Miami, Florida (Lee). (One critic, Representative Michael E. Driscoll of New York, dismissed the flood of good roads bills, complaining that all of them came from "the great broad states in the South and West of large areas, long roads, small populations, and small taxing power.")

With interest growing, several States decided to take it upon themselves to identify the best route within their borders for a transcontinental highway. These State efforts grew out of the belief that, someday, such a road would be built. Designation of the route in advance, they thought, would give the State control over the location.

In 1911, therefore, Governor Herbert S. Hadley revived the idea of a single cross-State highway from among the three chosen in 1907. Communities along the three lines understood the importance of the decision:

It meant that if the route was selected and put through, that not only would portions of the state be visited by many people and that this would be a link in the some-time Ocean to Ocean Route, but it meant the stimulation of a sentiment for good roads in Missouri that in the course of a few more years would bring about a great upheaval in this state which would mean the building of highways that would connect with this route.

During July 1911, a delegation headed by Governor Hadley inspected the three routes. Communities outdid each other in welcoming the inspectors, in the hope of securing the designation:

It is impossible to bring in all of the roads lined with bunting, the gate posts decorated with flags, garlands of flowers and farm produce; the crowds of people gathered at the country schoolhouses that had not been open since the closing of the sessions, of the barrels almost bursting with ice-cold lemonade; the tables "groaning" with fried chicken, Missouri ham, cake and ice cream, and dainties known only to Missouri housewives. As one member of the party expressed the trip, they "literally ate their way through fried chicken and ham."

On August 11, 1911, 1,600 delegates filled the Jefferson Theatre in Jefferson City for a meeting on the issue. Each of the three routes was defended in speeches. Dean Walter Williams of the School of Journalism, University of Missouri, spoke on behalf of the Central Route:

I have no word of criticism of any other route that may be proposed. But as for me and mine . . . we are for the Boon's Lick Road and the Santa Fe Trail. May I add that we are not polygamists either. We do not want to tie up the affections of Missouri to three Cross-State Highways We want no cut-offs in ours. I am for the Boon's Lick Road and Santa Fe Trail, the Old Trails Route

A few days later, State Highway Engineer Curtis Hill submitted a summary of the three alternatives to the State Board. One factor that Hill cited in favor of the central route was his view that the Old Trails Route had already been selected as part of a transcontinental highway:

The trans-continental route which would cross Missouri is the proposed extension from Washington to San Francisco of the Old Cumberland Turnpike and the route is termed the Ocean to Ocean Highway. The Old Cumberland Turnpike was originally surveyed to St. Louis, which is the logical place for it, and either of our proposed cross-state roads would be available. This Ocean to Ocean Highway, however, is now routed by the U.S. Office of Public Roads over the Old Boon's Lick Road or our Central Route.

This was a misstatement. The Office of Public Roads (another of the FHWA's early names) had not routed the transcontinental highway. Shortly before Hill prepared his report, the Office had published a map of nearly 15,000 miles of transcontinental, interstate, and trunk line roads contemplated around the country. Reporting on the map, *Better Roads* magazine (August 1911) pointed out that if the plans were fulfilled, they would result in "a network covering the whole country." The routes depicted on the map were:

- Capital-to-Capital Highway (Washington, D.C., to Jacksonville, Florida)
- Central Highway in North Carolina
- Clay-Jefferson Memorial (Niagara Falls, New York, to Meridian, Mississippi)
- Des Moines-Kansas City-St. Joseph Trail
- Dupont Highway in Delaware
- Lincoln Memorial Road (Washington, D.C., to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania)
- Lincoln Way (Louisville to Nashville, Kentucky)
- Memphis-to-Bristol Highway
- Montreal-to-Miami Highway
- Ocean-to-Ocean Highway
- Pacific Highway
- Rio-to-Rio Highway (Denison to Galveston, Texas)
- Yellowstone to Glacier National Park

The route Hill had in mind was the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, described as:

Ocean to Ocean Highway, extending from Cumberland, Md., to Tacoma, Wash., and passing over the old Cumberland Road, through Columbus, Indianapolis, St. Louis, over Boone's Lick Trail and St. Louis to Old Franklin, Mo.; through Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. 3,800 miles.

The Office did not endorse the route. As *Better Roads* explained, the Office had published the map ". . . merely for the purpose of gauging the extent of the good roads movement as fostered by individuals, associations, and communities."

After Hill's report had been adopted, the members of the State Board designated the central route as "The Missouri Cross State Highway--Old Trails Road." The cross-State route was dedicated on October 28, 1911. Dedication parties left St. Louis and Kansas City, to meet in Columbia for the ceremony. Governor Hadley delivered the dedicatory address, in which he said:

This marks the beginning of the end of bad roads in Missouri. The people who are building this road are as truly pioneers as those hardy frontiersmen who blazed the Old Trails Route into the forests and over broad prairies With great pleasure in the present occasion, and with hopes for the future, I now dedicate the Old Trails Route the Missouri Cross State Highway, to the men and women of Missouri of the present and the future.

The Woman's Old Trails Road

In 1911, Miss Elizabeth Butler Gentry of the D.A.R. copyrighted a publication titled:

*The Old Trails Road,
The National Highway.*
A Memorial to the Pioneer Men and Women.
A Suggestion of the Missouri Good Roads
Committee
Daughters of the American Revolution.



Miss Elizabeth Gentry

Miss Gentry, Jackson County's Chairman of the Missouri Good Roads Committee, described the proposed project:

The historic old trails, comprising this project, are: the old National or Cumberland Road, which includes the Braddock's or Washington Road; the Boon's Lick Road; Santa Fe Trail; Kearny's Road; Oregon Trail.

She explained the origins of the movement:

The Missouri Good Roads Committee had planned a woman's national movement to awaken interest in a national

highway from ocean to ocean, along the old trails of the nation's pioneers The Kansas City Chapter, Santa Fe Trail Committee [of the D. A. R], first suggested to and urged upon the Governor and State Highway Engineer of Missouri that the old trails of the State should be reblazed into modern roads as a monument to the pioneers of the State. Due to five years of untiring efforts, this committee is acknowledged by the State Board of Agriculture as the vital force that carried this project to its culmination and dedication as the Missouri State Highway--the Old Trails Road--on Oct. 28th, 1911.

The Missouri Good Roads Committee, appointed by the State Regent, was the result of this achievement. The dream of this committee is to make the Missouri highway, but a link in a national highway--to extend the Old Trails eastward over the Old National Road to Washington; westward over the old Santa Fe Trail and Kearny's Road to San Francisco; north-westward over the Oregon Trail to Olympia The women of the seventeen Trail States will be vitally interested and the women of other states will see the value to human welfare of a national good road, which will serve to unify and bind together the D. A. R. interests of the country.

As the Missouri Good Roads Committee has originated this movement . . . it will act as a central and directing committee for the national work A prominent D. A. R. in each state will be invited to be chairman of this work in her state A meeting of this committee is hereby called in the Missouri Room, Continental Memorial Hall, Washington, D.C., second day of D. A. R. Congress, 1912, at 3 o'clock

Miss Gentry's publication listed members of an Advisory Committee to the Missouri Good Roads Committee. Judge J. M. Lowe of Kansas City was the Chairman (in Missouri, a "Judge" was the equivalent of a County Executive, not a judge of law). Members included:

- Professor Williams;
- Logan Waller Page, Director of the Office of Public Roads;
- Col. Wm. F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody of North Platte, Nebraska;
- Ezra Meeker, who had traveled to Oregon in a covered wagon in 1852, and duplicated the trip in reverse to publicize the historic trail in 1906;
- The Governors of Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming;
- U.S. Representatives Champ Clark and William P. Borland (MO.).

The pamphlet estimated the cost of the project:

The cost per mile of highway is variously estimated, owing to prairie or mountain country, proximity to road materials, etc., at from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a mile. As there are about 5000 miles of road in this project, it calls for an expenditure of fifty million dollars.

The goal was to have Congress designate the route for Federal construction:

A bill has been prepared at the request of the Missouri Committee and will be introduced in Congress sometime during December, 1911, by Congressman Wm. P. Borland, of Kansas City, Mo.

Each state committee should instruct its members to write their senators and representatives at Washington, asking them to vote for the Historic Trails Bill of the D. A. R. To carry this women's measure, it should be emphasized, that the interest is non-political, non-commercial; purely historic, patriotic, entirely practicable and of national value

The D. A. R. of each trail state should insist that the trail be adopted as their state highway. Fifty road bills are before Congress. It will take a strong and united effort by the D. A. R. to win out.

The map in the pamphlet showed the contemplated road. The Oregon Trail branched off the Santa Fe Trail in Gardner, Kansas, just as the original trails had separated. At Fort Hall, the California Trail to San Francisco split from the Oregon Trail, again as had the historic trail. The Old Trails Road also followed the Santa Fe Trail and its Cimarron Cut-Off, the short-cut through a territory with less access to water and more danger from Native Americans than on the main line.

The two routes connected south of Raton, New Mexico, then continued through Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Gallup. In Arizona, the road passed through Holbrook and Flagstaff before turning southwest to Prescott and south to Phoenix. From Phoenix, it moved west again to Yuma and San Diego. The trail ran up the West Coast to link with the California Trail in San Francisco. The map identified the route through the Southwest as "Kearneys Route Santa Fe to Monterey & link to San Francisco."

General Stephen Watts Kearny was in charge of the Army of the West during the Mexican War in 1846. He was ordered to take over California

and set up a temporary civil government. After following the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri, Kearny easily captured Santa Fe; Governor Manuel Armijo surrendered without a shot being fired. On September 24, 1846, the Army of the West set off to complete the defeat of the Mexican forces in California.

Miss Gentry's map was inaccurate in depicting the route followed. Kearny did not follow a route through Gallup, Flagstaff, and Prescott. He moved south from Santa Fe along the Rio Grande River on the ancient Spanish trail known as *El Camino Real* (The King's Highway). In Socorro, New Mexico, he met his friend Lieutenant Christopher "Kit" Carson, who was returning from California with the news-somewhat premature, as it turned out-that California had been conquered by the combined forces of Captain Robert F. Stockton and Lieutenant John C. Fremont. After reducing the size of his force to little more than an escort, Kearny convinced Lieutenant Carson (who had been ordered to take dispatches to Washington) to take the small expedition to California over a route Carson had not only helped open but had just traveled.

From Socorro, Carson led the force west to the Gila River and followed it to the Pima Villages near where the city of Phoenix would be established in the 1860's. Still generally following the Gila River, they continued to the future site of Yuma at the Colorado River. After fording the river, Kearny led his men across the southern California desert amid considerable hardship. On the plain of San Pascual near present day Escondido, Mexican soldiers under Don Mariano Flores attacked the small American force. Kearny, although wounded in the fighting, held out for 4 days before being rescued by troops from San Diego. Kearny finally reached San Diego on December 12. (Kearny and forces from San Diego defeated Governor Pio Pico at the Battle of San Gabriel on January 8-9, 1847. Hostilities ended a few days later. The Mexican government surrendered control of California to the United States by approving the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848.)

Miss Gentry's pamphlet concluded with a section headed "D.A. R. Motor Trip to Panama Exposition in 1915":

Mr. and Mrs. Thos W. Wilby, of New York and Washington, have just finished a motor round-trip of these trails-10,000 miles-to lay out and log the road for the Government. They praised the scenic beauty and historic value of these trails, their practicability and charm for motor travel.

The fascination of the road is known to all travelers, whether it be by camel, stage coach or motor car, and the call of the

road to its lovers is as insistent a note as the call of the sea to the sailor or the call of the desert to the Arab.

What more delightful than a D.A.R. automobile pilgrimage over the Old Trails Road to the Panama Exposition in San Francisco in 1915? Visits could be made to historic places enroute and at famous old taverns, reviving the life of the old trails. To achieve success in this mutually beneficial project it will mean several years of splendid cooperative work. The dream of Missouri women will come true, through the help of women of other states in preserving the old trails and the historic spirit of the nation.

Wilby was a Special Agent of the Office of Public Roads. The Office designated unpaid travelers as "Special Agents" to examine roads, take photographs of them, and report on conditions, type of construction, and economic facts. The Office, in some cases, provided photographic equipment.

As Special Agent, Wilby described his mission as laying out and charting two transcontinental roads, as well as conducting an inspection tour. Wilby and his wife Agnes traveled in a touring car manufactured by the Ohio Motor Car Company and driven by Fred D. Clark. (Transcontinental tourists during this period often employed drivers.) The car was nicknamed the "Mud Hen" based on its successful experience in the Munsey Tour of 1910. Clark was a well-known driver who had completed a heavily publicized 4,767-mile trip that began in New York City on November 22, 1910, and ended in San Francisco, via a southern route, on January 14, 1911. "No automobilist," publicist Guy Finney of the Ohio Motor Company wrote, "completing an extended journey need now hold back for fear of 'the unknown.'"

The Wilbys began their trip in New York and went by way of Chicago, Illinois; Des Moines, Iowa; Omaha, Nebraska; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Ogden, Utah; Reno, Nevada; and Sacramento, to San Francisco. The route was designated the "Pioneer Highway," an informal name applied to the route by auto clubs. They toured south to San Diego, then headed west via Phoenix and Santa Fe to La Junta, Colorado; then to Hutchinson and Emporia, Kansas; Columbia and St. Louis, Missouri; Indianapolis, Indiana; Wheeling, West Virginia; Cumberland, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; and Baltimore, Maryland, to New York via Philadelphia and Atlantic City. The Wilbys' southern route was "The Old Trails Highway." Neither route was supported by the Office of Public Roads, which was not promoting such projects .

According to the January 1912 issue of *Touring Topics* magazine, this trip was the first time a woman had made a double transcontinental tour by automobile. Mrs. Wilby told the writer that the 105-day trip had been delightful, with the beauties of the country affording ample compensation for the "few slight discomforts" of the trip. Mr. Wilby was especially encouraged by the enthusiasm he encountered for good roads:

Few motorists in the east have any idea not only of the enthusiasm, but of the general hard and effective work being done in the western and southwestern states for good roads. At every point I found much enthusiasm for highway improvement, the state officials and highway authorities assuring me that appropriations, running in to the millions, would soon be available for the surveying and building of trunk lines through their commonwealths.

After returning to New York, Wilby took the time on January 20, 1912, to write to Missouri's Curtis Hill. Wilby reported that he had completed his trip in 105 days, during which he laid out and charted two feasible transcontinental routes. He was concerned that wherever he went, the interest in good roads was "purely local," when he believed, "The Transcontinental Highways are of First importance." Moreover, time was being wasted waiting for Federal-aid:

Let organized effort still be directed towards inducing Congress to vote money for National Highways, but let it not be forgotten that the people have already taken the initial steps in this work Any scheme for State Highways which do not form a direct link in the Transcontinental chain must be secondary. Time enough for those others when the Great Transcontinental Highways, forming the longest and most wonderful sightseeing thoroughfares known, shall be an accomplished feat.

The Old Trails Road, which he called "American History crystallized," seemed to him an ideal transcontinental road:

Who with the red blood of national pride within him does not thrill at the thought of such roads as these! They are surely highways worthy of the American people.

An article in the December 1911 issue of *Southern Good Roads* described "The Woman's National Old Trail Roads Association":

A movement initiated by Miss Elizabeth Butler and other women of the Missouri Daughters of the American

Revolution has resulted in the formation of the Woman's National Old Trail Roads Association, the first national good roads association to be composed exclusively of women It is planned to make the proposed national highway a project in which every woman in the United States will be interested.

The national highway will start at Washington, D.C., [and follow the old trails to Santa Fe]. There will be two routes to San Francisco. One, the Southern, over Kearney road, through Phoenix, Ariz., and Monterey, Cal., the other, the Northern route, will lead from Gardner, Kansas., to Fort Hall, Ida., and finally to San Francisco. A third route may be established from Fort Hall to Olympia, Washington, over the old Oregon trail, made famous of late by Ezra Meeker of Portland, whose ox team drive over it was a picturesque event in 1906.

The Old Trails Association of Missouri

The next issue of *Southern Good Roads* (January 1912) described organization of a new group, the Old Trails Association of Missouri. The organizational meeting took place on December 19, 1911, in the Commercial Club Rooms in Kansas City:

Fifty delegates representing several counties, assembled at the call of Prof. Walter Williams Mr. Williams was chosen president of the association.



Prof. Walter Williams

Judge Lowe was a member of the Executive Committee.

The participants unanimously adopted a resolution on the purpose of the organization:

Section 1. Resolved, That it is the sense of this meeting that steps be taken toward the formation of a Transcontinental Highway Association, extending from the cities of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, along the line of the Old Cumberland Pike, through the States of Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, to the city of St. Louis; thence west along the Old Trails Route, consisting of Boone's Lick Road and Santa Fe Trail, as near as practicable to Kansas City, Mo.; thence along the line of

the Santa Fe Trail through Kansas and Colorado to Santa Fe, N.M.; and thence along the line of the Sunset Route, through New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

Section 2. Resolved, That the Governors of all the States through which the above-designated road shall run be requested to select delegates from the commercial organizations and Good Road Association along the line of said roads of their respective States to meet at Kansas City, Mo., on _____ day of _____, for the purpose of perfecting a National Organization.

The date was to be filled in later.

The *Southern Good Roads* article discussed the purpose of the new group:

The meeting was the first step toward what Mr. Williams believes will become a great transcontinental highway Many of the roads included in the transcontinental project have important branches, such as the Oregon trail, which branches from the Santa Fe trail. It is the plan of the association to place markers at such points. The markers also will be placed at all points of historic interest along the various trails.

A. L. Westgard And The Trail To Sunset

The "Sunset Route" was more correctly called the Trail to Sunset. This was an early named trail between Chicago and Los Angeles. It was established in 1910 by A. L. Westgard on behalf of his recently organized Touring Club of America.

Westgard, the premier "pathfinder" of the early automobile days, was born in Norway in 1865 and came to the United States in 1883. He began his career as a surveyor doing railroad, municipal, and land work in the Southwest. His jobs included location work for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. From 1892 to 1905, Westgard had been in charge of a corps of engineers working in all the States east of the Rocky Mountains. The corps prepared State, county, and town maps and atlases. His information helped the early bicycle tourists, but proved especially useful when the automobile age began.

During the first 2 decades of the 20th century, Westgard repeatedly traveled across country seeking good touring roads. He documented them for other motorists in maps, photographs, and motion pictures. He was a

Special Agent of the Office of Public Roads at times, and worked for several motoring and road organizations beginning in 1905. In 1912, Westgard Pass in California was named after him (on today's State Route 168 in the Inyo National Forest). The title of an article about Westgard by Arthur Manchester in the June 1989 issue of *Car Collector and Car Classics* conveys a sense of his last 15 years: "A Marco Polo of The Motor Age." While on the dedication tour for the National Park-to-Park Highway in 1920, he became ill while passing through Spokane, Washington, traveled by train to Oakland, California, for surgery, but died on April 3, 1921.

A 1911 AAA booklet of strip maps of the "Trail to Sunset Transcontinental Automobile Route" shows the route. According to the booklet, "The route for the Trail to Sunset has been carefully and deliberately chosen from a strictly touring standpoint, offering the most varied and numerous points of historic interest." Like future U.S. 66, the Trail to Sunset began at Jackson and Michigan Boulevards in Chicago. However, the Trail to Sunset continued west out of the city to La Grange, unlike U.S. 66, which turned southwest at Ogden Avenue. The trail crossed Iowa on the River-to-River Road (future U.S. 6), and joined the future National Old Trails Road in Lyons, Kansas. The two routes separated at McCartys, New Mexico, with the Trail to Sunset going through Phoenix before breaking into two branches, via Yuma, Arizona, and Blythe, California, on the way to Los Angeles.

The cover noted that the booklet was based on Westgard's notes. Westgard compiled the notes for the strip maps, including information on road conditions. For example, he noted that asphalt pavement ended at Madison Street in Chicago. He found graded dirt roads in Kansas. In New Mexico, he encountered such features as a "Ford (Sandy Bottom)" and "Heavy Sand." He finally encountered a "Fine macadam Boulevard," at Redlands, California, and followed macadam roads, "Well Signposted," all the way into Los Angeles. The Trail to Sunset ended at the intersection of Main and Spring Street in Los Angeles.

Westgard being primarily a pathfinder, the Trail to Sunset did not follow the later pattern for named trails. It did not have a backing organization to promote its improvement and use. As a result, it soon lost its identity as an interstate trail. In October 1917, *The Road-Maker* printed a AAA summary of national tourist roads, including the Trail to Sunset, but noted:

. . . starts at Chicago and runs to Los Angeles along the Santa Fe trail and across New Mexico and Arizona to Southern California, thence north to San Francisco The original line of the Trail to Sunset was through Albuquerque, Globe, Phoenix and Yuma, the way it is largely traveled

today; but more lately there has been developed a new and shorter connection from Albuquerque through Holbrook, Flagstaff, Williams, Needles and San Bernardino to Los Angeles This route . . . will probably divide future traffic about evenly with the older way through Phoenix and Yuma.

The "new and shorter connection" was better known by 1917 as the National Old Trails Road and became U.S. 66 in 1926.

The Trail to Sunset inspired a novel that was published in March 1912 by Moffat, Yard and Company. *On the Trail to Sunset* was written by Special Agent Thomas W. Wilby and his wife Agnes and illustrated with photos from their transcontinental trips . In it, an idealistic journalist accompanied his globetrotting Uncle John Eastcott, John's wife Nell, and a chauffeur on a trailblazing trip along the Trail to Sunset. A newspaper in New York heralded the trip:

WELL-KNOWN GLOBE-TROTTER TO CONQUER THE WEST!
JOHN EASTCOTT TO BLAZE A TRAIL ACROSS BY AUTOMOBILE
AND END THE MONOPOLY OF THE RAILROAD!

The novel included a romantic interest, a revolutionary movement to remove the Southwest from American control, sabotage of the transcontinental journey, an Indian attack, and a car chase along rough northeastern New Mexico roads at speeds exceeding 20 miles per hour. In the end, the young man wins his true love, the Southwest remains part of the United States, and the transcontinental pathfinding trip is a success.

In *RoadFrames: The American Highway Narrative* (University of Nebraska Press, 1997), Kris Lackey critiqued *On the Trail to Sunset*. He described it as "a preposterous throwback, and its reactionary colonialism, depicting Hispanics as wild-eyed fanatics and Native Americans as childish, defeated savages, lacks the revisionist romanticism of later nonfiction narratives." Lackey concluded by explaining the point of the novel, as he saw it, namely that a cultivated Easterner can "muster virility enough" to defeat his native rivals, "thus insuring the right and proper march of Anglo civilization into the recesses of the continent." In short, it wasn't a very good novel.

The Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association

The day after the Old Trails Association of Missouri was formed, the Tri-State Road Convention was held in Phoenix on December 20-21, 1911. The organization was based in Arizona, California, and New Mexico, with the Governors of each State appointing the delegates. As in Missouri, officials in the Southwest wanted to influence what they anticipated would

be Federal decisions on transcontinental highway routings. John S. Mitchell of Los Angeles was elected president, with J. S. Cornwell, also of Los Angeles, the treasurer. The secretary was George Purdy Bullard of Phoenix.

The new organization had to address efforts by San Diego boosters who had been fighting for years regarding highway routing between Phoenix and Los Angeles. Early automobile traffic between the two cities went via San Diego and Yuma across the difficult roads of the Imperial Valley. San Diego interests, fearing their city would become a backwater if transcontinental traffic went directly from Yuma to Los Angeles, had identified a routing that would become U.S. 80 when that route was designated in the 1920's (I-8 roughly follows the route today). Los Angeles had adopted a route following in part the tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad from Yuma to San Bernardino by way of the Salton Sea. Nevertheless, San Diego advocates claimed their route was a faster way to Los Angeles, in part because it cut off 100 miles of desert travel.

This longstanding dispute would emerge during the organizing convention of the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association. According to an account of the convention in the January 1912 issue of *Touring Topics*:

In the ensuing business session on the day following [December 21] the principal matter brought up for settlement was the selection of the route which the highway should follow through the state of California. The delegates representing San Diego and the southern portion of the Imperial Valley were insistent that the association should endorse a route by way of Yuma to El Centro, thence over the Devil's Canyon to San Diego and up the coast to Los Angeles, while the northern men united with the Los Angeles and upper Imperial Valley delegates in espousing a route through the Imperial Valley to Beaumont, Banning and thence into Los Angeles.

During a meeting before the convention, the California delegation had unanimously selected the Beaumont-Banning route, which left San Diego out, as the favored course. San Diego delegates had declined to attend the caucus:

On the floor of the convention, when the matter of the two routes came up, some rather acrimonious debate was indulged in, but President Mitchell ruled that the speakers for the San Diego delegation were out of order and a resolution embodying the Beaumont-Banning route was adopted for

transmission to the federal authorities as the official action of the association.

According to the adopted resolution, the route recommended to the Federal Government ran "westerly from Yuma, along and near the Southern Pacific Railway, to a point about 4 and one-half miles west of Mammoth station, thence southwesterly to Brawley, thence northwesterly along the south and west side of the Salton Sea to Mecca, thence along the line of the Southern Pacific tracks to Beaumont, Redlands Junction, Colton and thence along the shortest route to Los Angeles." The resolution indicated that the route had been selected because the association believed the route presented "the fewest geographical and physical obstacles," passed "through as much settled territory as possible" and was "within striking distance" of a transcontinental railroad.

An article in the January 13, 1912, issue of *Good Roads* described the western division of the route:

[It] begins at Raton, N.M., running from there to Las Vegas, through Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Carthage, San Antonio, Cocorro [Socorro] and Magdalena, N.M., Solomonville, Globe, Roosevelt, Phoenix and Yuma, Ariz., and Mammoth, Cal., west to Mecca, via Beaumont, through Redlands Junction and Colton to Los Angeles.

That was essentially the route of the Trail to Sunset.

By April 1912, *Touring Traffic* could report progress in improving the new route:

Three months ago there was no direct connecting route between Los Angeles and Yuma, a city just over the Colorado River in Arizona. The automobilist of Los Angeles or vicinity who wished to go to Yuma was compelled to travel down the coast to San Diego and thence over the difficult roads through the lower part of the Imperial Valley and on to his destination. Today he can travel over a direct route between the two cities and he will find the roads ranging from fair to excellent for the entire three hundred and two miles.

Extensive work had been completed:

[The Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association] has secured a fourteen mile right of way between Ontario and Colton that provides a direct and excellent route between these two

cities. It has overcome the extremely difficult and often impassable stretch of road at Whitewater Point by constructing four miles of new roadway along higher ground that provides a good rock foundation and is beyond the reach of water even during the rainy season. A new road has been built between Mecca and Brawley, a distance of sixty-four miles, and this highway is in very good condition. The road between these two points was formerly a sandy trail that, for the most part, could be negotiated only by the higher powered cars. Between Brawley and Yuma a fairly good road has been provided by way of Mammoth and Ogelby. This particular portion of the proposed ocean-to-ocean highway presents road engineering problems of some difficulty and to provide a first class highway between the two points will entail a considerable cost.

Mitchell and other leaders of the new association began working with other associations interested in being part of the route that they hoped the Federal Government would build. As *Touring Topics* put it in April 1912, "President Mitchell and Secretary Conwell have not been confined to the extreme west but they have been successful in inoculating the Eastern states with the virus of their enthusiasm." One of the groups that Mitchell worked with was based in Missouri.

The First National Old Trails Road Convention

On April 17 and 18, 1912, Professor Williams presided over the National Old Trails Road Convention, held in the Commercial Club Rooms in Kansas City. The Committee on Credentials certified delegates from Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and California did not send delegates.

Mrs. Hunter M. Merriwether, the Missouri State Vice Regent for the D.A.R. and a member of the Missouri Good Roads Committee, addressed one of the main problems facing the convention, namely routing. No one questioned the eastern portion of the new named trail. It would follow the Cumberland Road to its terminus in Vandalia, Illinois, continue on to St. Louis and Kansas City via the Missouri Cross-State Highway. West of Kansas City, however, the best location for the trail was in dispute.

Citing Shakespeare's claim that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," Mrs. Merriwether commented:

In your case, your name is *your fortune*. The "Old Trails Road" tells its own story The men of Missouri saw the need of a State Highway, and the Daughters of the American

Revolution joined hands with them and helped them to decide the proper place to put the road.

Why not build the National Ocean-to-Ocean Highway along the Old Trail's Road as Missouri has built her link?

Each of the trail States should insist that the Trail Road be adopted as their State Highway.

She emphasized the importance of designating the route along the historic trails chosen by the D. A. R. instead of the alternatives under consideration. A good road that was not also historic would spoil the significance of the name:

Hold to your name and build that National Old Trail's Road. We, Daughters of the American Revolution, do not come before you to plead for it, because the section through which it passes is a great commercial one, but because it was the pathway of our forefathers, who took civilization from the tidewaters of the Atlantic to the golden sands of the Pacific

When we gather our children about our knees, we do not tell them of the great captains of industry, of the leaders of finance. We tell them of Washington and Lee; of Daniel Boone, who led the pioneers along the "Wilderness Road," across the Mississippi; of Meriweather [sic] Lewis, and William Clark; Whiteman and Spaulding, of the Oregon Trail; of Colonel Alexander Doniphan, General Stephen Kearny; of Fremont and Thomas H. Benton, the Lion Hearted

Men of brain and brawn, fling away personalities in this Old Trail's Road building. Root from your hearts the miasma of commercialism, which, in its fever and fury, blinds your eyes to the upper and higher aim, that of united hearts and hands across this great country of ours, to build a National Monument that will ever be pointed out as the Old Trail's Road, which has been designated as "The Road of Living Hearts," over which marched the civilization, opportunity, religion, development, and progress of our grand America.

Routing Disputes: The New and Old Santa Fe Trail

One of the major routing battles was between rival forces backing the New Santa Fe Trail and the Old Santa Fe Trail in Kansas. The New Santa Fe Trail was the first named trail in Kansas. Interests in Hutchinson began the

trail by calling a convention in January 1910 to select a route between Newton and the Colorado State line, via Hutchinson, Kinsley, Dodge City, Cimarron, Garden City, Hartland, and Syracuse. The 300 delegates who attended the convention established a temporary organization, chose the name for their route (after rejecting the Valley Speedway), and urged eastern Kansas good roads boosters to extend the route to the east. In May 1910, a conference in Emporia established the eastern routing. In October, Westgard included the New Santa Fe Trail in his Trail to Sunset.

A competing association formed in November 1911 at Herington. This group mapped the Old Santa Fe Trail, as close as possible to the historic route, given section line land division and modern development. West of Lyons to Santa Fe, the two routes were identical.

The competition between the two Kansas groups was intense, primarily because they were competing for the business that would follow the main transcontinental artery. Of course, the D. A. R. interests supported the Old Santa Fe Trail, because of its historic importance, for inclusion in the National Old Trails Road.

On April 12, 1912, Ralph Faxon, President of the New Santa Fe Trail Association of Kansas, addressed the convention in support of designating his line. Just before Faxon spoke, Professor Williams had acknowledged the arrival of Chester Lawrence. He was on a pathfinding transcontinental trip from New York to Los Angeles under the sponsorship of the William Randolph Hearst newspaper organization and the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association:

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to step aside from the regular program just at this moment to introduce to you the first man who will follow the National Old Trails Road entirely across the continent, Mr. Chester Lawrence. (Applause).

MR. LAWRENCE: We have been a long time coming, gentlemen, but we are here.

THE CHAIRMAN: He will say something to us a little later, because just at present he has come up out of tribulation-I mean Kansas. He has to catch his breath. (Laughter).

Faxon picked up on the theme at the start of his speech:

A little while ago . . . my friend, the president of this conference, suggested that Mr. Lawrence had recently come down out of tribulation, meaning Kansas, and the thought occurred to me, and I think my Kansas friends will agree with

me perfectly, that possibly he did come out of tribulation, but he didn't help matters much by coming into "misery," (Laughter and applause).

After discussing the good roads movement in Kansas, he turned to his main concern:

I pause for a moment to pay my respects to these Daughters of the American Revolution-and many who are not here I know will join me-in paying respect to them for the work they have done. But I say, stripping it of its sentiment, there must be organization and practical construction. There must be practical work and must be men's work along with it.

He said that his association was a pioneer of the good roads movement in Kansas and listed some of the men who helped create the New Santa Fe Trail:

It is men like that who have done the road work in connection with the New Santa Fe Trail; and when anybody tells you that mere sentiment should govern more than honest, sincere efforts of a band of men covering a period of years and extending as it has back into a time in the past that makes it the pioneer of all the roads of the West, then I want to tell you it is time to pause and think a minute, and to pay tribute to the men who have gone to the front and done the actual work that has been done by the New Santa Fe Trail and by its organization. Mr. Williams knows it. Mr. Wilby knows it. Mr. Westgard knows it. The American Automobile Association knows it and Chester Lawrence knows it; the office of public roads of the United States, Department of Agriculture knows it

Faxon concluded, "I thank my stars that it has been recognized from the government down to the humblest traveler as one of the most significant things in Good Roads in all the West."

Now, George P. Morehouse, speaking on behalf of the Old Santa Fe Trail Association, referred to Lawrence:

Those two organizations [the New and Old Santa Fe Trails] should receive encouragement. But when you hold a national Old Trails convention to induce the United States Government and other interests to improve a great ocean-to-ocean highway across this country along this historic line, it is no wonder that the action of your convention was so

unanimous in selecting by resolution, the route of the Old Santa Fe Trail . . . rather than the new trail (applause)-rather than that new Santa Fe Trail of modern times which my friend Faxon represents and which this distinguished automobilist has partially come over, and would have been here many hours before if he had only taken the old natural route. The trouble with Mr. Lawrence has been that he did not follow that old natural route that kept away from the boggy, the sandy and the gumbo bottoms of the cottonwood and other regions he has been obliged to come through. (Applause.)

. . . But when it is stated here that the Old Santa Fe Trail is simply a sentiment, I take issue with that; and, looking along its historic value, I want to say something in regard to why sentiment is even stronger often than commerce. Sentiment is the reason that the Daughters of the American Revolution . . . have always worked to have the national highway follow along the Old Trails line. Sentiment is the reason that the national organization of the D.A.R. in Washington yesterday has sanctioned and asked that the Old Trails line should be used. (Great applause.) Sentiment has accomplished more in this country, often even drenching our country in blood rather than to cut it up, when possibly a little commercial finesse would have prevented it. And sentiment is what will ultimately get the United States Government to make vast appropriations for roads from one end of our country to the other, more than even the strength and political sagacity of commercial centers. (Applause.)

That afternoon, during debate on the association's constitution, Faxon tried to convince the convention to postpone adoption of the "Old" line. Noting that the adopted resolution only "recommends" the Old Santa Fe Trail "as nearly as practicable," he said:

I should be absolutely failing in the decency and respect that we all owe to an organization that has promoted more than one good thing, if I did not preface the few words I am going to say with a tribute which comes from my heart towards the Daughters of the American Revolution.

[But] I stand on those words, "as near as practicable," and Mr. Miller [J. M. Miller, representing the Old Santa Fe Trail Association] ought to stand on them, and the rest of my good friends ought to stand on them; and then we can take this thing home where it belongs and fight it out and settle it for

all time, and the winner will have the support of the vanquished and we shall all be together in this movement.

Faxon also complained that the resolution endorsing the Old Santa Fe Trail had not been properly introduced to the convention by the Committee on Resolutions.

. . . why try to run anything over us which did not come through the channel of the Committee on Resolutions in the ordinary and orderly manner?

Mr. Miller replied:

For what purpose are we here? We are here for the purpose of determining the national highway that shall connect the two oceans, if we have any purpose at all; and my friend Faxon knows it as well as anybody on earth, and he knows that the only thing we can do is to appeal to the people here--not to run the bandwagon over them. There is no disposition in this magnificent audience to run the bandwagon over anybody, but above and beyond any other organization on earth, this organization will never run the bandwagon over the Daughters of the American Revolution, after their grand work in this cause. (Applause and cheers). Daughters of the American Revolution, I cannot give you my heart. It is not mine to give. I would first have to interview the lovely little woman out at Council Grove; but you have my voice and my hand in every good work and my help in the good work you are undertaking. You may accept the hearts of these gentlemen who belong to the New Santa Fe Trail, if you will, and their wishes in your good work; but it will not help you very much, in my judgment, unless you have their determined effort to carry out what you want done.

When the issue was resolved in favor of the Old Santa Fe Trail, Professor Williams joked:

I wish to call attention to the meeting tonight before I get further on, so I will not forget it. I understand that Mr. C. R. McLain of Kansas City will present an illustrated lecture at the New Casino--and I hope those of us now who favor the "Old" will not stay away because it is the "New" Casino, if that is the name of it--on road building.

Routing Disputes: The Ocean-to-Ocean Highway

The other main controversy over routing concerned the Southwest, where few good roads existed. Colonel Dell M. Potter, of Clifton, Arizona, addressed the convention on the second day. (He noted that his title of "Colonel" resulted from his having been paymaster of the State's National Guard.) Potter explained how the organization he represented, the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association of Redlands, California, came about:

Four years ago I went to the Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles and asked if they would not assist us in boosting the National Highway from the Pacific to the Atlantic And what has the state of California done? It has bonded itself for eighteen million dollars for the purpose of building what? Building automobile roads--not transcontinental roads, not roads for the benefit of you and me, but roads that will benefit California and allow or permit California to have [automobiles] shipped by train from across the United States to its eastern line and tour through from there. We want to take some of this [touring] money from them before they get to California. I want to tell you if you get to California and ever get away with a cent you do more than the Potter tribe ever has. (Laughter)

After four years of hard fighting in Arizona, we believed that we could settle our difficulties as to where our part of the National Highway should cross the state, and . . . at a meeting called on the 20th of last December, at which twenty-eight delegates from the State of California and twenty-eight from New Mexico and twenty-eight from Arizona met together for the purpose of organizing some kind of a transcontinental or national highway. We found, to our sorrow, that the fight had been making us only trouble. We found more Arizonians there interested in taking that road across the northern part of the state than we knew there was in Arizona. They all believed they were entitled to have it, but we finally eliminated and finally settled our difficulties. We settled our difficulties in the state of California, and so did the state of New Mexico; and so far as the National Highway across the state of Arizona and the southern part of California and the state of New Mexico is concerned, that is absolutely settled. We have no more fight. But I can tell you the Lord could be proud of some of the fighters they have got in the northern part of the state, and the devil could afford to give half his kingdom for some of those fighters up there

I want to say that four years ago we advocated the building of this transcontinental highway following the Santa Fe Trail, and we have fought this thing out up to the 20th of last December, and then agreed that this should be the line of road from ocean to ocean, and the first one built by the United States government. We say that we are in a position to show you people from Missouri, those that have that [transcontinental] disease, and we must show you and we are ready to show you. We are not babies in this particular, if we are the "Baby State" in the Union. We began this thing, and we have been fighting for Colorado and Kansas and Missouri and Illinois and Indiana and Ohio and New York and New Jersey and Pennsylvania to have them put on the map, long before this association was formed. We are not asking for any credit for that, but we saw the writing on the wall and said, "We have got to get busy and have got to bind these various states together."

Colonel Potter also explained how the association was named:

I want to say, with reference to the name of that association, it was finally suggested as the Southwestern Transcontinental Highway Association. I said, "Not in a thousand years. We will make it something broader than that. It must be either the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association or the Transcontinental Highway Association." You could not inject into that organization or any other such organization as that anything as narrow as any particular section of the country. We finally agreed that the name of the association should be the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association.

According to the proceedings of the National Old Trails Road convention, no one argued against Potter's position.

The convention adopted a route along the Cumberland Road, the Cross-State Highway through Missouri, the "Old Santa Fe Trail" to Santa Fe and "from Santa Fe west on the most historic and scenic route to the Pacific Coast." Possibly, debate within the Committee on Constitution and By-laws, not reported in the proceedings, blocked adoption of the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway's route through New Mexico, Arizona, and California during the first



US map showing proposed location of National Old Trails Road

convention. The Oregon Trail branch, as shown on Miss Gentry's map, was not included; to judge from the proceedings, this branch was never seriously considered part of the route.

On another matter, Colonel Potter offered a suggestion:

Mr. Chairman, I move you that it is the sense of this Association, born today, that we affiliate with the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association, with one and the same purpose in view; that we affiliate with them and work with them first, last and all the time to the end that this one first transcontinental highway from ocean to ocean be completed.

The motion was carried. In addition, the convention resolved:

That the thanks of this convention is extended to the Daughters of the American Revolution, who, by their energy and patriotism, have so permanently marked the "Old Santa Fe Trail" by lasting monuments in several States, and that the route of this historic old highway will be forever preserved to posterity.

Judge J. M. Lowe

As the convention neared its end, the Committee on Permanent Organization proposed to designate Dr. Williams as President of the new association. He declined:

While I appreciate more than I can express the courtesy shown me in this Convention, and the action, particularly contrary to my express wishes and desires, of my friends on the Committee on Permanent Organization, there are reasons that I have confided to some of my more closely affiliated friends which make it utterly impossible for me to accept at your hands this signal mark of your confidence in me. If I will not be accused of plagiarism I would say with all the emphasis that I can, that under no circumstances could I accept what you apparently are inclined to offer me, the leadership of a movement that is epoch-making, history-making, in its character.



Judge J. M. Lowe

He suggested an alternative:

If it is left to me to make a nomination in my stead, it would afford me great pleasure to nominate for the presidency of this Association a resident of this city, a man of the highest character, a man influential at the national capital, a man who has served the Missouri Old Trails Association as executive committeeman, a lawyer and statesman whose heart is in this work and who is as thoroughly committed to it as any other man, and who here at this central city, which bears the name of one state and belongs to the other should be located, it seems to me, the president of this association. And I present, in withdrawing my name, thus trespassing upon your courtesy, which I am sure is more than I ought to do, I am withdrawing my name regretfully and appreciatively, in your interest as well as in Mrs. Williams' and my own, if you will allow me to take you into my confidence to that extent, I present to you the name of Judge J. M. Lowe of Kansas City. (Cries of "Good!" and applause.)

The convention elected Judge J. M. Lowe, always referred to by his initials, to be President.

Joseph Macauley Lowe was born in Pendleton County, Kentucky, in 1844. When he was old enough, he joined the Confederate Army and served for several months near the end of the Civil War. He taught school in Greenfield, Indiana, while studying law. He moved to Plattsburg, Missouri, where he practiced law for 15 years, and served as prosecuting attorney of Clinton County for four successive terms.

In Plattsburg, he married Mary Elizabeth McWilliams in 1874. They had two children, a daughter, Mrs. Hughes Bryant of Kansas City, and a son, Mr. J. Robert Lowe of Lees Summit. The couple moved to Kansas City in 1882. Although primarily focused on private activities, he occupied several appointive offices and served as Judge of the County Court of Jackson County. He also served as election commissioner in Kansas City for 6 years, during which time he gained a reputation for fighting dishonesty in politics and at elections, regardless of party.

He had been a fighter for good roads for many years. In an 1897 address to the Southwestern Commercial Congress in Atlanta, Georgia, he spoke about a subject "which has enlisted the thought and energies of the greatest intellects throughout civilization," namely good roads. He discussed and quoted the great leaders who had supported the development of roads, especially the Cumberland Road, in the United States. He said, "Let us no longer quibble over hair-splitting theories of governmental power. Either the General Government has authority to appropriate national revenues to road building, or it has not." He was in no

doubt of the answer, namely "that the thing can and shall be done." He explained:

Let us begin where we left off when the "bogy man" of doubtful authority made his appearance, take up the old Cumberland road, or any other road, carry it forward and intersect the Santa Fe trail and stretch one great national highway across the continent. When this is done, "the way" discovered will seem so simple and so easy that we will only marvel at our sloth and go forward in the only rational, feasible, equitable way of road building.

He suggested that, "We must cease regarding road building as a tax, and look upon it as an investment." The Congress had appropriated \$300 million for post office buildings. "the necessity for which did not exist," money that could have built "ten great macadam roads from ocean to ocean, and ten from the Lakes to the Gulf." But when good roads advocates asked for a percentage of that amount, "a mere bagatelle," advocates of States rights cry out, "Paternalism."

Be it so; but we shall not halt. We fear this charge even less than we did the equally foolish cry of "unconstitutionality." We are beginning to know our rights, and knowing them we dare maintain them. This question has figured largely in the election of two Presidents, and it may be of equal potency in the election of a third. **This is our money** ; and we shall not stop until a portion of it is appropriated to the development and enrichment of the country, furnishing employment to thousands of idle hands, and adding millions in value to the wealth and prosperity of the country.

By 1910, Judge Lowe was absorbed in the cause of good roads. Addressing the National Good Roads Convention in Oklahoma City on October 5, 1910, he had begun, "The amount of energy employed on the subject of good roads is out of proportion to the results obtained." After summarizing the history of the Cumberland Road, he addressed a more recent objection to Federal funding for road building:

But it may be said this would be to open wide the "pork barrel"-every congressional district would want a road. It may be replied that, as it is now most congressional districts have a creek or bayou which needs dredging, riprapping, or "snagging," and if road building was added, it would give the average Congressman something to do, and he could always report to his constituents how earnestly he had tried and what he could do next time.

After listing over \$441 million in appropriations by Congress over 20 years for rivers and harbors and quoting the good roads planks adopted by the Republican and Democratic conventions before the 1908 presidential election, he restated his argument from the 1897 speech, but with a few modifications:

Both parties having decided "that the thing can and shall be done," it only remains to search and "find the way." This is easy. Begin where we left off when the "bogy man" of doubtful authority made his appearance, take up the old Cumberland Road, carry it forward and intersect the Santa Fe trail and the Oregon trail, and stretch one great national highway across the continent.

He concluded:

What I do insist upon is, that if the policy of internal improvements, which has become the settled policy of the Government, is to continue, then the highways of the country shall share in that system as constituting a vital part thereof, and as such entitled to a square deal. As public highways they constitute a vital place in transportation, and, belonging to the public, they should be constructed and maintained by the public.

Judge Lowe had also proposed a \$50 million highway system for Missouri--an astounding sum for the times. He also claimed credit for being the first person in the United States to propose the use of motor vehicle license fees to support highway construction.

In all his public endeavors, Judge Lowe exhibited what one account described as "militant honesty, unselfishness, vision, faith." He was "a foe of inefficiency and lax methods of administration in public office."

After the delegates approved the appointment of Judge Lowe as President, Professor Williams was elected to the specially created post of Advisory Vice President. The name of the organization, which filed for incorporation in the Circuit Court at Kansas City, was the National Old Trails Road Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association.

With the convention nearly over, Professor Williams called for an acceptance speech by Judge Lowe:

Now the chairman is going to ask--let him be just this moment longer the chairman--in order to cement the tie that binds, in the closing hours of the Convention, after again

thanking you for your courtesies to him, that the new president of the National Old Trails Association be escorted to the chair and is going to appoint as a committee to escort Judge Lowe to the chair, Mr. Miller of Kansas and Mr. Faxon of Kansas. (Cries of "Good!" and applause.)

Professor Williams continued:

I present to you gentlemen with my love and thanks, and my congratulations on your new president, with my best wishes for his success, and for your own personal welfare and prosperity, your new president, my friend and yours, a lawyer, a Good Roads promoter, a man whose interest is thoroughly in behalf of the building of this transcontinental highway on the National Old Trails road, Judge J. M. Lowe of Kansas City.

In accepting the Presidency, Judge Lowe began:

I don't know what I ought to say. Of course it is always expected that the recipient of such an honor as you have bestowed upon me, shall return his thanks. As I said to a friend of mine a moment ago, when congratulating me, that it did not impress me that it was congratulations I stood most in need of at this particular hour.

He spoke of the "calamity" of losing Professor Williams' leadership, "but he has presented his reasons in such a way that they made it impossible for us to press it upon him further."

Judge Lowe then discussed his views on highway development:

Now, personally, just one word, because a great deal, I suspect, remains to be done, as most all of you know without my telling you, that in selecting me, you have selected a president who is in favor of good roads. (Applause.) I have reached a point where, perhaps, I have not quite as much patience as I ought to have with men who talk like we ought to go to Congress and, upon bended knee-or, as Shakespeare expresses it, "Crook the pregnant hinges of the knee, where thrift may follow fawning"-and talk about the government extending national aid to road building as something to be petitioned for and begged for. I have gotten way beyond that. I know, and you know, that the national revenues belong to the people. I know, as you know, that these revenues are subject to the action of Congress. I

know, and you know, they have been appropriated to all sorts of uses and purposes. Now, this is our money, just as the states' funds are. These representatives in Congress are our servants, or should be, and when we go before them we will demand that this money be appropriated for this purpose. (Applause)

While we have been meeting in this convention and passing these resolutions, we have already had introduced in the Congress a bill appropriating out of the general revenues of the government moneys sufficient to meet one-half the expense of building the National Old Trails Road across this country. That bill was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and on yesterday twenty-four states, represented by the Daughters of the American Revolution, were before that Committee, pressing upon the committee its duty with reference to that bill. I have a copy of that bill in my pocket. I have only one. If I had more time I would read it to you. It may not be the wisest or may not be the best; but the point I want to get before you is this, that the National Old Trails Road is the first on record in the Congress of the United States demanding a national system of highways. Now, then, let's see to it that it remains **the first**.

Of course I am, and I expect you are, in favor of all the bills introduced, about thirty-eight in number. Personally I am in favor of the Underwood bill, and I am in favor of the Cullom bill, and am in fact in favor of all of them and any of them. As to how much Congress should appropriate, this is a detail we will work out when we come to it--whether the Government should assume the entire expense of building it, as I believe it should, or whether the Government should simply aid the states in building it, I don't care a rap about that. I will do business with them on either proposition or in either way. Now gentlemen, this is more than I intended to say to you. I repeat, as I began, that it is absolutely a calamity to this organization that Colonel Williams should be permitted to retire from its presidency. I cannot hope to fill his place--no man can fill his place, in the chair. In the language of Jefferson, when he succeeded [Benjamin] Franklin as minister to Paris, when being congratulated by one who said, "I understand you are to take the place of Dr. Franklin," replied, "No, sir! I can't take the place of Dr. Franklin. No other man can. I succeed Dr. Franklin." That is true at the present time. I cannot fill Col. Williams' place-- no man can. I can only succeed him.

The convention also adopted *Better Roads* as its official organ. Its editor, Jesse Taylor, addressed the members near the end of the session. Although he pointed out that he was not an engineer, he had a word of warning. He stressed, he was not against the automobile ("I don't own one, but I have nothing against the other fellow") and he didn't care whether the route was the Old or New Santa Fe Trail (the Chairman admonished him, "Don't use that phrase again. That is settled."). He explained that hundreds and thousands of people would be heading to the San Francisco Exposition in 1915 in \$590 Fords all the way up to \$6,000 vehicles weighing 3 or 4 tons:



Jesse Taylor

You are going home and ask the people of your localities to put up money to build roads. You are going to advertise this great National, ocean-to-ocean highway, and invite the four hundred thousand automobilists from one end of this nation to the other, and the people who own mules and horses, to come and travel on that road. Now, we are warning you, when you build it, build it right. **Wake up now!**

He mentioned earth, gravel without proper drainage, and waterbound macadam. He wasn't advocating any specific surface:

But I want to warn you now, when you go home and start this sentiment for building a road, take along with it the sentiment for the proper construction of roads, and build them **right**. Because, if you don't, when the automobiles going to the great celebration of the opening of the Panama Canal in San Francisco have run thirty days over the thing, they will have the whole State of Kansas cursing you because you have wasted their money in improper construction. You will have the whole of any state through which it may pass cursing you because you wasted their money in improper construction.

He urged them to study proper construction methods, as well as proper upkeep. To applause, he cited the French system of road patrols:

What I want to admonish you to do in these few moments is to build your roads **right**, and I want to warn you against improper construction and a rebuke from the people which will come to you if you build this Old Trail in a careless way.

Professor Williams, still acting as Chairman, ended the convention with these closing words:

I wish to express to you again and finally my personal appreciation of your kindness to the Chairman for your courtesy to him personally, and to say that in this wonderful convention, with more than five hundred delegates representing eight states of the American Union, we have launched a movement that, in my opinion, will establish the first transcontinental wagon road on the Old Trails Route across the continent.

Miss Gentry's Testimony

Miss Gentry had not been able to attend the convention. She and other members of the D. A. R. were in Washington, D.C., to testify before the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives on April 19. The committee was considering H. R. 17919, Representative Borland's bill calling for Federal construction of the National Old Trails Road.

Before introducing Miss Gentry at the hearing, Representative Borland read a telegram to her from the convention delegates in Kansas City:

Old Trails Road convention assembled, 500 strong, in Kansas City; acknowledge greetings of the Daughters of the American Revolution Old Trails Road committee in session in Washington, and again acknowledge our obligation to you for having been first in promoting what we believe and hope will shortly become the first great transcontinental highway over the historic and scenic route along the old trails of the pioneers. Walter Williams, Chairman.

Representative Borland then introduced Miss Gentry, "the lady who, I believe, is the originator of this idea" In reprinting her testimony, *Better Roads* (August 1912) referred to Miss Gentry as "Chairman Old Trails Road Committee, National Society, D.A.R."

Miss Gentry's comments emphasized the difference between seeking good roads for commercial interests and seeking them as a memorial to the men and women who traveled our historic trails:

A countrywoman said to me: "My men folks have left me stuck in the mud all my life. I am mighty thankful the D.A.R. are trying to pull me out." While individually we are concerned with this phase of good roads, as an organization we are dedicated to the historic and patriotic side, and are

here to urge that a great National ocean-to-ocean highway be built as a memorial to the pioneer patriots of the Nation.

Miss Gentry explained the original conception of a highway along the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails, as well as along General Kearny's trail to California during the Mexican War. She added that the plan included an extension through Baltimore, Philadelphia, and into New York along the roads George Washington traveled on his inaugurals as President of the United States.

She contrasted the D.A.R. project with other proposed highway projects:

There are many projected roads at present; the Meridian Road, proposed to run from the Gulf to Canada, bisects our road at Kearney, Nebraska, and also at McPherson, Kansas; another road is the capital-to-capital, or the Quebec-Miami Road, which intersects our road at Washington, D.C. The Natchez Trace is a feeder into our road, as is also the Chicago to St. Louis Road, to be called the "Lincoln Highway"; the river-to-river road across Iowa connects Chicago with our road again at Council Bluffs. All of these and many other roads will eventually be built for commercial advantage; for educational, historic, and patriotic motives, we urge that a distinctive scenic highway should be dedicated, built, and maintained by the National Government I want to say very frankly to you that my interest and the interest of the Daughters of the American Revolution in the National highway is purely historic; purely sentimental and patriotic [O]ur interest is not a vague sentiment, but an insatiable passion

Let the D. A. R., who conceived and initiated this movement, bind with homespun cords the realized past to the ideal future of the Nation

Near her conclusion, Miss Gentry explained the nickname of the project:

In Samoa the natives have built a memorial road to [novelist and traveler] Robert Louis Stevenson, which they call "The Road of Loving Hearts." Our plan also is to make a road of loving hearts; and it will have not only that interest, but it will have commercial and economic value.

Congress did not approve Borland's bill or any other bills supporting specific highway proposals. However, the Post Office Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1913, enacted on August 24, 1912, authorized the

Department of Agriculture and the Post Office Department to conduct an experimental program for construction of post roads. The act also established a Joint Congressional Committee on Federal Aid in the Construction of Post Roads to study the Federal-aid question and report to Congress on it. It would be headed by Senator Jonathan Bourne, Jr., of Oregon.

On The Road

On May 15, 1912, Colonel Potter left Los Angeles for a trip to New York in a car provided by *The Los Angeles Times*. According to an article in the September 1912 issue of *Better Roads*, he was accompanied in the "Los Angeles Times Special" by correspondent Bert C. Smith and a chauffeur, John Zak.

In Kansas City, Judge Lowe joined them for the trip to Wheeling, West Virginia:

Public meetings were held all along the route, branches of the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association and National Old Trails Road Association were organized at many places, and much interest was aroused that will make sentiment for the early improvement of the Old National Road and the Santa Fe Trail. "This country ought to have an ocean-to-ocean road which is in condition at all seasons of the year," said Judge J. M. Lowe. "The route we propose is the only one which will make this possible."

He described the route, including the western end along the "old Sunset Trail" to Los Angeles, the route adopted by the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association.

During an address in Cambridge, Ohio, on July 6, 1912, Judge Lowe focused on the authority of the Federal Government to appropriate funds for national highways. As he would on many occasions, he went back to the Constitution, which delegated specific powers "to establish post-offices and post roads" to the Federal Government. While the modern Congress, he said, may have forgotten that the phrase "to establish" meant "to build," there was no doubt in the Congress in the days when it included men such as James Madison, one of the Founding Fathers. Judge Lowe cited the history of the National Road, initiated under a law signed by President Thomas Jefferson in 1806. Bills for its construction and maintenance were approved by later Presidents even though "this exercise of power was not without opposition." He explained:

So jealous were the people of what they considered the rights of the States, and so fearful were they of the encroachment of Congress, strange as it may seem, the great and logical expounder of the Constitution, the greatest stickler for strict construction then living, or who has since lived, John C. Calhoun, stood shoulder to shoulder with Henry Clay in defense of the exercise of this power.

To those who argued that the Federal Government does not have the authority to finance road building, he cited Federal land grants for railroads, and appropriated funds to improve rivers and harbors or build the Roosevelt Dam or the Panama Canal. Where, he asked, is the constitutional authority for those expenditures? "A spectacular performance was pulled off recently of sending the navy around the world, which formed no useful public purpose and cost \$14,000,000." This funding could have been used for the National Old Trails Road, which "experts" said would cost only \$12 million. He cited the appropriation of \$200 million a year for pensions, "and the only defense for this vast expenditure made by the politicians is that it puts the money back into circulation. So would the building of roads, and at the same time give employment to labor and add millions in value to the wealth of the country."

The cooperation of the two organizations was cited on June 5, when John Mitchell, President of the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association, delivered a speech in Library Park, California. He referred to the December 1911 Tri-State Road Convention held in Phoenix at the request of the Governors of Arizona, California, and New Mexico:

[W]e are going to work with the people east of the Colorado River, for while our organization, originally formed in December last, consisted only of California, Arizona, and New Mexico, our cause has so interested and pleased the people of the other States that we now have linked to our chain the States of Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. And if you doubt the earnestness and enthusiasm of the people of those States, you should read of the proceedings at the Kansas City convention wherein that proud old organization, the Santa Fe Old Trails Road Association generously changed its name as suggested by our delegate, Mr. Dell M. Potter, so that today that organization which is building and improving roads from St. Louis, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, is now known as the National Old Roads Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association.

American Road Congress, 1912

Judge Lowe and Mrs. Donald McLean, Honorary President-General of the D.A.R., were scheduled to address a road congress sponsored by the American Association for Highway Improvement in the Greek Temple on the Million Dollar Pier in Atlantic City, New Jersey (September 30-October 5, 1912). Logan Page had formed the association in 1910 as an umbrella organization for all elements of the Good Roads Movement to consider a broad range of issues, in contrast to the AAA and American Road Builders Association, which reflected their backing interests primarily by trying to influence legislation. In 1912, the association changed its name to the American Highway Association.

Although Judge Lowe was unable to attend, his speech was read to the delegates. He described the history of the links in the Old Trails Road and the trail association's motto: "The biggest thing ever conceived. The easiest thing to do." He added:

The Daughters of the American Revolution, inspired by the splendid labor and achievements of those early patriots, have led the way in this great work, and are cheering us on to a full fruition of our hopes and our labors. We shall not fail. I look with enraptured vision to the time, not distant, when this great highway, beginning at tidewater on the Atlantic, shall be rebuilt across the continent, to end only in the golden sands of the Pacific, lighted throughout by a streak of electricity, and dedicated once more to the descendants of the heroes and heroines who baptized it in the blood and tears of a nation's birth.

Mrs. McLean followed his presentation with a speech that *Good Roads* summarized in its issue of November 2, 1912:

[She] said she had always been interested in old trails and that although she was quite willing to leave the securing of the money for road improvement to men, she, and the organization which she represented, wanted the expenditure directed rightly. She told of the work done by the women of Missouri in marking old trails in that state and urged that in the construction of roads the consideration of sentiment and patriotism be not overlooked.

Colonel Potter was present for a session on "How to Encourage the 'See America First' Idea." The session began with a speech by Preston Belvin, president of the Virginia State Automobile Association, on the history of road building, historic roads, and scenic beauties of Virginia. North

Carolina's Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, president of the Southern Appalachian Good Roads Association, addressed the general topic of "See America First." He explained that the wonders of Europe could be reached by first-class highways, resulting in large amounts of American tourist dollars leaving American shores. If America built comparable highways, he said, those dollars would stay in America, and no area would benefit more than the Southern Appalachian region. He discussed the "Crest of the Blue Ridge Highway" that was being planned as a scenic road rather than a commercial road.

Potter spoke on the advantages of the transcontinental road being planned by the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association from New York to Los Angeles. It should, he felt, be built by the Federal Government, and it should be built first. Such roads were essential to the economy. He thought three transcontinental roads and three north-south roads were what was needed. He closed by saying that if America did not have good roads, American money would continue going to Europe, which would use the revenue to maintain its roads.

The session concluded with a presentation by Captain H. Z. Osborne, Secretary of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, who discussed Los Angeles County's efforts to improve its roads, and Frank D. Lyon, Secretary of the New York State Automobile Association, who described the State's color marking scheme for certain main roads. He also expressed support for the Federal-aid concept.

Buffalo Bill

William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody had been a member of the Advisory Committee to the Missouri Good Roads Committee, but in October 1912 he took another step in support of the cause. Miss Gentry announced that Buffalo Bill had

donated a stagecoach to the Old Trails Road Committee of the D.A.R. According to an account by Miss Gentry in the February 1913 issue of *Better Roads*, the gift came about by accident:



Stagecoach donated to Old Trails Road Committee of the D.A.R. by Buffalo Bill Cody

Col. Cody was visiting his old friend, Col. Daniel B. Dyer, whose southern mansion down on the Independence road is locally famous. Col. Dyer's niece, Miss Green, invited a number of guests to meet Col. Cody.

We sat on the wide gallery under the August moon and listened to Col. Cody tell thrilling tales of his life on the plains. Col. Cody is a raconteur of brilliant ability and we sat fascinated for hours. His last story was of the first exhibition of his Wild West Show in London, when the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward) and four European monarchs, then on a visit to the court of St. James, commanded a ride in the Deadwood Coach, with Col. Cody as the driver[. T]he Prince introduced "Buffalo Bill" to his guests, put them inside the coach and as he took his seat on the box remarked, "You probably have never held four kings before." Col. Cody with the same nonchalance that made him famous as Government scout, and pony express rider and plainsman, drawled back, "Better than that, I held four kings and the joker."

This repartee amused the prince and he thereupon booked passage for the next afternoon's performance, for the Princess of Wales and the royal children. "Buffalo Bill" became lionized; his Deadwood coach, and Wild West Show became the fashion; requests poured in from the English fashionables for rides round the show ring, with the Indian attack and company rescue and all the thrillers thrown in.

Col. Cody rested on his laurels and would not drive for any one under royalty. Passage was booked up for every night of the show's long run, but the regular stage-driver sat on the box.

Col. Cody finished his tale by inviting Miss Green and me to ride in the Deadwood Coach at the following afternoon performance. We laughingly accepted with the provision that he present the coach to the D.A.R. Old Trails Road Committee.

Col. Cody took the banter seriously and said he would present the committee with a Deadwood coach, but the Deadwood coach was promised to the Smithsonian Institute. Through the courtesy of the Burlington Railroad and the interest of its officers in the Oregon Trail, which is part of the Old Trails Road, the coach was transported from Cody,

Wyoming, to Kansas City, where it is on public exhibition at the Swope Park Zoo.

Cody wrote to Miss Gentry on October 26, 1912, to inform her of the history of the stage coach.

I think the one you have was built by the Abbott Downing Company at Concord, New Hampshire, in 1863, was shipped around the Horn to California and was used on the California stage lines; finally worked its way East on the Ben Holliday overland stage line to Old Fort Laramie; then used by Cheyenne and Deadwood Black Hills line.

He added, "It has been baptized in blood many times."

Miss Gentry concluded her account with a comment about the Old Trails Road:

Red, white, and blue bands on the telegraph poles mark the "D.A.R. road" across Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas. Soon, tourists will be able to "Follow the Flag" across the continent. A D.A.R. motor-party will rendezvous at Westport, Missouri, in 1915, and form a motor caravan to journey to the Panama-Pacific Exposition where they hope to dedicate the Old Trails Road as the National Highway.

Location of the National Old Trails Road Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, December 1912

On December 12, 1912, Judge Lowe addressed the Indiana State Better Roads Convention. By then, the National Old Trails Road Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association had settled, tentatively, on its route in the Southwest. The association, based in 222 Midland Building in Kansas City, published the speech as a brochure in support of the construction and maintenance of the highway by the Federal Government.

At the time, the National Old Trails Road included six historic trails. The first was Braddock's Road in Maryland. In 1755, during the French and Indian War, Major General Edward Braddock led British and Colonial troops, including Colonel George Washington, from Alexandria, Virginia, to take Fort Duquesne (at the future site of Pittsburgh) from the French. Leaving Alexandria, Braddock's army marched to Rock Creek in what is now Washington, D.C., then north on the established Georgetown-Frederick Road. Leaving Frederick, the army marched to Boonsboro. This portion of the route was incorporated into the National Old Trails Road Ocean-to-Ocean Highway. West of Boonsboro, however, Braddock's

march dipped to the south, going through what was then Virginia before turning north to Cumberland, Maryland. From Cumberland, Braddock and his troops partly followed a path that had been blazed in 1751 by Colonel Thomas Cresap and Christopher Gist, with the help of a Delaware Indian named Nemacolin, on behalf of the Ohio Company. Washington had widened the path to 6 feet in 1754 on a campaign that ended in defeat at his makeshift Fort Necessity, about 15 miles north of the Pennsylvania line. Braddock, Washington, and their troops widened the path partway to Fort Duquesne. Before reaching their goal, however, they were defeated in a surprise attack and Braddock killed. The National Old Trails Road Ocean-to-Ocean Highway roughly followed Washington's and Braddock's route west of Cumberland.

From Cumberland to St. Louis, the National Old Trails Road Ocean-to-Ocean Highway followed the Cumberland Road (also called the National Road), the country's first great national road. After the Revolutionary War, Washington saw the need for such a road to link the States along the East Coast and the territories west of the Allegheny Mountains. He feared that without better transportation, the western territories would be drawn to the English in the north or Spanish interests in the south. President Thomas Jefferson signed the legislation authorizing the National Road on March 29, 1806, to serve as a portage linking the Potomac and Ohio Rivers. It went from Cumberland, Maryland (the head of navigation on the Potomac River in those days) to the Ohio River at Wheeling. The National Road to Wheeling, built of crushed stone and completed in 1818, soon became the route of commerce that helped bind the union of settled East Coast communities and the pioneer communities in the territories.

In 1820, funds were approved to extend the road to a point on the Mississippi River between St. Louis and the mouth of the Illinois River. The western terminus was changed to Jefferson City, Missouri, in 1825. By 1833, the National Road was completed as far as Columbus, Ohio, and it would reach Springfield, Ohio, but beyond that point, the road was simply laid out to Vandalia (then the capital of Illinois). A dispute over location west of Vandalia was not resolved before the coming of the railroad rendered the road obsolete. The Federal Government began turning the National Road over to the States. West of the Ohio River, the States operated the old road as a turnpike, known as the National Pike.

The third historic segment was Boon's Lick Road in Missouri. In 1806, two of Daniel Boone's sons, Nathaniel and Daniel, traveled from St. Louis to salt springs on the Missouri River, a distance of about 135 miles. They established a successful business transporting salt to St. Louis. The road they traveled on, extended to what is now known as Old Franklin, was called Boon's Lick Trail (without the "e"). Although it was more a trace than a highway, it proved to be the trail of migration across the State.

The Santa Fe Trail from Missouri to Santa Fe was the fourth historic segment. The Santa Fe Trail was established in 1821, when Mexico gained its independence from Spain. Until then, Spain had banned foreign trade. In September, William Becknell left Old Franklin for Santa Fe with a pack train of trade goods. His trip to Santa Fe was so successful, that it inspired hundreds of other traders to follow his path. He also established the Cimarron Cut-Off.

The brochure listed the fifth historic segment, Doniphan's Road from Santa Fe to Rincon, New Mexico, as a "Tentative" location. During the Mexican War in 1848, Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan led an army of Missouri Mounted Volunteers south along *El Camino Real* to Chihuahua, where he defeated his Mexican opponents. *El Camino Real* was part of a network of roads built by the Spanish to connect Mexico City with Spanish territory in what became the United States. The branch from Mexico City to Santa Fe (founded 1609) developed during the 16th Century. It was the first of the three branches, the other two ending in St. Augustine, Florida, and Sonoma, California. The central branch, roughly followed today by U.S. 25/1-25, is sometimes called "the oldest road in America."

Kearny's Road to California (also listed as "Tentative"): The map in this brochure showed Kearny's supposed route following *El Camino Real* to El Paso, Texas, before turning west. As noted earlier, Kearny turned west with Lt. Kit Carson at Socorro.

Judge Lowe, in his speech, explained:

Other roads ought to be built. All National highways, by the General Government, but we have selected, and are concentrating our efforts on this as being entitled to first consideration.

The brochure also reprinted Judge Lowe's letter to Chairman Bourne of the Joint Congressional Committee on Federal Aid in the Construction of Post Roads. Judge Lowe's view of Federal-aid was clear:

There is much confusion of thought on the road question. So-called "Federal Aid"-a misleading phrase-is responsible for much of this confusion. It ought to find no place in road literature. The States need no "Aid" from the General Government or from any other source in building their own highways. No such phrase occurs in the Act establishing the National or Cumberland Road. No such expression anywhere occurs in the history of that highway. The Government did not "Aid" the States through which it ran and neither did the States "Aid" the Government. It was declared

to be a National Highway and was built and maintained by the Government exclusively. It was as much under the supervision and control of the Government as if it had been a navigable river

Let Congress exercise its undoubted authority, either directly, or through a Commission or Bureau of Highways, to decide what roads are National, and take over such roads for improvement and maintenance by the Government.

He thought Congress should decide which national roads would be built first; any of those under consideration would cost about \$20 million. The States and counties could then build a system of lateral or local roads intersecting the national roads:

This system if adopted, will not require the levying of a single dollar of additional National taxation, will build at least one transcontinental highway annually, will add millions of dollars to property values, and thus increase enormously the Federal revenues, and add to the sum of human welfare and well being beyond any other single activity of government endeavor.

No purpose to which the revenues can be applied will accomplish so much-will do so much good to so many people-will in a few years' time, place this country, in material prosperity, far above any country in the old world. And when this is done we will only marvel at our long delay, and wonder why we postponed the accomplishment of the greatest purpose ever conceived when it was the easiest and most obvious thing to do.

Southwest Rival

While the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association promoted its route as the Southwest link in the expected national transcontinental highway, residents along a rival for the southwest connection began to promote their own claim.

The route was to the north along the tracks of the Santa Fe Railroad from Kingman, Arizona, via Needles, Barstow, and Victorville, California, to Los Angeles. An article in *The Needles Eye* of June 22, 1912, reported improvements along the route in California. From Needles to Barstow, the road was partially macadamized. Signs along the route helped motorists find the road. A new road had been built from Barstow to Victorville. A skilled motorist with "a good machine," the article explained, will have little

trouble on the road, but a motorist who is familiar only with hard roads "must not be disappointed if he is compelled to ask the assistance of the faithful horse to extricate him from some of the deep sand beds or pull him up some of the steep grades."

In November, O. K. Parker of the Automobile Club of Southern California was traveling the area in a Franklin car mapping the roads for auto guides and placing signs along the best route. *The Needles Eye* reported in its November 22 issue that he had been in the city "visiting with auto enthusiasts." The newspaper reported that, "Mr. Parker states that the roads from San Bernardino here are far better than those by way of the southern route which has been used in the recent road races and which is getting prominence now because of its probable selection as the location of the Ocean-to-Ocean highway."

The article explained that for practical reasons, improving the roads was important for the future of the area:

The Ocean-to-Ocean highway means plenty of people passing through the country and with increasing numbers each year. Beside the addition they will give to local business directly, there will be the constant advertising of the country.

The issue of November 30, 1912, reported on a meeting of the Mohave County Good Road Boosters in Needles to promote a route from Los Angeles via Barstow, Needles, Kingman, Seligman, Ash Fork, Williams, Flagstaff, Winslow, Holbrook, Springerville, and St. Johns, with connections to Prescott, Phoenix, Bisbee and other points "whereby the great auto traffic of the near future as well as the annual road races will pass through these various places." The boosters were convinced of the merit of their route:

It is generally conceded that this Northern route has many advantages over the southern roads and accommodations and is through a country of great scenic beauty. The scenery in the Arizona mountains cannot be excelled anywhere and the Grand Canyon stands alone as the most gigantic work of nature.

The accommodations were the restaurants, hotels, and lunchrooms operated by the Fred Harvey Company since 1870 along the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway (Santa Fe Railroad) throughout the southwest, and some other States, including Kansas.

Participants discussed improvements underway and planned, while deciding on a course of action:

Correspondence will be entered into at once with the other organizations and prospective organizations. Activity will be urged all along the line. It is probable that at least seven or eight machines from Needles accompanied with two or three from Kingman and some from perhaps further east will move in solid formation west from Needles to San Bernardino and obtain the co-operation of every person they will meet. At the same time autos from Kingman, augmented with several from here, will travel east through Arizona enthusing the people of that state.

The boosters agreed with other boosters around the country that the goal was to have the road in shape by 1915 in time to carry traffic bound for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the companion Panama-California Exposition in San Diego:

It is estimated that there will be fifty thousand cars drive across the country in 1915. Some have estimated double this amount. If the best road is along the Santa Fe they will all come this way.

Needles, the article concluded, would become the gateway to southern California. "BOOST NOW AND KEEP ON BOOSTING, else join the discard."

By early December, the newspaper could report that the route from Needles to Los Angeles would be included in the road maps of the Automobile Club of Southern California and the Arizona Good Roads Association.

On December 13, 1912, the Needles Good Roads Association met with O. K. Parker, who had reached the city in his Franklin with his wife. They agreed to call the northern road the Santa Fe-Grand Canyon-Needles route. As explained in the *Eye* the next day:

The Grand Canyon attracts the traveler because of its widely known grandeur. Santa Fe designates the many accommodations to be had along the line as well as commemorates the old Santa Fe trail, while Needles means the gateway both east and west for this great highway over which the motorist will travel in increasing numbers as the years pass.

The newspaper reprinted an article from *Our Mineral Wealth of Kingman* that claimed, "The southern route booster is working entirely on long stretches of sand and hot air for his favored route for the National Highway." The article warned readers:

They are as numerous as the leaves of a forest down there and they may pull the winding way through their jungles unless the northern few [who] backed the only practical route get into the fight in earnest and show these Wise Men of the East.

The cause was boosted a few days later when Parker happened to be in Kingman the same day as O. D. Hamilton and Barry Locke, his counterparts from the Arizona Good Roads Association. Parker was traveling east promoting a Los Angeles-Phoenix road race through Needles, while Hamilton and Locke were headed west to continue mapping the route. The December 21 edition of *The Needles Eye* described the meeting:

The two charting parties were entertained at Kingman and a very enthusiastic meeting held and everything of the plans talked [about] here again gone over there and Needles greatly appreciates that it has the active co-operation of the people of Mohave County As our people already know that Mr. Parker is mapping the road for publication in the road book of California so are Messrs. Locke & Hamilton mapping the road from the Colorado River to Los Angeles for the purpose of publication in the new road book of Arizona soon to be published by the Arizona Good Roads Association.

That same month, December 1912, *Touring Topics* carried an article headlined, "Still Another Nation-Wide Highway."

The good roads enthusiasts of northern Arizona and of San Bernardino County, in California, are agitating for the improvement of the old but little traveled transcontinental route which connects with the Santa Fe trail at Santa Fe, New Mexico, and extends westerly by way of Albuquerque, Nation's Ranch, the Zuni Indian Cliffs, the Petrified Forest, Canyon Diablo, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, Ask [sic] Forks, Kingman, Needles, Daggett, San Bernardino and thence over the Foothill Boulevard to Los Angeles.

The counties through which the road passed were cooperating to finance its improvement. San Bernardino County had pledged to pay whatever

sum was needed to improve the road from San Bernardino to Needles. Mojave and Yavapai Counties in Arizona had guaranteed to raise \$200,000 for the road from Needles through Kingman, Gold Roads, Seligman, Ash Forks to Williams. Cococino County "will aid" in improving the road past Flagstaff. "Easterly from Santa Fe, New Mexico," the article explained, "this highway will connect with the old Santa Fe trail which winds over the Raton Pass to Denver and easterly to Kansas City and Chicago."

The route was "already negotiable and in general does not present the difficulties of the more southerly routes." The article suggested that when the route is improved, it will "undoubtedly become one of the most popular of the nationwide highways." The towns along the route were "exerting themselves to secure its early construction." It added:

The earnestness with which they have addressed themselves to the problem is shown in the pledge of Needles and neighboring cities on the route to raise a purse of \$8,000 to induce the next Los Angeles-Phoenix race to use this course, and as an earnest of its good intention it has already raised \$1,000 of this amount.

On January 28, 1913, supporters gathered in Kingman for a convention to boost the route. On the 29th, they drove to San Bernardino where they finished organizing the Santa Fe-Needles-Grand Canyon National Highway Association "to encourage and foster the construction of a national highway from San Bernardino via Barstow and Needles, along the Santa Fe trail, through Arizona and New Mexico, to connect the Pacific with the Atlantic." They agreed on an emblem designed by George D. Hutchison, a Barstow businessman. The emblem consisted of a blue Greek cross within a red circle on a white background. The name of the highway appeared on the red circle. Buttons with the emblem were to be sold for \$1 each to support the association's work. By April 11, 1913, the *Eye* reported that 60 buttons had been sold in the Barstow district, and a second batch had been made, for a total of 100.

Engineer Parker addressed the convention. *Touring Topics* (February 1913) described his talk:

Mr. Parker exhibited more than fifty colored lantern slides showing scenes along this highway that were of unusual beauty. In addition to the views a detailed map of the route was displayed and in connection with it Mr. Parker described the road building methods that could be more advantageously used. A telling point in this lecture was Mr. Parker's statement that, in addition to the scenic and

topographical advantages of this route, it was further favored by the unlimited amount of natural good road material that exists throughout Arizona and assures the construction of a high-class road at a moderate cost.

The association planned its promotional activities, which included sending delegates to the automobile manufacturers convention at Indianapolis in February. Having heard of a plan for a \$10 million transcontinental highway (the Lincoln Highway, as will be discussed later) to be built by the manufacturers, the association designated delegates to attend in an attempt to get a share of the money for their route. They also would attend the Second Federal Aid Good Roads Convention sponsored by AAA at the Raleigh Hotel in Washington, D.C. on March 6 and 7, 1913.

Misconception, 1913

The January 1913 issue of *Better Roads* printed a resolution passed by the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association, with Judge Lowe in attendance, during its annual convention in Santa Fe:

To the end that no misconception shall exist anywhere as to the absolute affiliation, cooperation, and mutual good will of these associations, the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association will cordially lend any proper aid to the organizing force of the National Old Trails Association in securing memberships in the States of California, Arizona, and New Mexico, and the National Old Trails Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association by its president renews and reiterates the declaration of good will and cooperation stated in its constitution and reiterates its purpose to faithfully and earnestly cooperate with the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association, and will lend any proper aid to the organizing force of the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association in securing members in the territory of the National Old Trails Ocean-to-Ocean Association in consummating the great purpose of the two associations.

The magazine did not explain what misconception prompted the resolution, but it apparently related to the western end of the National Old Trails Ocean-to-Ocean Road. Judge Lowe's activities appeared to favor the route supported by the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association, but the map of the National Old Trails Ocean-to-Ocean Road listed the extension as tentative.

The National Highways Association

Judge Lowe was an early supporter of the National Highways Association. Charles Henry Davis conceived the association to persuade the Federal Government to build a 50,000-mile network of national highways. Davis was a wealthy road contractor who disposed of his business to divorce his new association from any hint of commercialism. "The National Highways Association," according to its publicity director, "believes that, when established, these national highways will increase the wealth, the power, and the importance of this country as nothing else can do besides that which has brought civilization to the savage, wealth to the poor, and happiness to all--GOOD ROADS" (*Better Roads*, October 1911). Its initial motto was "The Biggest Thing Ever Conceived, The Easiest Thing To Do."

Judge Lowe fully supported the goal of national highways, so his involvement was natural. The National Highways Association was incorporated in the District of Columbia in early 1912, with Judge Lowe as a Vice-President. General Coleman Du Pont, the wealthy good roads advocate who built the Dupont Highway in Delaware, was the Chairman of the Board of National Councillors. A. L. Westgard became a Vice-President and Director of Transcontinental Highways in 1913. Many named trail associations were affiliated with the National Highways Association, which called them "departments" or "agencies." For example, Judge Lowe was not only President of the National Old Trails Road Association, but President of the National Old Trails Road Department of the National Highways Association.

To read about the National Highways Association, see:
www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/davis.htm

On Capitol Hill

In national elections held in November 1912, the American people chose a new President, Governor Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey. In anticipation of the 64th Congress that would convene in 1913, Representative introduced H.R. 28188, the latest version of his National Old Trails Road bill, on January 17, 1913. It authorized \$20 million for construction of "The National Old Trails Road," which the bill described by identifying the cities it would pass through, including its route through the Southwest: "via La Junta and Trinidad in Colorado; via Santa Fe, Socorro, and Las Cruces in New Mexico; via Douglas, Phoenix and Yuma in Arizona; via El Centro, San Diego, and Los Angeles in California." As with all similar bills, H.R. 28188 was referred to committee.

Judge Lowe was in Washington on February 11 to testify before the Joint Committee on Federal Aid in Construction of Post Roads. His testimony

began at 8 pm with Representative Dorsey W. Shackleford, the acting chairman, and Representatives Martin B. Madden and Richard W. Austin in attendance.



Congressman Dorsey W. Shackleford

Shackleford, who was from Sweet Springs, Missouri, had introduced a bill in 1912 that would have authorized \$25 million a year out of the Federal surplus to improve rural free delivery routes based on the quality of the road. Under Representative Shackleford's bill, all roads over which the mails were carried would be classified as A, B, or C roads. The Federal Government would "rent" the use of these roads from the States for mail by paying \$25 per mile for Class A roads (macadam), \$20 for Class B roads (gravel), and \$15 for Class C roads (dirt). While leaving the roads

under State control, Shackleford believed the proposal would provide a stimulus to road improvement and benefit farmers throughout the country. He also believed that by reducing the cost of delivering the mail, the bill would save money for the Federal Government, which was losing \$28 million a year on rural free delivery.

Although the bill had passed the House, 240 to 86, on May 2, 1912, it failed in the Senate on August 13. Opposition from the automobile interests, particularly AAA, was a factor in the Senate defeat of Shackleford's farm-oriented rental plan in the Senate. However, the Administration--that is, Director Logan Page of the Office of Public Roads--also opposed the plan, on the grounds that the allowance per mile would not result in any significant amount of good roads.

In testimony on February 11, 1913, Judge Lowe began by describing the National Old Trails Road Association, and its work in promoting the building or rebuilding and maintenance of a 3,180-mile national road from Washington to California over historic trails, including the El Camino Real of New Mexico and the trails over which Doniphan and Kearney marched. He told the committee that he was not an expert road builder, but based on the cost of macadam roads in Jackson County, he estimated a 16-foot wide macadam road would cost \$6,000 per mile or \$18.6 million. Approximately 25 million people lived within a day's automobile drive of the route.

The Federal Government, he said, should build the road and maintain it. Asked if he was contemplating any other such roads, he said he was not:

I know that what is called the northern route-from New York, by way of Buffalo, Cleveland, Toledo, Chicago, Des Moines, Omaha, Denver, Salt Lake, and San Francisco-is strongly advocated by John Brisbane Walker and others, and it would be a magnificent and important national road.

He added that the route would be "out of commission on account of the weather" during much of the winter, while his central route "would be good at least 10 months out of the year, if not the entire year."

When Representative Austin pointed out that the central route went through 11 States, and would not help the other States, Judge Lowe agreed that the other States should have national roads as well:

I will say, by way of emphasis, that as president of the National Old Trails Association, we stand first for that, because that was the purpose and object of our creation, yet, if there is another road equally national in character, of equal importance commercially, or equal historic interest, and of every other kind of interest that might enter into the question, that ought to have precedence, then we will gladly give way and throw our entire organization behind that kind of a movement.

Representative Madden asked Judge Lowe for his views on the idea that the States should cooperate with the Federal Government in the construction of roads. Judge Lowe explained that he initially favored should a plan:

I believed that there ought to be close cooperation between the States and the National Government, and the National Government, perhaps, would hardly be justified in aiding any State unless the State showed a willingness to do something itself, but I have abandoned that idea entirely.

He did not like the concepts of "aid" or "cooperation," he said:

If all the States would "cooperate," and all the counties through which a road ran would "cooperate," and do it loyally and honestly, it might work; but when you divide responsibility and authority, and one would wait on the other, I question whether you would ever get a system of good roads I started out with the idea that they ought to be made to "cooperate," and the more I have thought of that the more I have thought it would lessen the prospect of going

ahead-that it would retard road building rather than encourage.

He favored a national system of roads built by the Federal Government "and let the States build theirs." The Federal Government should appropriate \$20 to \$25 million a year and build a transcontinental road each year. He also rejected the notion that the States could be counted on to maintain the road if the Federal Government built it:

I think the whole question of maintenance was pretty well illustrated in the history of the old Cumberland Road. [Henry] Clay pronounced that as the greatest roadway in the world after it was finished, and he had seen the best roads. There may have been some burst or oratory in his statement, but . . . there was a magnificent highway built by the Government and maintained by it for more than a quarter century, and they turned it back to the States and it immediately went into decay and ruin.

Asked to comment on Representative Shackleford's bill, Judge Lowe remarked that the main thing he liked about the bill was that it acknowledged the Federal Government's authority to apply its funds to the building of roads. As for the funding provision in the bill, he said, "I am afraid the appropriation will be used, as public funds so often are, by scattering them out among the congressional districts and among the States and counties and be frittered away and no roads, practically, will be built."

In closing his testimony, Judge Lowe said:

I have one other matter I want to explain, and I want to say this with all the emphasis that it is necessary it should be said, and that is this: That our organization is not affiliated with nor interested in any organization of manufacturers of automobiles, or any other line of industry. We have not at any time been influenced by any position they may have taken, or anything of that character. We are as independent of any influence of that character as it is possible to be.

The contrast was with the Lincoln Highway Association.

The AAA Federal Aid Good Roads Convention

On March 6 and 7, Judge Lowe was in Washington for the AAA Federal Aid Good Roads Convention at the Raleigh Hotel, where he restated his views on the Federal role in road building. Representative Shackleford

had addressed the convention the day before. In this setting, Judge Lowe felt freer to criticize the Shackleford bill than he had during his testimony:

I have been a farmer all my life. I only differ with Judge Shackleford in this, that he farms the farmer, and I run the farm. (Laughter.) You have always got to take in a man's environment. Mr. Shackleford's district is sort of a shoestring there. I wish I could point it out to you on the map, and I wish I had time to tell you about the people there. They are good people, splendid people, but I can say about a good many of them that when they move, and they move frequently, that a good many in the lower end of his district when they move simply have to call the dogs and put out the fire (Laughter.)

He referred to a farming community in the Congressman's district that had voted unanimously in favor of a bond for road construction:

Mr. Shackleford speaks of the people that are in favor of such a proposition as "high-brows." I do not care anything about how high their brows are, but I see that some of them are educated up to the point where they believe in building roads

Judge Lowe discussed the Old Trails Road, which he was certain could be finished in time for the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915, but focused on the importance of national roads:

Let the authority over the National roads remain where of right it belongs, in the National Government, under the supervision and control of National authority. (Applause.) And let the States and counties manage their own affairs in their own way.

Now, let us get behind a single project. If it be not my project let it be yours, and if we decide on taking up some other proposition other than mine, I will back it with all the power I have. But let us get behind something definite, and stand for it, not only in this Convention, but when this convention adjourns and we go home let us stand for it; and talk for it; and if we do that before the Ides of next November you will see the Congress of the United States obeying our will and giving us the project we have been hoping for during all these long years. We will then come in and carry out a project that will do more for the up-building of the country; do more for the progressive ideas of the country; do more for the school system of the country; do more for the churches

of the country; more for the patriotism and manhood and womanhood of the country than any project ever conceived in the mind of man. (Applause.)

Second National Convention, 1913

By the time the National Old Trails Road Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association held its second annual convention on April 29 and 30, 1913, the Santa Fe-Grand Canyon-Needles National Highway Association was ready .

E. J. Kirker, representing the Old Trails Road, had visited Needles a few days earlier to perfect a branch organization. Kirker informed boosters that the decision on routing through the Southwest would be made at the annual meeting-and it would be a hard fight. As the *Eye* had explained in its April 26 edition, the "so-called Ocean-to-Ocean Highway via Yuma" had an advantage in population. Although the Needles boosters felt they had the advantage of climate, proximity to railroad, and accommodations, "the greatest advantage we have is that most of our road is built."

The 1913 convention was held in the Midland Building, the Old Trails headquarters in Kansas City. Estimates of delegates ranged from 250 to 400. However, even before the meeting began, G. D. Hutchison, representing the Grand Canyon route, was ready for what he called the hardest fight of his life. In the edition of May 9, 1913, the *Eye* explained that publicity had been his focus:

He saw the newspaper men first, told them his delegation was there to get the road, and nothing contributed to his success so much as that first impression on the newspaper men. He went immediately to the Star's art department and had a map made showing THE route to California. Barstow was marked by a flag, being the most important point on the road, of course. When the convention met, the principal thing in sight of the delegates was that map.

The debate on routing took place during the afternoon of April 29. An amendment was offered to amend the association's constitution to adopt the Grand Canyon Route between Santa Fe and the Pacific Coast as the official route of the National Old Trails Road. Either during this session or that evening, O. K. Parker spoke in support of the change:

The Santa Fe, Grand Canyon and Needles National Highway follows closely the route of the Santa Fe railway from Los Angeles to Santa Fe, the route being approximately that of the Kearney trail. It will form the western link of the

Old Trails National Highway. There is a good road most of the way and by the middle of the summer it will be posted with signs. The posting of the Santa Fe trail will have been completed by that time, so there will be a well marked highway from Kansas City to the coast.

Aside from Hutchison's publicity efforts, another factor in the decision was creation of a new rival, the Southern National Highway. It had been established during a meeting in Asheville, North Carolina, on February 12-13, 1913. Governor Locke Craig of North Carolina had called the convention with the principal object of choosing a route from Washington, D.C., to connect with the El Paso-San Diego road. Dell Potter, who had played a key role during the first Old Trails Road convention in support of the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, was elected president of the Southern National Highway Association.

With the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway now part of a rival transcontinental highway, delegates to the Old Trails convention adopted the Grand Canyon Route as the Pacific Coast link. It was not a certain thing, though, as the *Eye* explained:

As soon as the motion was carried to make this the main road, some of our delegates rushed out to wire the good news home-before the chairman had declared the motion carried. The borderland delegates took this opportunity to continue the debate, but our warhorse [Hutchison] kept them at bay until the other delegates returned to cinch the road.

The constitution was amended to adopt the official route west of Santa Fe:

through Albuquerque and Gallup, New Mexico; Holbrook, Winslow, Flagstaff, Williams, Ashfork, Seligman, Kingman, Yucca, and Topeka [Topock], Arizona; Needles, Coffs [Goffs], Bacdad [Bagdad], Barstow, San Bernardino, Upland, San Gabriel to Los Angeles, and from Barstow through Bakersfield, Corcoran, Fresno, Merced, Stockton to San Francisco, California.



**US Map showing location
of Old Trails Road**

Recognizing that the adopted route, especially across western New Mexico, was not ready for automobile traffic, the association approved a detour through Socorro and Magdalena, New Mexico, and Springerville and St. Johns, Arizona.

The association also dropped "Ocean-to-Ocean" from its name. Hereafter, it was known simply as the National Old Trails Road

Association. The new slate of vice presidents and state organizers reflected the change as well. California would now be represented by Hutchison (vice president) and Ralph E. Swing (organizer) of San Bernardino. John R. Whiteside (vice president) of Kingman and Father Cypriano Rian Vabre of Flagstaff represented Arizona. The representatives from New Mexico were Harvey M. Shields (vice president) of Dawson and C. C. Manning of Gallup.

Although the routing decision had been the most important action of the convention, the delegates had much else to occupy them. During the first day, several addresses were presented, including one by Professor Williams. That evening, Miss Gentry presented an illustrated address on the "Old Trails Road." She was followed by Stanton Warburton, who had represented the State of Washington for one term in the U.S. House of Representatives (March 4, 1911 through March 3, 1913). During that term, he had introduced a bill calling for Federal construction of trunk highways linking Washington to the State capitals. He told the delegates:

The government soon or late must build and maintain national roads. Any other system of extensive road building only opens a door to graft and makes impossible a national system of highways. The Shackleford Bill is a pork barrel scheme providing for state aid in small amounts I claim above all else for my plan that it treats every State alike, large or small, rich or poor, and, furthermore, that my system will serve the greatest number of people. My plan provides for eighteen thousand miles of highways, and, on or within ten miles of these highways, live two-thirds of the inhabitants of the United States.

I would have the government build the best road that can be built and by that I do not mean a macadamized road, for that is not the best I will insist upon eighteen thousand miles of pavement in my system, pavement equal to the best in the streets of your city. My roads will cost from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a mile and it means a total cost of about 300 million

dollars. The figure at first staggers congressmen to whom I have outlined my project. They ask breathlessly, "How will you raise the money?"

I propose to obtain the money by increasing the tobacco tax, the least taxed luxury in America. By increasing the tobacco tax to where it was in 1879 the government will acquire 70 million dollars a year, which will build my system and pay for it in five years.

During a similar speech to the AAA Federal Aid Good Roads Convention, Warburton had been asked what type of pavement he preferred. He responded, "Brick or cement, whatever is the best, I don't care what it costs--\$15,000 or \$20,000 a mile-because in the long run the best is the most economical thing to do." He also explained that the tax on tobacco had been lowered because Congress had been concerned about the growing surplus in the treasury. At that point in his speech, Judge Lowe asked how the war with Spain had been financed in 1898. He knew the answer, but Warburton replied, "We fought the war with Spain by doubling the internal revenue tax on smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco and snuff." After the war, the tax had been reduced to the 1879 level.

According to an account of the Old Trails convention in the June 1913 issue of *Southern Good Roads*, Warburton's "address probably attracted more attention and provoked more discussion than any other feature of the convention." His ideas were reinforced by Charles Henry Davis, who addressed the delegates regarding his bill to establish a National Highways Commission that would determine which roads should be built. He had nothing but contempt for "Federal-aid," as he explained:

"What's in a name?" has been asked. Everything or almost everything! "Give a dog a bad name and it sticks to him." It is the same with roads. They are now laboring under that infernally confusing, false, and misleading epithet, "Federal Aid." Responsible for delay in Congressional action! Responsible for the continuation of the activities of those more interested in their individual advancement than in the attainment of good roads! ...It can be made to mean anything which suits the selfish desires of the user! Indefinite! Alluring! Uncertain! Vicious! It does not spell GOOD ROADS!

If Federal-aid became a law, he said, people would awaken one day "to the fatal error and their ignorance in permitting such extravagance, incompetence, and graft as the result thereof." He favorably quoted Judge Lowe:

And, as your President has said, "By the Eternal" we will provide so-called statesmen responsible therefore "with a long and much needed vacation."

During the afternoon of April 30, the delegates were given an automobile tour of the city's boulevard, courtesy of the Kansas City Automobile Dealers' Association and the Kansas City Automobile Club. In the closing session later that day, the delegates unanimously re-elected Judge Lowe as President and association secretary Frank Davis of Herrington, Kansas. Miss Gentry was named Honorary Vice-President, while Professor Williams remained Advisory Vice-President.

The delegates adopted 15 resolutions, constituting according to *Better Roads* magazine, the "strongest road platform ever made." Resolution No. 1 stated:

That it is with the deepest respect we express our profoundest appreciation of the devoted, unselfish and patriotic service to the cause of the National Old Trails Road, and to this organization [by] that splendid and powerful association, the Daughters of the American Revolution, whose untiring zeal and consecrated devotion has done more than all others in preserving to future generations the memorable roads and landmarks in the pioneer history of this country, and that we will hold in everlasting remembrance their invaluable service to the great purpose we have so much at heart.

Resolution No. 2 sent greetings to residents of Ohio who had been devastated by floods, but whose legislature had voted a one-half mill tax to restore roads, including the old National Road. Similarly, Resolution No. 3 encouraged residents of Missouri to support a constitutional amendment that would authorize a one mill level for roads.

The Lincoln Highway

Resolution No. 4 stated:

That we recognize with sincere appreciation the great business movement of a great and rapidly expanding industry, in process of promotion by Carl G. Fisher, of Indianapolis, whereby the money is being rapidly raised with which to construct at least one transcontinental road of the highest type known to modern engineering ability. Not an exclusive "Automobile Road," but a great national free thoroughfare, for the accommodation of all sorts of

transportation. We commend the enterprise, and endorse with heartiest approval, this effort as being the greatest business and philanthropic scheme ever conceived by the mind of men; and when consummated it should, and we have no doubt will be taken over by the Government and maintained as a National Highway for all time to come.

In 1912, automobile entrepreneur Carl G. Fisher of Indianapolis had conceived the idea of enlisting his friends in the automobile industry to build what he initially called a coast-to-coast rock highway from New York City to San Francisco. He estimated it would cost \$10 million, but could be completed in time for the 1915 exposition in San Francisco. In September 1912, Fisher met with other automobile industry leaders to ask them to pay for the proposed road. "Let's build it," he told the group, "before we're too old to enjoy it!" Publicity about this idea, renamed the Lincoln Highway, had prompted the Santa Fe-Grand Canyon-Needles National Highway Association to think about sending a delegation to Indianapolis to try to secure some of the funds.

The Lincoln Highway Association was incorporated in Detroit in July 1, 1913, on the same day Fisher led a caravan of vehicles out of Indianapolis on a pathfinding tour to the West Coast. On September 14, 1913, the Lincoln Highway Association announced its route, which followed a more direct route to San Francisco than would have been possible if an alignment had been chosen through the Southwest.

The Lincoln Highway Association soon realized that Fisher's cost estimate was too low. Moreover, expecting private businesses, even automobile companies, to build the road was unrealistic. The road would have to be built by State and local governments (with Federal-aid after 1916). Private contributions were practical only in a few unusual cases. Nevertheless, the Lincoln Highway Association was the most powerful of the named trail associations, and the Lincoln Highway was the most famous American road of its day. For more information, see: www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/lincoln.htm

Additional Resolutions

Resolution No. 5 adopted the view Judge Lowe had expressed during his testimony before the Joint Committee. The delegates called on Congress to finance construction and maintenance of the National Old Trails Road, but "stand equally and earnestly" in favor of a general system of National highways to be built and maintained by a national authority. To this end, Resolution No. 6 explained that Federal-aid was "obnoxious in principle and vicious in application." It would revive the "'pork barrel' system of

legislation, and tends to corrupt Congress and the whole body politic as well."

The delegates, in Resolution No. 7, endorsed the idea that any permanently improved road taken over as a national highway "should be valued and paid for by the government." Resolution No. 8 cited the experience with the Cumberland Road as evidence that furnishing "aid" to States or local bodies in expectation that they would reciprocate or cooperate would be a "waste of money."

Resolution No. 9 pledged "our heartiest cooperation and affiliation with all organized efforts to aid and assist" in improving the common roads of the country. The universal effort to improve roads was "the most far reaching in its influence, the greatest factor in material development and in moral and educational advancement the world has ever known." In this regard, the delegates adopted Resolution No. 10, which heartily endorsed "the wisdom of the Act of Congress creating the office of Public Roads in the Agriculture Department." The Office, according to the resolution, had conducted itself in a "very able and efficient manner."

Although the delegates favored Federal road construction, they adopted Resolution No. 11 in favor of State and local activities in building State and local highways, "which should be so systematized as to connect with and supplement a system of national highways." They also endorsed Charles Henry Davis' bill for establishing a National Highways Commission, stating that it "should have full charge and authority" over construction of national highways.

The delegates endorsed a bill introduced by Representative R. L. Henry of Texas to establish a Committee of Roads (Resolution No. 13)

Judge Lowe introduced Resolution No. 14 expressing the support of the delegates for restoring the tobacco tax to 1879 levels to pay for the building and maintenance of national highways. When the resolution was introduced, Representative Shackleford spoke up. He did not object to the tax portion of the resolution. "I move to amend this by saying it shall be set apart as a sacred fund to be used in the construction and maintenance of such roads as Congress shall determine to give aid to by Congressional legislation." The Committee on Resolutions rejected the Congressman's change. The committee then voted to adopt Judge Lowe's resolution.

Resolution No. 15 recommended that the equipment used to build the Panama Canal "should be brought home to help in construction of national highways."

Confirming the Route Change

The *Eye*, in its edition of May 30, 1913, informed readers that Judge Lowe had confirmed the change in the western end of the National Old Trails Road:

A circular issued by President J. M. Lowe, of the Old Trails National Road, for the purpose of setting at rest all question of the route chosen by the members of that association in convention at Kansas City May 1, speaks of the right of the delegates to choose the Santa Fe-Grand Canyon-Needles National Highway as the route to the coast, and concludes as follows:

They (the western delegates) were a live, wide-awake bunch, absolutely frank and fair in their demeanor, and won their contention in fair and open contest. They are entitled to the highest respect for the manly manner in which they presented their claims, and from information received since the convention adjourned, we are much inclined to the opinion that no mistake was made in thus definitely locating the western end of this road.

It is settled, definitely and for all time, and it but remains that we shall now unite and stand as one man in favor of the entire integrity of the road as adopted at this convention.

While reporting this good news, the *Eye* summarized a story that had appeared in *The Los Angeles Examiner* on May 29 about hardship and danger on the Borderland/Ocean-to-Ocean route:

H. W. Hall and bride, of Long Beach, on their honeymoon, accompanied by his parents and sister, in two machines arrived in Phoenix after many days of fighting their way through drifting sand on the road through Yuma and Mexico.

By contrast, the *Eye* pointed out that, "The tourist has no nightmares" on the Santa Fe-Grand Canyon-Needles National Highway.

The routing change was further confirmed in correspondence between Judge Lowe and Governor W. C. McDonald of New Mexico. After receiving Judge Lowe's circular letter, The Governor wrote on May 29 to confirm that the routing change "must govern whether or no for all time to come." He had not known the convention was taking place and wanted to

know who represented New Mexico's interests. He wanted "to know all about it so that the state highway commission may have full knowledge before deciding upon what course to pursue in regard to highway construction through New Mexico."

Judge Lowe replied on May 31, explaining that the association had been "at sea" on the routing west of Santa Fe:

Every other route which had been discussed was tentative as no one having authority had ever taken any action locating that end of the road. We notified the people of New Mexico, Arizona and California along the different routes which had been suggested to be here prepared to take such action as they thought best. At the convention the delegates from each of these States were assigned to a room and each set of delegates by majority vote located the road through each State. When this was done it was reported back to the convention as a whole and upon motion, the action of such delegates was approved by the convention. Thereupon the constitution of our association was amended adopting the line as suggested from Santa Fe via Albuquerque, Holbrook, Flagstaff, Needles, etc. Therefore so far as this organization is concerned it stands for the Old Trails Road as defined in its constitution as it now exists, as running practically from the tide-water of the Atlantic to the tide-water of the Pacific over the line as above suggested.

The letter pointed out the association's affiliation with the National Highways Association, which had adopted the National Old Trails Road "as pre-eminently the back-bone and Central Factor in a Great System of National Highways." He added that the national highway system proposed by the association included "extension of the Camino Real and thence via Borderland Route to Phoenix, etc."

He concluded with a warning about the Lincoln Highway:

These differences as to location are natural but greatly to be regretted. Instead of effecting any good they often drive away the possibility of anybody's being benefited. As illustrating what I mean, there is active and tremendous force behind the proposition to extend a central road through Denver, Salt Lake, etc., to San Francisco. The Southwest will be to blame if by their quarrels among themselves they drive a great trans-continental highway entirely out of New Mexico and Arizona.

On June 3, Governor McDonald thanked Judge Lowe for his reply, adding:

You may depend upon me to do what I can to get this road through New Mexico. The important thing is to have it. The state highway commission will assist in every way possible to accomplish this end.

Lt. Edward F. Beale's Wagon Road

Miss Gentry and the D.A.R. had primarily been interested in the Old Trails Road for its historic associations. Although Judge Lowe made history a regular part of his publicity for the route, it had lost some of its historic associations, including the link to the Oregon Trail, beginning with the organizing convention in April 1912. Now, as a result of the second convention, the Old Trails Road appeared to lose another part, namely "Kearny's route," as shown on Miss Gentry's early map of the historic trails road. As noted earlier, the D.A.R.'s claim that General Kearney marched through Flagstaff on his way to California was incorrect. Nevertheless, the Grand Canyon Route had a long history of its own.

A pamphlet called *The Old Santa Fe Trail Across Arizona* discussed some of the history. It began by commenting on the title of the booklet:

For the benefit of the reader who may feel somewhat surprised by the title of the present booklet, I beg to state that the Old Santa Fe Trail Across Arizona takes him back many years past the time of the triumphant march of General Stephen W. Kearney . . . in the year 1846 . . .

Father Cypriano, the Arizona representative of the National Old Trails Road Association, wrote the foreward. He traced the route in Arizona to such early Spanish explorers as Hernando de Alarcon (1540) and Melchior Diaz (1541), but especially to Don Juan De Onate, Governor of New Mexico (1604), and two Franciscan friars, Father Silvestre Velez de Escalante and Father Francisco Garces (1776). Governor Onate, having established the forerunner of *El Camino Real* in 1598, explored northern Arizona, looking for what he thought would be the South Sea and a trade route to the Orient.

In 1776, Spain's viceroy in Mexico City dispatched Fathers Escalante and Francisco Dominguez to find a trail to connect Santa Fe with the missions Father Junipero Serra was establishing in California. They pursued a route through Utah, north of the Grand Canyon, that became part of the traders' route known as the Old Spanish Trail. Father Garces, on a similar mission that same year, explored the route across northern Arizona that was the predecessor of the National Old Trails Road across Arizona.

The Epilogue described the point of the booklet:

The OCEAN-TO-OCEAN HIGHWAY is in the air. The great and latest mode of transportation had to become almost a necessity before the crying need of good roads in this country was noticed. Now the movement for a good automobile road from the Atlantic to the Pacific is fairly launched, and it will never stop till its object has been fully secured

To decide wisely and prudently the vital question of locating [the] route across Arizona [the highway-man] has to bear in mind the reasons that have brought about the success of similar undertakings in other parts of the world.

It must be granted, in the first place, that this highway is not going to be a freight traffic road, and, in the second place, that the mere feat of motoring from the Atlantic seaboard to the surf-splashed beach of the Pacific Coast, regardless of the intervening country, is not going to be sufficient to render the road popular with the sight-seeing tourist. What is, therefore, the wisest solution to this problem?

. . . Now, the tourist does not leave his home to go and see alfalfa, potato, beet, corn and wheat fields, profitable though they be to their owners. That point is well known to the people of Europe. Hence, their touring highways are all laid out across historical and scenic fields If, therefore, you wish to establish a popular highway across Arizona, you will by all means locate it as close as possible to and over the dust-covered tracks of the Spanish Conquistador's steed and the venerable trail worn across Northern Arizona years ago by the sandal and the staff of the Franciscan Friar. Add to those historical associations, the wonderful scenery with which they are encompassed as with a frame and you will readily concede that the Old Santa Fe Trail across Arizona described in this booklet is the logical and natural forerunner of the coming Transcontinental Highway.

The route that became the National Old Trails Road across New Mexico and Arizona can be traced back to early Spanish explorers, but their exact routes are in dispute. Moreover, the path of the National Old Trails Roads did not become a major travel route until the mid-19th Century. Its prominence dates to the effort to construct a transcontinental railroad. The Federal Government dispatched surveying crews to explore possible routes, including a crew under Captain Amiel W. Whipple of the Army

Topographical Corps in 1853. Beginning July 15, 1853, Whipple led a wagon train of about 70 men along the 35th parallel from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Los Angeles, generally following a route traveled by Captain Randolph B. Marcy in 1849. It went through Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) and the Texas Panhandle to Albuquerque. After crossing the Rio Grande River, the expedition struggled for 3 months across New Mexico and Arizona to the Colorado River. The survey crew reached Los Angeles on March 21, 1854.

When sectional disputes stopped Congress from authorizing a transcontinental railroad, it instead authorized construction of several wagon roads to meet the demand, temporarily, for better communications with the West Coast. The Army selected Lieutenant Edward F. Beale to establish a wagon road along the 35th parallel from Fort Defiance on the modern New Mexico/Arizona border to the Colorado River.

Using Whipple's report as a guide, Beale worked on the road from 1857 to 1859, diverging from Whipple's route in many cases. The work on Beale's Road cost \$200,000. During the work, Beale tested the usefulness, endurance, and economy of a herd of camels. The test was part of an experiment to see if camels could help meet transportation needs in the southwestern deserts. In Beale's opinion, the experiment was a success, but the U.S. Army did not pursue it.

At first, Beale's Road was criticized, particularly by northern California interests. They feared that Beale's Road and another wagon road further south would divert traffic from their part of the State. They had consistently criticized any transportation plan, such as the early overland mail routes, that used a southern entrance to the State, even though the Sierra Nevada passes in their part of the State were closed by snow throughout the winter. At one point, even *The Los Angeles Star* turned against the road. Gerald Thompson, in *Edward F. Beale and the American West* (University of New Mexico Press, 1983), cited the newspaper's issue of October 1, 1859:

The paper quoted the *Missouri Republican*, which stated that many wagon trains departing from Texas and Arkansas over Beale's Road had been forced to turn back with great losses--and then took the southern route through El Paso, Tucson, Yuma, to Los Angeles. According to many emigrants, "the Beale route is worse than a humbug--it is a swindle."

Nevertheless, Beale's Road soon proved its value, as a wagon road and a location for the Santa Fe Railroad in the 19th Century and a main travel corridor in the 20th Century. "In opening this highway," according to

Thompson, "Beale joined the small group of explorers who left an enduring mark on the American West during the nineteenth century."

West of Needles, the road also can be traced to Father Garces. Early in 1776, he traveled north along the Colorado River to a point near Needles. Turning west, Father Garces reached the San Gabriel mission near today's Los Angeles on March 24. He had ". . . followed the approximate route over which the Santa Fe Railroad was built through the Mohave Desert to Los Angeles a century later," according to Jay J. Wagoner's *Early Arizona* (The University of Arizona Press, 1975). The National Old Trails Road followed this route to the vicinity of Barstow and Victorville, before turning toward Cajon Pass. After this pathfinding mission, Father Garces returned to the Mojave Indian villages near Needles for his trip across northern Arizona that same year.

The Spanish discovered Cajon Pass in 1772 when Pedro Fages, military Governor of California, was tracking a group of deserters from San Diego. Father Garces' 1776 route, with a variation through Cajon Pass, became the route of the mountain men, the fur traders, and the pack trains. In February 1831, William Wolfskill, a Kentucky trapper, traveled from the Mojave Indian villages near Needles through Cajon Pass into the San Bernardino Valley and on to Los Angeles. Alice Fisher Simpson, writing in the Centennial issue of *California Highways and Public Works* (September 1950), explained the importance of his trip:

Wolfskill's trip was a noteworthy one, since his course over the mountains is clearly defined. From Santa Fe to California, his route approximated more closely the trail later followed by the New Mexican caravans than did that of [earlier traders]. It might therefore be said that it was William Wolfskill who established the famous pack-train route known as the "Old Spanish Trail," used by the Santa Fe - Los Angeles caravans for nearly two decades. The Old Spanish Trail bypassed most of northern Arizona, passing through Utah instead, as had Fathers Escalante and Dominguez in 1776.

Once each year, pack trains accompanied by a heavy (sic) armed guard, made the round trip over the trail. California bound, the caravans carried blankets, Mexican woolen goods, silver and all sorts of American-made wares from St. Louis. On the return trip, the traders brought back mainly Chinese goods, silks and the like, obtained from trading vessels on the California coast. They also drove back horses and mules.

As this background suggests, the National Old Trails Road retained the concept of linking historic trails, if not the glamour of the names involved in the abandoned original routing.

On The Cumberland Road

Judge Lowe's promotion of the National Old Trails Road took him to Zanesville, Ohio, one of the cities along the route, on July 21, 1913, to deliver a speech on the history of the National Road. His purpose was to demonstrate that the Federal Government had a continuing obligation to improve the historic highway established by legislation in 1806.

He began by quoting the 1805 committee report on the bill. The report noted that rivers tend to unite the interests and promote the friendships of those along its banks, while mountains tend "to disunion and estrangement." On this basis, the report made clear the purpose of the National Road:

In the present case, to make the crooked ways straight, and the rough ways smooth will, in effect, remove the intervening mountains, and by facilitating the intercourse of our western brethren with those of the Atlantic, substantially unite them in interest, which, the committee believe, is the most effectual cement of union applicable to the human race.

In an era when river travel was more efficient than overland travel, the National Road met this goal by providing a land bridge from the Potomac River at Cumberland, Maryland, to the Ohio River at Wheeling. Given the sensitivity to the issue of States rights, the 1806 Act authorized construction of the road by the Federal Government only with the consent of the States through which it passed.

The construction authorized in the 1806 Act was financed with revenue from the sale of public land in Ohio. When Ohio was admitted as a State in 1802, a reserve fund was established consisting of 5 percent of the revenues received by the Federal Government from the sale of public lands in the State. Of the 5 percent, the government set aside 2 percent for roads leading to the State, while the remaining 3 percent was for roads in Ohio. In May 1820, a new act authorized a similar arrangement to generate revenues for extension of the road through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, where Congress intended for the road to reach the east bank of the Mississippi River.

Again in March 1825, legislation used the reserve fund method of financing a survey to extend the road through the State capitals to Jefferson City, the capital of the new State of Missouri. The road,

however, stopped at Vandalia. While communities seeking to be the Mississippi River link debated the routing question, the Federal Government lost interest in the road because of the emergence of the railroad as the best means of land travel.

One alternative was to install toll booths to raise revenue for upkeep and construction, but the Federal right to collect tolls on State property was unclear. Therefore, the question was turned over to the States. In 1831 and 1832, Pennsylvania and Maryland agreed to take over the road, but only after the Federal Government put it in good repair and furnished funds for toll houses and gates. These two States had the oldest section of the National Road, dating to 1813, and it was in poor shape. Ohio and Virginia (West Virginia was part of Virginia until the Civil War) also agreed to conversion, but did not require Federal repair of the road as a condition of State takeover. Congress, by law enacted on July 3, 1832, assented to the conditions imposed by Pennsylvania and Maryland, declaring that the assent would "remain in force during the pleasure of Congress." Similar assent was given for Ohio and Virginia in March 1833. The reserve fund was again the revenue source.

Judge Lowe argued that Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri never consented to accept their portions of the road and that Congress never passed legislation turning the road over to them. Moreover, those States received only limited benefits from the reserve funds raised in their boundaries and used for the road, and Missouri received nothing more than a survey. Therefore, he said, legislation declaring it a "national highway" was not necessary in view of the prior legislation declaring it as such. Congress need only appropriate funds to rebuild, repair, and maintain the road. Under a similar concept of reserve funds, moreover, the road could be extended to the Pacific Ocean.

After discussing later legislation during the 19th century, Judge Lowe turned to proposals to provide "aid" to the States. "Congress may pile dollars heaven high, and turn it over to the States or the congressional districts," he said, and it would still not fulfill the Federal commitments under the earlier legislation:

The political reason for building national roads may not be as acute now as it was in the beginning of our great governmental experiment, but who shall say what dangers await us in the future? Who will deny the prophetic wisdom of the sages who planned this road? Who will deny the cohesive power of cementing the States by a great system of national highways? And who will lightly value the sacred promises solemnly made by the original thirteen States to induce the new territories to join the Union? Ohio has kept

the faith, and for thirteen years her national road funds was appropriated beyond the borders of the State. Then she was joined in a similar compact by Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, and unitedly they built and maintained this road out of their own national road fund and thus saved the Union. They too, "kept the faith." Can the Government-can any government long survive which keeps only "Punic Faith" with its own people.

("Punic," referring to the ancient Phoenician colony in Carthage, means faithless or treacherous.)

Following publication of his speech in *Better Roads*, Judge Lowe informed members of the National Old Trails Road Association that "what we ask and all we ask is that the Government shall comply with and keep this agreement If the Government may refuse to build this road, then it may equally refuse the application of the money arising from the sales of the land provided for the school fund, or she may refuse any other obligation assumed, and turn any State back to its original territorial condition."

In short, he believed the government should build the national highway across the States (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri) where commitments in the 19th century legislation had not been fulfilled.

American Road Congress in Detroit

From September 29, to October 4, 1913, highway interests gathered in Detroit for the Third American Road Congress under the auspices of the American Highway Association and AAA. *Better Roads* described the Congress as "an epoch-making meeting in the history of good roads." The magazine added:

It was conceded on all hands that it was the greatest ever held, on this or any other continent. Greatest in attendance-more than 4,000 delegates registered-greatest in subjects discussed, and in expert intelligence displayed in their discussion-greatest in breadth and depth of patriotic endeavor to get together in an unselfish spirit of cooperative achievement.

President Wilson sent a letter regretting he could not attend "to express, at least, the very deep interest which I feel in the whole matter of adequate road building in the United States." Wilson, a dedicated motorist who enjoyed regular jaunts around the Washington area, said, "Every man who

wishes to see this great country made the most of must sympathize with the efforts now being made to weave its parts together by good roads."

Charles B. Warren, representing Detroit's Board of Commerce, greeted the delegates enthusiastically. One reason, he said, for the city's interest in the American Road Congress was that Detroit's "progress and development is now largely bound up in the prosperity of the motor car industry, and these two-good highways and good motor cars-move along side by side." The city had another interest:

And Detroit is interested in this other movement-in the Lincoln Memorial Highway. It appeals to our imagination, this idea of connected, improved highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, binding many States of the Union closer together. It appeals to our sense of patriotism that this highway should be known as the "Lincoln Highway," for the spirit and the blessed memory of that man binds this Country together as the spirit and memory of no other American who ever lived.

Logan Page told the delegates:

A mighty wave of sentiment for better roads is sweeping over the country, and already the American people have entered upon a road building era which has no parallel in all history-not even the splendid era when Rome knit together, with massive military roads, the farflung outposts of her empire, nor the century of constructive work begun by Napoleon, which has given to France the most superb system of highways in the world.

After discussing the history and benefits of road building, he explained the purpose he hoped the gathering would serve:

I wish to express the hope that the American Road Congress may become more and more an annual clearinghouse, where the best thought and practice of good roads people throughout the United States and Canada may be exchanged, and started on an endless chain-so to speak-so that we may all benefit by the progress that each is making, and by avoiding the duplication of effort, so that the costly mistakes which have marked our course in road matters for over a century may not be made again and again.

Page was followed by A. G. Batchelder, Chairman of the Executive Board of AAA. He recalled that "automobilists, once upon a time, used to half apologize for our participation in the road question." Then, they

"awakened to the fact that we were the men who were using the roads more than anyone else." Next came the public complaint that the automobilists were wearing out the roads, to which Batchelder pleaded guilty:

So we said that if we use the road more than anyone else and if we wear out the roads, it is up to us to get into this road movement good and hard with our work and energy; and, furthermore, as long as we are paying a road tax to use the roads, we might as well wade in and swim in the open and struggle along with the rest of the people.

After discussing concerns about the rights of counties and States, he summarized AAA's position:

I think that the average man is willing that the State shall relieve the counties of roads that are really interstate in their use, and we simply advance another point when we say that the States themselves are going to look to the general government for a certain amount of cooperation and support in those roads that go from State to State.

Referring to Logan Page, Batchelder concluded his short address by saying that, "when we can get the representatives of our national government to participate with us on this occasion, there cannot be any other than a mighty good result."

The next speaker was Judge Lowe. The proceedings of the American Road Congress summarized his speech, which covered the history of the Cumberland Road and the National Old Trails Road Association. Then, in "a very forceful manner," he presented an argument in support of Federal involvement in road building from a constitutional standpoint by drawing attention to the "parallel question" of the tracts of land set aside by the Federal Government for railroads and the funds appropriated for the Panama Canal. According to the summary:

He then made a stirring plea for the building of great national highways by the federal government. He said, however, that he was not absolutely committed to this plan and might be converted to the plan providing that the State, county, and township, should contribute an equal amount, dollar for dollar, with the government. His reason for opposing the latter plan was the idea of retaxing the people before they would be permitted to have the benefit of the money that they had already been taxed for, contending that they should be appropriated at first hand by the federal government for

the best interests of the people, the more important of which he believed to be the building of good roads.

Judge Lowe further said, "I cannot for the life of me conceive of any great difference in taking the money to build roads out of the national treasury, or out of the State treasury, or out of the county treasury, except that Uncle Sam's pocket is the deepest and biggest and the government has the power of taxation that the States and counties have not. He can replete his pocketbook very readily, the State cannot, neither can the county. Now that's the biggest pocketbook and this is our money, all the time, and I am in favor of building roads out of it If anything is written in the Book of Fate more clearly than any other it is that this government has now reached a point where it is going to take a hand and a large hand in building a system of national highways. It is sure to win, and in my judgment, to win during the life time of the next Congress, not next year, not the year after, not after we old gray-haired fellows have gotten off the stage forever, but it is going to happen in my lifetime and in yours, and we will ride in our splendid automobiles, and will travel around all over this country over a splendid system of national highways.

The general session began that afternoon, with Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston addressing "this sturdy band of highwaymen." He explained the experimental post road program Congress had approved in 1912 on a Federal-aid concept as a potential model for permanent Federal road legislation. He considered the options for meeting road needs. He began with the model favored by AAA and Judge Lowe, among many others:

The suggestion of great national transcontinental roads appeals to my imagination, as does the suggestion of interstate roads connecting capitals or cities of commercial importance to my logical faculty and to the sense of pleasure that I experience in riding about the country in my friends' automobiles.

The "essential thing," however, was to provide good roads that get products from the community farms to the railroads and "make rural life more profitable, comfortable, and pleasurable."

He recognized that the idea of Federal aid "raises grave questions and involves possible dangers." He noted that "complex problems" would have

to be resolved before many States and communities could handle road building funds efficiently:

There are proposals before the public mind which would bankrupt the federal treasury and suggest possible abuses before which those of the worst pork-barrel bills of the past would pale into insignificance.

He believed that from a practical standpoint, States would be the "smallest unit with which the federal government might deal." Aside from the inefficiency of some States in road building, he recognized another concern:

The cry of centralization-that the federal government aims unduly to extend its powers, may again be raised. Yet, in a field of common interest and of inseparable activities, what could be more natural than cooperation and mutual assistance?

Still, he said, "as a practical program, I believe that this matter is one in which haste can best be slowly made." Accordingly, he praised Congress for establishing a special committee to look into the role of the Federal Government in road building. "This indicates a wholesome desire to know the facts as well as generous interest."

On September 30, the morning session was devoted to the prospect of Federal legislation. The first speaker was Congressman Shackleford. He was now Chairman of the Committee on Roads, which the House had established in July 1913. Shackleford acknowledged that the constitutional authority of the Federal Government to participate in road building was no longer in dispute. Moreover, he acknowledged that "the overwhelming majority of the people want Federal road legislation." Unfortunately, he said, "they radically differ in opinion as to what such legislation should provide."

He saw two camps, which he designated as the "touring-roads" class and the "business-roads" class. He thought that most people favored business-class roads, "but they are not here today." He explained:

They are at home sowing wheat for a harvest from which all of us must get our bread. They have neither the time nor the money to travel across the continent to attend road congresses.

Advocates of the business-class roads were marshaling their forces "under a flag which bears the legend: 'Cheaper transportation and lower cost of living.'"

Advocates of the "touring-roads" class roads were "marching under a banner upon which is inscribed in letters of gold: 'See America first.'" They were "rich automobile owners, who desire to spend a part of their leisure in touring the country." They are supported, he said, by manufacturers of road machinery and materials ". . . who regard Uncle Sam as 'good pay,' a liberal buyer, and one who would be a valuable customer if only he would embark in the business of building 'national roads.'"

He was concerned about accusations that he was "being antagonistic to automobiles and automobile interests." He denied the charge. "I am an automobilist myself and a member of an automobile club."

I do not want to see the number of automobiles in use diminish, but rapidly increase. I want to see the whole country supplied with a general system of average good roads and every farmer replace his horse and buggy with an automobile.

Nevertheless, he devoted most of his speech to a denunciation of advocates of "touring roads," who favored Federal construction of national roads. Failing that, their second choice was Federal and State cooperation in construction of cross country roads. The chief sponsors of such plans were AAA and the National Highways Association. Both organizations were dominated by men "of the highest character and ability, while the National Highways Association was dominated by "gentlemen who are, or have been, connected with the manufacture of road machinery and road materials." The leaders of both groups "have abundant leisure and unlimited resources." With their abundant resources, that have "found the fountains of publicity."

They have even been powerful enough to place before the country in an unfavorable light those who have opposed their plans. Yet, Mr. President, at the hazard of being called a "knight of the dirt roads," or a "pork-barrel Congressman," I will avail myself of this opportunity to reason with these "touring roads" advocates.

He then launched into a lengthy critique of the proposals of Charles Henry Davis and his National Highways Association, whose members included the National Old Trails Road Association and other named trail associations. "I hold in my hand a map of the United States showing the tentative location of these proposed 50,000 miles of 'national roads.'"

Aside from criticizing the location of "national roads" in several States, he pointed out that Davis estimated they would cost \$20,000 a mile. Shackleford explained that in a country of 2,250,000 miles of public roads, devoting large amounts of funding to 50,000 miles of "national roads" would leave 2,200,000 miles of roads unprovided for. He pointed out that the people along these "unprovided-for roads" would be taxed to build the "national roads." Using the estimate of \$20,000 a mile, he estimated that the entire road system of 2,250,000 miles would cost \$45 billion:

The human mind is paralyzed in contemplation of such an enormous sum. All the nations of the world could scarcely raise it.

Just building the 50,000 miles of "national roads" advocated by Davis would cost \$1 billion. Considering that the Federal Government would not likely authorize more than \$25 million a year, Shackleford explained that "it would require 40 years to complete the proposed 50,000 miles." By then, he said, "most of us will have died and gone to judgment. What we want is roads while we live." He considered the whole concept of "national roads" to be "a dismal delusion."

He objected to the bill pending in Congress that would establish a public highway commissioner in Washington to determine the location and method of construction and maintenance to be employed in "national road" building. One of the fundamental errors of the "aristocratic classes" is that "there is no official wisdom and capacity except in federal officers." By keeping the commissioner's office in Washington, Shackleford said the bill would ensure "he may not be influenced nor even impressed by the yearnings of the people among whom the roads should radiate."

The Congressman realized "that I am not in entire harmony with the dominant spirit of this great roads congress." He summarized the difference:

You want 50,000 miles of expensive "touring roads" to be built in forty years. I want 1,000,000 miles of "business and post roads" to be built in five years.

He appealed to them to "withdraw your opposition to a plain people's plan." His "modest" bill had passed the House, but failed in the Senate, with AAA claiming credit for the defeat ("How that was accomplished has not been revealed"). He called on the delegates to let his plan go forward:

It will not be expensive, and a vast majority of the people favor it. Get out of the way and let us try it out. If it fails, then we can take up one of your more ambitious schemes.

He concluded: Won't you "come over and help us?"

Convention chairman George Diehl, chairman of AAA's Good Roads Bureau, responded in some detail to Congressman Shackleford, beginning:

I know to us motorists, especially the poor ones, like myself, it is very pleasing to be put in the plutocratic class . . . I love to close my eyes as he talks and see myself swimming in millions and reveling in luxury and splendor.

When the turn came for Congressman Borland to address the delegates, he said it was fortunate that he did so because "it may clear away from your minds some misapprehension that we have only one idea of roads out there in Missouri, and that is Judge Shackleford's idea." Borland explained that he did not own an automobile "and therefore I am not in this plutocratic class," but that in his district, more automobiles are owned by farmers than any other class of citizens. If he agreed with Shackleford that road building is "purely a local enterprise," he would not be at the convention:



Congressman William Borland

If this be purely a local enterprise and amply and thoroughly handled by local initiative, then there is no justification for federal aid in any form. If the uniformity, efficiency, economy, scientific perfection, utilization of advanced ideas of construction and maintenance, if, in other words, the reduction of things to a business basis, is not necessary, then there is no justification for our acting in larger bodies.

Borland stressed that each part of the country is dependent on the other. He had heard people from New York City complain, "Why should the nation lay its hands upon the wealth accumulated in the City of New York and build roads in Missouri and Montana?" Borland explained:

And I tell them that the principle is precisely the same, that they lay hands upon the wealth of Buffalo and New York City to build roads in the interior counties of New York. The wealth that is centered in the great, glittering metropolis of this wealthy nation of ours, was not produced upon the

barren streets and squares of the metropolis; it came from the rural sections, and the more of it that comes from the rural sections, the greater will New York be.

The experimental Federal-aid post road program, he said, illustrated the difficulty. It required the State to contribute two-thirds of the cost, he said, and in the end, only a few States were able to participate. (In Missouri, he said, the Governor "had the nerve to go contrary to someone's opinion," and chose a section of the cross-State highway, but neither the State nor Jefferson County was able to match the Federal funds, so the money was withdrawn.)

He spoke of the expertise gathered by Logan Page and the U.S. Office of Public Roads "at public expense to put into the hands of the people." He added:

But if you want to build a Chinese wall around your road district, let your little road boss find out for himself what are the scientific requirements for maintaining permanently and efficiently good roads in your neighborhood. We want better roads and the only way to get them is to get economy and efficiency in the management.

The American Road Congress, he said, was a meeting of business men. "If you believed that your road district was solving the problem, you would not be here, not a man of you." If, instead, delegates believe wealth accumulating in the cities should be used for "the development of the country," then one day, "you will find that the old Stars and Stripes will wave from ocean to ocean, over the grandest, best civilization that the world has ever seen."

Judge Lowe addressed the convention again on October 2, during the morning Road Users Session. He expressed concern about wearing out his welcome, since he had addressed the delegates during the first day and was scheduled to speak again the following day. He restated his view that if the Federal Government can support railroads and rivers and harbor bills, it could, and should, build roads. He acknowledged that some Members of Congress take offense at being called "pork barrel statesmen." But he contrasted the idea of how much mileage could be built by the Federal Government versus putting the same amount of money "into the pockets of a lot of road officials for political purposes."

Now that is it exactly, brother. I am a conservative of the conservatives, yet they talk about me being a radical, every once in a while. Mr. Shackelford says that in five years he proposes to build a million miles of road with the national

revenues. What does that mean? At \$10,000 a mile, that means an appropriation of \$10,000,000,000 in five years, \$2,000,000,000 annually. That means, if it means anything, absolute national bankruptcy. Why, there is not a government on earth that could stand such a scheme. Now, that is enough to say about that; I dismiss him and dismiss his idea and consign him, together with the Congressmen who stand by him-and I know most of them-to that oblivion which he has so richly merited.

He told the delegates that he had stopped using the term national aid or Federal aid because it was "the most wretchedly misleading proposition under the shining sun." He explained:

Now let us stop talking about national aid and let us go to the government and say, "Build a system of national highways and maintain such system." That is the correct doctrine.

The following day, during the final session of the American Road Congress, Judge Lowe was called on for a few final remarks. It was a brief talk, in which he said, in part:

I do not know when I first began attending road conventions, but I have never attended a road convention that impressed me with its intelligence, its deep and abiding earnestness and its all round intelligence as this convention has done. I believe it is the greatest road convention ever held in this country. I will except Europe and the foreign countries because I have not had the pleasure . . . of attending conventions in those countries, but this convention has certainly set the pace, and I cannot, for the life of me, imagine how it is going to be possible for the next Congress to avoid taking a definite position on the question of national roads.

The American Road Congress adopted several resolutions, including the following:

That the American Road Congress earnestly favors the creation of a national department of public works, directed by a secretary, who should be a member of the President's cabinet.

That the American Road Congress favors State highway commissions and State aid for the construction and maintenance of the main roads of the several States.

That the American Road Congress favors the establishment of a national road system, and favors the construction by the States, counties, and towns of the lateral and connecting market highways.

That the American Road Congress commends the Lincoln Highway Association for its efforts in seeking the establishment by popular subscription of a transcontinental highway as an enduring and useful memorial to Abraham Lincoln, and further commends the National Old Trails Association for its splendid work in the rebuilding of the Cumberland Road and the Santa Fe Trail.

Before The Good Roads Committee

In January 1914, Judge Lowe testified before the House Committee on Roads. Following his testimony, he submitted a formal statement summarizing his views. He began:

As "Federal Aid" in some form is being agitated as preferable to a System of National Highways, permit me to ask why make the States contribute an equal amount or any other amount as a condition precedent to any action by the General Government?

Why make the State contribute to a National enterprise at all?

If a road is not of National concern, ought the National revenues to be appropriated for it?

If it is of National concern, ought the State to contribute?

He commented on the fear among Federal-aid advocates that automobile "joy riders" would use "Cross Country Roads, "Tourists' roads," and "Ocean to Ocean Highways."

The roads most in favor by these critics are "the rural roads," the roads in the back districts, in remote sections, where there are no products to market and no people to use them, either for "joy" or necessity-roads that "begin nowhere and end nowhere"-roads of little local value, and no general value, these are the roads to which it is proposed by some that the general revenue be applied.

He summarized the legislative history of the Cumberland Road to demonstrate that previous great leaders "stood for a System of National Highways." He believed that joint authority over a National Highway, or any highway, was "illogical and impracticable." Either the State or the General Government, he said, must be supreme. "If each is supreme over its own system, *and only over its own system*, there will be no friction, no departure from the uniform practice of the Government, no questions of State right, nor of Paternal nor concentrated Federal Power, no conflict of authority, no dodging of responsibility."

Judge Lowe and his associates were making similar arguments around the country as Congress considered the role of the Federal Government in road building. For example, he had written an open letter to Governor Elliott W. Major of Missouri in December 1913. If \$50 million were appropriated annually and distributed equally among the States, and if Missouri distributed its share equally to every county, "she could build about four-fifths of a mile of hard surfaced road in each county." Judge Lowe then explained what would happen if Congress appropriated \$50 million a year for 6 years for a System of National Highways. It would, he said, build 30,000 miles at an average cost of \$10,000 per mile. "This system could be made to furnish an average of two trunk lines across each state and across the continent, and all connected with the national capital."

On February 20, 1914, *The Needles Eye* reported on a visit to Barstow by J. H. Miner of Kansas City, Missouri, on behalf of the National Old Trails Road Association and the National Highways Association. Miner explained the two associations' opposition to the Shackleford bill to distribute \$25 million to the States. "Under this plan," the article explained, "the wealthier and most populous states would receive the most of this fund, on account of their being able to appropriate state funds for roads, as the bill requires." The article also reported Miner's comments about road issues of local interest:

He stated the Grand Canyon-Needles-National Highway is now a good road, and that he and Supervisor Butler came from Needles to Barstow in 9 hours-170 miles-including stopping for supplies, lunch, etc. This could not be done if the road was not first-class. The Borderland route could not, he said, compare with our road. The Lincoln Highway Association, he claimed, is a \$10,000,000 corporation of Detroit, and is not a national highway.

Miner's business concluded with his explanation that for Judge Lowe and others to continue to promote the area's road interests before Congress,

financial assistance was needed immediately. "For this purpose contributions of \$2.50 were given by each of 14 citizens of Barstow."

N.O.T. & The PPOO

On March 18, 1914, a new transcontinental highway association was organized during a meeting in St. Joseph, Missouri. The Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway (PPOO) Association was dedicated to promoting improvement and use of a road from New York City to San Francisco, the same termini as the Lincoln Highway. An account in the May 1914 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* (as the magazine was now called) explained the new highway:

"The Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway" is the latest development in the transcontinental route situation. The new highway was launched at a meeting in St. Joseph, Mo., on March 18, by the federation and alliance of State and interstate associations already in existence.

The course of the Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway is from New York through Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, Cumberland, Wheeling, Columbus, Dayton, Indianapolis, Springfield, Ill., Hannibal, Mo., St. Joseph, Belleville, Kans., Colorado Springs, Glenwood Springs, Salt Lake City, Reno, Sacramento and Oakland to San Francisco.

To create the route west of Illinois, the national association affiliated with State trail associations, including the Lincoln Highway Association of Colorado, a State association that predated the Lincoln Highway Association. Pending a location tour, the association announced it would follow the Lincoln Highway west of Salt Lake City. East of Illinois, the association had worked out a cooperative arrangement with the National Old Trails Road Association to share its route to Washington and New York.

The PPOO association claimed that its route was "the central and most direct across the country." However, the leaders were concerned about sharing the eastern portion of their route with the National Old Trails Road. The process of ending the linkage began during the association's annual meeting in St. Joseph on February 2, 1916. A committee was named to represent the association in negotiations with possible State partners east of Illinois. On February 15, a conference was held in Indianapolis to pursue the goal. The March 1916 issue of *The Road-Maker* described the results:

Through adoption of an independent alignment from Indianapolis east to the Atlantic Ocean, the Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway Association has forged another link in its great transcontinental highway. At a conference of its committee on eastern extension, held at Indianapolis on February 15th, decision was reached in favor of a route extending from Indianapolis through Richmond, Indiana; Eaton, Dayton, Springfield and Columbus, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Blairsville, Johnstown, Altoona, Huntington, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Reading, Pottstown to Philadelphia; with a connecting branch from Harrisburg to Washington, D.C., and another from Reading, Pa., to New York City. The selection of this route is subject to early organization and affiliation of state divisions in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and active steps have already been taken looking to meetings for this purpose during the month of March

The routing change was confirmed during a meeting on March 10, 1916, ending the relationship with the National Old Trails Road. For more information on the Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, see www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/pikes.htm

Judge Lowe Called A Polecat

As reflected by Representative Shackleford's comments during the American Road Congress in Detroit, he was frustrated by the opposition by good roads interests to his proposal. In February 1914, his frustration boiled over on the floor of the House of Representatives.

His modified ABC Rental bill had passed the House by a vote of 284 to 12 on February 10, 1914; now it would go to the Senate, which had rejected his bill in 1912. Almost immediately after the 1914 vote in the House, he saw a flood of editorials against the bill in newspapers around the country. On February 24, 1914, shortly after the House began business at noon, Shackleford rose to "a question of personal privilege affecting my rights, reputation, and conduct as a Member individually." He was upset by an editorial in the February 10 issue of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* titled "Let Public Opinion Smash Pork-Barrel Politics." The phrase he particularly objected to was: "The danger is imminent. Once this graft has started it can not be stopped."

He countered that not one single Member of Congress supported the bill "through any motive of graft."

Mr. Speaker, there are two things without which civilization, even in its crudest form, could not exist. They are the public

roads and the public press. Both of these are all the better if they are kept free from mud. Dirt roads should be kept compacted and firm by the frequent use of the split-log drag. Newspaper editorials should be kept free from slime by the constant use of the fair play drag.

He knew that "this endless chain of malevolent editorials" did not occur by accident. They "all came from the same editorial canning factory." He explained:

Mr. Speaker, look at these editorials. Here is one headed "Another pork barrel." Here is another, which says: "It is distinctly a bad bill, the effect of which would be first to plunge the good-road movement head over heels into Federal pork barrel." Here is another: "Think what an entering wedge and scandal that pork barrel road bill would be." Here is another: "Judge Lowe is warning all supporters of the good-road movement throughout the length of the proposed old-trails route to help defeat the pork barrel" The distinctive feature of all these editorials is the words "pork barrel."

If one comes across a quadruped and wants to know to what particular species it belongs, there are certain distinctive features which will point him to a correct solution. If a naturalist should go afield and discover a little animal under a hedge and he looked at it and was in doubt what it was, he would approach it closely. He would notice it had a nose; so had a horse. He would discover that it had two eyes; so had a cow. He would discover that it had a tail; so had a dog. He would discover that it had teeth; so has a wolf. Approaching nearer still, he would suddenly discover the air filled with a fog which would penetrate his eyes, his mouth, his nose, his ears. From the distinctive odor of that fog he would instinctively discover the particular family to which the animal belonged

Shackleford was referring to a "polecat," a term he used during his speech but excised when given the opportunity to edit his remarks for the *Congressional Record*. A "polecat" is defined as "any of various North American skunks."

He wanted his colleagues to understand which "canning factories" had come up with the word "pork-barrel," slipped their label on it, and shipped it off to the newspapers:

There are in this country a number of road associations made up of men of great wealth who have special interests that they want to promote, and they have undertaken to shape all road legislation that is adopted here or in the States. I shall not undertake to enumerate all of these road associations. I can now recall the National Highways Association, the National Road Builders' Association, and a number of others of that character.

They were, he said, made up of individuals and companies that would benefit from big road construction projects. But he particularly wanted to denounce AAA because its "ramifications extend into every nook and corner of the great Republic." AAA was opposed "to expending any money on roads within a State, because if the money is frittered away on these community roads-these farm roads-there will not be funds enough left with which to build the peacock lanes upon which they have their hearts set."

Shackleford cited resolutions adopted by AAA during its national assembly in Chicago the previous December. He quoted George Diehl saying "the association is on record as being opposed to any Federal aid for 'pork barrel' propositions." Shackleford asked:

Mr. Philadelphia Ledger, where did you get your term "pork barrel"? Was it not from the editorial canning factory of the American Automobile Association? [Applause]

To illustrate the insolence of the AAA, he entered a letter into the record. He explained that the Automobile Club of St. Louis had endorsed his previous bill. After he reintroduced it in modified form, H. D. Train, vice president of AAA, wrote to the St. Louis chapter on September 3, 1913:

This bill, as you probably know, carries with it an appropriation of \$15 per mile for dirt roads through the rural free-delivery districts of the United States. We consider this bill the biggest joke ever introduced into Congress. The American Automobile Association, through its influence, beat this bill once in the Senate after it had been passed by the House.

Mr. Shackleford has shown throughout his course to be antagonistic to the automobilist and to automobile interests both in this State and in the United States. The probabilities are that he will continue to create trouble as his mental make-up leads him altogether in that direction. I consider Mr. Shackleford a joke and we look for him to be retired in the district in the coming election The American Automobile

Association, of which you are a member, is doing everything in its power to beat this man for the coming term.

Shackleford did not know how AAA would go about trying to prevent his reelection, but he considered it an outrage that the organization can put "their hands down into their treasury and fill the papers of my district and my State with canned editorials against me." He did not think he would be defeated, but he wanted to call attention to "the nefarious methods that are being resorted to in order to defeat legislation in which all of the people are interested." Again, the *Congressional Record* inserted: "[Applause.]" He warned his colleagues that each of them, the "knights of the dirt roads," could be subjected to the same treatment.

Next he turned to the National Highways Association, another of the road associations whose members "want to try out the automobiles from New York to San Francisco in order to see which one can win the race. They want a road that is adapted to their purposes, and they want the farmer down on the muddy roads in my district and yours to pay the expenses of this peacock lane over which these peacocks shall strut in luxurious automobiles. [Applause.]"

He made fun of the association by explaining its membership policy. At the top, he said, are the founding members who contribute \$25,000. The association also has national members (\$10,000), collective members (\$2,500), life members (\$1,000), and the sustaining member:

We are getting down now, Mr. Speaker, into the pond where the suckers swim. [Laughter.] A sustaining member pays \$100 Then, coming on down to smaller suckers, they have contributing members, who pay \$10 each, and then they have assisting members, who pay \$5 apiece. Lastly, in order that no man, however humble, shall be permitted to escape this dragnet for funds relied upon to prosecute this propaganda for the rich and special interests, they have a subscribing membership for a dollar apiece. And then, in order to get the other fellow who has a little vanity in him, they have what they call an "associate membership," who gets down to 50 cents apiece. [Laughter.] They have spread this net out all over this country, taking in every man, from the fellow willing to pay \$25,000 for a founder's membership down to the man who pays 50 cents in order that he may wear upon the lapel of his coat the badge of an apostleship in the peacock-lane propaganda. [Laughter.]

That brought him to his own State.

There is the Old Trails Association, hibernating up in the district of my brother, the gentleman from Kansas City [Mr. Borland]. [Laughter.] It is powerful. If it lived in my district I would be afraid of it. [Renewed laughter.] The head of that institution is one J. M. Lowe.

Now let us get down to him-this Old Trails man. What does he do? When he needs money to carry on his editorial canning factory he takes a United States map and a piece of red chalk and marks an old-trails highway across some State and then goes to the people in the towns along that line and collects dues. His association is a branch of the same association whose organization I read to you a while ago.

I see where he went down into the district of my good friend the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. Wingo]. He went into Fort Smith. He was getting hard pressed because this bill had passed the House. He wants to defeat it in the Senate. He wants to bring up public sentiment enough to scare the Senators, so that they will run away from it and avoid being personally attacked as "pork-barrel statesmen." In order to accomplish this he must have more money. He went down into my brother Wingo's district, as I say, and marked off a red line on the map and extended it through a number of those towns, among others Fort Smith. He called the credulous of Fort Smith together [laughter] to organize an old trails association. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have no complaint against my friend Borland who introduced the bill, whose caption I now read:

A bill to provide a national ocean-to-ocean highway over the pioneer trails of the Nation, thus making a continuous trunk-line macadam road from the site of Jamestown, Va., and from the City of New York, N.Y., to the city of Washington, D.C., thence by way of St. Louis, Mo., to Gardner, Kans., and there to branch, one branch leading through Santa Fe, N. Mex., the other branch from Gardner, Kans., through Kearney, Nebr., to Olympia, Wash., also to aid the States through which the highway herein described on the national old trails road shall run in extending, constructing, rebuilding and repairing same.

This is the bill that Judge Lowe wants. Mr. Borland introduced it. Judge Lowe is seeking to build a peacock lane that is going to put out of commission the transcontinental railroads that go between New York and San Francisco, if you believe what he will tell you. [Laughter.] Here is a letter published in multiform, sent to every newspaper through the country, from Washington to San Francisco:

The National Old Trails Association,

Kansas City, Mo., February 14, 1914

Mr. _____,

_____, Mo.

My Dear Mr. _____, I am sending you herewith extracts from the Kansas City Journal (Republican), the Kansas City Star (Progressive), and the Independence (Mo.) Examiner (Democratic), along with the National Highways Association Bulletin, as ideas upon which to base an editorial expression of your own, if you have the time and space.

The National Old Trails Association needs your support at once in the fight, which is to benefit your community on the floor of the United States Senate. It is needless to add that we beg of you your best effort, for it will be read in the Senate, together with the name of your paper and your own name and politics. What you say now will do more than the rantings of any legislator at Washington to hasten the day when your city will be linked with a rock road to the rest of the United States.

Can you mail us a copy of your paper, accompanied by a short personal letter stating your desires in the good-roads movement, your politics, and a little data concerning your public service in your community, length of residence there, etc.? Tell us whether or not you, together with the citizens of your city, would be glad to be a link in the national-highway chain.

Hoping that this is not asking too much,

Yours truly,

J. M. Lowe

The newspapers out in my country, like the Congressmen, are not rich. They have nothing to sell but their space. [Laughter.] If this old trails hero is asking all of these newspapers to put up free hundreds of square feet of space in order to push his propaganda, then all I have got to say for him is that he is a little stingy in his disposition. He has got the money. Why does he not pay these people for the space he uses, if he does not.

As he moved toward the end of his speech, Shackleford wondered why his bill was called a "pork-barrel bill" when it was intended for the entire country:

Why? Because everybody had a piece of pork in the barrel, I suppose. It is subject to that criticism. There is not a man, woman, or child in the United States who would not be benefited by the enactment of that law.

Civilization, he said, depended on roads. "Civilization should exist along every roadway and every lane in this country, and not be confined to the few chains of peacock lanes that these people have in mind." He estimated that creating these peacock lanes would cost \$45 billion.

He wanted to help the farmer because "nine-tenths of all the commerce of this country is hauled to market over dirt roads." The big cities that are complaining about his "pork-barrel bill" didn't complain about the "pork barrel" when "we dropped \$14,000,000 into the harbors of the State of New York in one year, paid in part by the farmers of my district." They also helped pay for harbor improvements on the coast so other countries could ship farm products to the United States in competition with American farmers. Now, the advocates of peacock lanes are saying to the farmers, "the Federal Government is going to leave you alone in peace, in the mud where you now are, to stay in the mud or dig out for yourselves, as may seem best to you."

Shackleford indicated that those opposed to the bill were trying to bluff the Senate into thinking that President Woodrow Wilson would veto the bill. If, Shackleford said, the President intended to do so, he would have informed the Congress before he told "the proprietors of the editorial canning factory." He pointed out that the 1912 National Democratic Platform,

adopted in Baltimore as the party nominated Woodrow Wilson for the Presidency, stated: "We favor National Aid to State and local authorities in the construction and maintenance of Post Roads." Representative Shackleford assured his colleagues that, "as a great leader, one of the greatest this country has ever seen, we may confidently rely upon [President Wilson] to lead on to victory in behalf of the people for whom I am now speaking. [Applause.]"

He then referred to one of the Nation's pressing social issues, namely how to keep "the boys and girls from leaving the farm." Conferences of bankers and professors were being held on the issue, but Shackleford said it could be done by making "farm life tolerable; treat the farmer as though he was an American citizen. [Applause.]"

Perhaps, he speculated, he was wrong. Perhaps the farmers should be taxed to build these peacock lanes. If so, "then put it through on its merits; let these big road associations get out of the field; let Congress legislate with freedom; let Judge Lowe stop his canning factory of sinister editorials; let the representatives of the American people legislate upon the merits of the proposition."

He concluded:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I regret that circumstances have called for just such a speech as I have made. This ought to have been said on behalf of every Member who voted for the bill. It is an outrage that the public press should hold up to the public as grafters every man who votes against special legislation that a lot of these special interests want to put across. Somebody ought to have said it, and I have said it.

Will Harry Train get my scalp for this? What if he does? Many soldiers have died on the battlefield before. [Loud Applause.]

On March 3, 1914, Representative Borland rose on the floor of the House to respond to Representative Shackleford's personal privilege speech. Borland said that after hearing the speech, he had prepared a resolution calling for a special committee of Congress to investigate the charges he had heard of organizations using influence, by intimidation or otherwise, on the roads bill. But then he saw the *Congressional Record* version of the speech:

I find that some of the positive statements have been omitted. I can not find the word "lobby" anywhere in the printed speech, and there are a great many other portions of

the speech as made on the floor of the House which I do not find in the Record. Some of the most offensive matter has been omitted. Doubtless this is to my colleague's credit, and I sincerely trust that both his natural life and his political life will be long enough for him to regret sincerely his entire speech.

The Shackleford bill, Borland said, had been a great disappointment to thousands of friends of good roads. Although Shackleford had no doubt been "stung by the criticism he has received," Borland doubted the wisdom of "an attack on the character of private citizens." After quoting some of "the most offensive portions of the speech still remaining in the printed version," he clarified the term "pork barrel," by saying:

The evil of a pork barrel is that it is cleverly designed to aid in the reelection of the sitting Member by the expenditure of public money. The money is distributed in such a way as to produce the largest political effect.

The press, he said, has a high duty "to turn the light of pitiless publicity upon the expenditures of public money." Even the "humblest citizen" can criticize public men and measures. But if a corrupt lobby exists, "both this House and the courts are clothed with ample power to punish it."

Borland then turned to the term "peacock boulevards" that had caused his colleague to take "great offense." He said:

If we disregard the epithet and get down to what he really means, the logic of his position is that he is assailing any form of improved highways which lead from city to city or town to town, or which cross an entire State or run into two or more States. It so happens that the present strength and success of the good roads movement is very largely due to business men all over the country who are advocating just exactly this type of road.

The men, he said, were expending considerable time and effort, but very few of them "have anything to gain personally in the matter." As an example, he cited the National Old Trails Road Association, which his colleague "denounces and which he compares to the odoriferous quadruped," and the Missouri Old Trails Road Association, still headed by Walter Williams. He listed several other Missouri-based associations, but noted that every State has a dozen or more such groups:

Most of the members of these associations are business men of the highest type and the most unselfish patriotism. It

may be possible that they are mistaken in their views, but it is not possible that they belong to the tribe of quadrupeds indicated by my colleague, or that they are engaged in any corrupt attempts to influence the press or Congress.

Representative Wilson of Florida asked Borland if the criticism had been directed at the associations or their methods of propaganda. Borland replied that the criticism was directed at "the character of the roads and the methods of the associations." He referred to the term "peacock lanes" as the "particular hit of the speech." In fact, said Borland, in view of the "hostility" displayed by Representative Shackleford to this type of road, he had made it "impractical in this bill for the Government to aid in their construction." Borland believed that the Federal and State governments should help with all classes of road, but he did not want to repeat arguments he had made in previous debates:

But I am opposed to wasting road money on politics, and I am opposed to making campaign matter by denouncing men who are working for any class of good roads [However,] it seems to me unexplainable that the only Member of Congress, so far as I know, who belongs to any of these "peacock boulevard" associations is my colleague [Shackleford], the chairman of the Roads Committee. He is a member of the only highway association from ocean to ocean supported by automobile manufacturers, the one which runs through Chicago, Omaha and Denver.

Although the Lincoln Highway did not go through Denver (except via a branch road), Borland was referring to the Lincoln Highway Association, which was backed by Carl Fisher and his automotive industry associates:

I know of no distinction between this association to which my colleague belongs and the National Old Trails Road Association, except that the old trails route is through Missouri, while the other route is through other States, and the National Old Trails Road Association has not the official backing of the automobile manufacturers, while the association to which my colleague belongs has. If my colleague really believes that these people belong to the class of quadrupeds to which he has referred, I am surprised to find him in their company, unless he is there purely as a naturalist.

Large numbers of people, some of whom have a "selfish and business interest," had generated interest in good roads:

When a movement approaches success it is hardly possible to prevent ambitious politicians from jumping astride of it and riding it to victory or death, as the case may be; but why the people who furnish the steed must also be kicked in the face is more than I can understand.

If Shackleford believed that "a dangerous and corrupt lobby was at work," he could have called for an investigation, but he did not do so. Borland doubted the propriety of assailing the motives of private citizens who are unable to defend themselves on the floor of the House. He would speak for them, beginning with Judge Lowe:

Judge J. M. Lowe, president of the National Old Trails Road Association, is a true and tried Democrat who has been prominent in affairs in Missouri for many years. He was prosecuting attorney of Clinton County during his young manhood, and more recently he was election commissioner of Kansas City by appointment of Governor Folk. I am astonished to think that my colleague has intimated that Judge Lowe is engaged in buying or attempting to buy either newspapers or Congressmen, or, in fact, that there are in Missouri either newspapers or Congressmen for sale

The fact is that Judge Lowe is a man of very modest means but large public spirit. He has given freely of his time and work and I have no doubt also of his means in devotion to what he believes to be a patriotic duty. His letter referred to by my colleague shows that he is asking friends to assist him in this work and entirely [negates] the idea that any pay is offered or expected.

In addition, Borland ridiculed Shackleford for having the public printer make 36,000 copies of the "polecat" speech for distribution under his free mailing frank:

Of course, the circulation of these 36,000 copies will prove conclusively that the Shackleford bill is a good bill and in the interest of the farmers; that the opponents to it are divided into zoological groups of polecats, peacocks, and suckers; that the peacocks are not only found associating with such strange friends but have taught the polecat and suckers to "strut" like themselves; that the press of Missouri is poor and has nothing to sell but its space, and that good-roads associations should be put out of business. Well, after all, the 36,000 copies tell the tale without any words of mine. [Applause.]

When Borland concluded, Shackelford requested time to respond to his colleague's "somewhat caustic arraignment." He acknowledged and repeated his claim that "some of the big road associations and special interests" have been lobbying in support of "ocean-to-ocean highways." He said he had not used the word "corrupt," as Borland had suggested, but believed that a powerful lobby was being maintained in opposition to the Shackelford Bill.

He responded to Borland's defense of "my alleged attack" on Judge Lowe:

Now, what about him? He is a man, so far as I know, of unsullied reputation. He possesses great enthusiasm and firmness of purpose. He is obsessed with the idea of having the Federal Government build some peacock lanes to connect up the antipodal oceans. He has devoted himself to chasing this jack-o'-lantern. In his dreams he sees the old Cumberland Road, the old national trails, as they were in the days of long ago. In his waking hours he yearns for a restoration of these old ways of travel over which our forefathers drove their ox teams. He thinks that if these conditions were restored the crack of the ox driver's whip would drown the sounds of the clanging bell and the screeching whistle of the speeding locomotive. To bring all of this about he has been through the years conducting one of the most persistent lobbies that has ever existed in connection with legislation here. Just now he is procuring editorials to be inserted in every newspaper whose columns he can enter. For what purpose let him answer. Here is what he says in his letter to the editors: "It is needless to add that we beg of you your best efforts, for it will be read in the Senate, together with the name of your paper and your own name and politics." All of this, of course, has for its object the influencing of the votes of Members of Congress.

To get all of this stuff to the newspapers takes money. To get it back, takes money. To get it to Washington to be read on the floor of the Senate takes money. To travel about year in and year out to work up sentiment along the old trails takes money. He gets the money and spends it. What for? To influence Congress to kill a road bill which would extend a system of good roads among the farmers and to secure legislation for a construction of old trails of which he is so much enamored. He is president of the Old Trails Association. He directs its movements. This association collects and spends every year large sums of money. Not a dollar of it has ever gone to build a rod of road.

Now let me say again that I do not charge that Judge Lowe has been guilty of corrupt lobbying. I do charge, however, that he is expending large sums of money trying to influence legislation on the road subject.

Shackleford concluded by saying that "no lobby in recent years has spent more money in trying to move Congress and the country into the support of a measure than has been put into the fight for peacock lanes and against roads connecting the farms with the towns and railway stations." At every road convention, he said, the lobby is there to promote their resolutions. If a State legislature is in session, the lobby is there. If a road magazine is published, the lobby is on hand "to get behind it and subsidize it."

And when the road question gets to Washington this lobby is here, with its headquarters open under the management of talented men to keep in close touch with Congress to wield its influence. Mr. Chairman, they want ocean-to-ocean highways for automobile tourists at public expense and they are not willing that a dollar shall be spent upon any system of roads leading from the farms to the markets. The tourist has his lobby here. Who is here to lobby for the farmer and the consumer of farm products? Nobody. They elected us to guard their interest, and we will be unfaithful to our trust if we fail to do it.

He observed that despite differences on the road bill, he and Representative Borland were close friends. In fact, they had talked earlier that day:

I gathered from my conversation with him that he, too, is in favor of a system of community roads connecting the farms with the towns and market places; that his opposition to my bill is more upon administrative features than upon the real principle involved in it. I have no doubt that ultimately he and I will be found supporting the same measure.

With that, the House went on to other issues related to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's annual appropriations act.

Judge Lowe Responds to the Peacock Lane and Polecat Speech

The April 1914 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* contained Judge Lowe's response to the "peacock lane and pole cat speech." He was not backing down. He explained that:

The great advocate of a national chain of rock or macadam highways from the very beginning of the present movement has been the farmer; the natural enemy, the politician, who is striving to make road appropriations a 'pork barrel' to increase his prestige among his constituency.

After quoting the polecat portion of Shackleford's speech, Judge Lowe said:

This was the famous "peacock lane and pole cat" speech and the Congressman's attack was so bitter as apparently to justify the belief that his position is unalterably against the roads that lead from one town to another, across the State, or through several States.

The truth is, that the good-roads movement, now approaching success, is the direct result of the self-sacrificing work of business men and associations promoting precisely this kind of roads. In every city in the country there are from one to a dozen of these organizations promoting highways from one hundred to one thousand miles in length. The officers and members are among the most responsible business men of the community, and far from being "pole cats and lobbyists," as openly claimed by Judge Shackleford. These public-minded citizens have lent their money, time, and brains to the movement, but unfortunately, there is nothing to prevent any ambitious politician, like the father of the notorious "Pork Barrel Bill," from jumping astride and riding their well-intended schemes to victory, or to death, as the case may be.

But, as Congressman Borland pointed out in his reply to Judge Shackleford, there ought to be some rule of fair sportsmanship against the rider kicking in the face the men who furnished him the steed. Without the city and small town good-roads boosters, there would have been no good-roads movement of importance, and the judge would not be chairman of a committee investigating the merits of the project.

Moreover, there is nothing about the so-called "Peacock Boulevards" to suggest joy-riding, as declared by Judge Shackleford. That pastime of rich men's sons, everybody knows, is not a transcontinental or town-to-town sport, but is most perniciously conducted on suburban roads and city parkways.

In Judge Lowe's opinion, the present Shackleford bill was even worse than the previous bill. It is "cunningly revised" to appeal to farmers, and especially those who do not live near cross-State or principal market roads:

So insidious is this appeal that the unthinking or uninformed may say, "There, at least, is a chance to get something for nothing; "Shack" has knocked off the top of Uncle Sam's barrel." Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Before the farmer even gets a "look in" into this barrel, under this A.B.C. class, he is required to build his road first, and then match dollars with Uncle Sam for its maintenance. For every dollar appropriated by the Government of the people's own money for building roads, the people must be taxed again to raise an equal amount. And this is true both as to money to be given over to road overseers . . . for repair work, as well as for road construction.

The men and road organizations so virulently and wantonly assailed by Shackleford on the floor of the House, men who have given this [sic] time and money to the cause of good roads, who have devoted their lives to this great work, offer no such scheme as this. Their purpose is to apply the money already paid into the treasury to building and maintaining roads, without raising one dollar by additional taxation. Do you see the difference?

Judge Lowe concluded by referring to a man in Mississippi who liked to be called "Old Reliable," even though he was "utterly unreliable." Similarly, the Congressman called himself "Old Shack," and "seems to leave the impression that others call him that seriously." Judge Lowe explained:

This is in keeping with his criticism of "Peacock Boulevards, built for joy-riding automobilists," while the fact is, he is a member of the only organization having for its purpose the building of just such a "Peacock Boulevard," as he describes, but which he carefully and significantly refrained from mentioning in his pole-cat speech, to-wit, the so-called Lincoln Highway. "Friend of the Farmer?" "Old Shack-Old Reliable?"

At the end of Judge Lowe's defense, *Better Roads and Streets* published one of his editorials under the title "Looks Like Quick Money! Is It?" If, he said, the Shackleford Road Bill is "a serious and honest attempt to do the best thing," and if the States could accept the money (22 had

constitutional limitations on doing so, he said), and it was fair and just to tax the people of cities even though none of the funds would be spent in cities, the funds would be spent on less than one half of the public roads. He explained the consequences as he understood them:

One hundred and twenty dollars per mile goes to the repair of macadam roads; sixty dollars per mile goes to the repair of gravel roads; and thirty dollars per mile goes to the repair of mud roads, the average being fifty dollars per mile, and it is safe to assume that the road overseers will maintain this average expenditure. As the benefits apply to the 1,042,477 miles of post rural free delivery roads, the annual repair account will be, if the average is maintained, \$52,123,850, or \$2,123.850 deficit.

If this allotment were eliminated in the Senate, and the full appropriation applied to making permanent, hard-surfaced post roads at an average cost of \$10,000 per mile, "it will take 208 years to construct them, saying nothing about maintenance, and the [sic] cost *ten and one-half billion dollars* (\$10,424,770,000):

It is evident, therefore, that both of these plans for "national aid" are absurd, and will hinder rather than help road construction.

He advocated building one or two roads at a time "and keeping it up" (quoting Senator John Sharpe Williams of Mississippi). A single transcontinental road could be built for \$25 million a year. The States and counties can then focus on the other 98 percent of roads.

The idea that the National Highway would be an "automobile road" is, Judge Lowe said, "too ridiculous to demand a serious reply." Tourists would enjoy such roads, "but the farmer would be the chief beneficiary." He concluded:

Why is a road, or system of roads, built and maintained by the Government without additional taxation, "peacock boulevard for auto tourists," while roads built under the provisions of this bill by *doubling the taxes*, "good roads from farms to markets"?

Do you favor the double system of taxation, as provided for in the Shackleford bill, or do you stand with us for national highways, to be built and maintained out of the revenues already paid?

Judge Lowe also commented on the "peacock lane and pole cat speech" during his address to the third annual convention of the National Old Trails Road Association. It was held on May 7 and 8, 1914, in Indianapolis. Judge Lowe explained the constitutional basis for Federal road appropriations. He also discussed the importance of interstate roads. Then he commented:

We are free from any entangling alliance with any special interest of any character whatsoever. No manufacturer of road vehicles, road machinery or road material has contributed one dollar to our support. The delegates to this convention are here at their own expense. The membership extending across the continent are a patriotic, public-spirited body of men and women seeking by donating their time and money to their cause, to do what they can to further the cause of the material, social and spiritual welfare of all the people. For this patriotic and unselfish work, their principal reward thus far has been to be lampooned and maligned upon the floor of the National House of Representatives. But this neither weakens our cause nor discourages our efforts. No great cause was ever won in a day, nor without great sacrifice. Undismayed and unharmed by the opposition of those who have not the capacity to comprehend our purpose, nor the honesty to treat fairly even if they had, we shall neither abandon the field, nor march under the white flag of a dishonorable surrender During the great Civil War, a soldier in the Southern army to which I belonged, was observed hastening to the rear, when the commanding officer ordered him to "fall in line." He replied, that there was no good place to "fall in." Again came the order, sharp and decisive, "fall in anywhere, there is good fighting all along the line." So it is today. "There is good fighting all along the line."

The following month, *Better Roads and Streets* carried an article by Frank A. Davis, the association's secretary. He explained a bill Judge Lowe had submitted to the Senate subcommittee on roads that would require the government to finally honor its commitment to build a national road across Missouri. The Shackleford bill, Davis said, "not only is odious to all public-spirited citizens and friends of fair play in this State, but fails utterly to be in keeping with the spirit of the promises made by the government when Missouri came into the Union." Davis then turned to the recent attack:

The attacks which the National Old Trails Road Association has made upon the Shackleford Bill therefore have been no more than earnest endeavor on the association's part to get

for Missouri what really belongs to her and which she ought to have had a generation ago.

The accusation frequently made in speeches before the House of Representatives by Congressman Shackleford, that Judge J. M. Lowe refuses to see an honest purpose in the proposed measure, is not denied by Judge Lowe, who feels that his attitude is indorsed by the facts in the case.

Judge Lowe printed his speech and Representative Borland's in promotional literature for the National Old Trails Road. In later versions, Judge Lowe added the following note at the end of Representative Borland's speech:

Shackleford was retired to private life at the ensuing election which he graces so well; but why adopt now his defeated methods?

Representative Shackleford was defeated for reelection in November 1918. (Representative Borland served in the House until his death on February 20, 1919.)

After the House passed Shackleford's ABC Rental Plan, it went to the Senate, where Senator Bourne substituted his plan to apportion \$1 billion among the States based on the issuance of long-term bonds. Senator John H. Bankhead of Alabama introduced a bill to establish a National Bureau of Highways in Washington to spend \$25 million a year on a national highway system. However, the Senate adjourned in 1914 without approving any of the bills introduced that year.

What is a Post Road?

By this point, the constitutional issue that some had used to argue against Federal involvement in road building had been set to rest.

On March 27, 1893, the Supreme Court had ruled in *Monongahela Navigation Company v. United States*, that, "the power of Congress to regulate commerce carries with it power over all the means and instrumentalities by which commerce is carried on We are so much accustomed to see artificial highways, such as common roads, turnpike roads and railroads, constructed under the authority of the States, and the improvement of natural highways [waterways] carried on by the general government, that at the first it might seem that there was some inherent difference in the power of the national government over them. But the grant of power is the same."

The Supreme Court reaffirmed this ruling in a decision on January 7, 1907. In *Wilson v. Shaw*, a case involving Federal authority to construct the Panama Canal, the decision cited Supreme Court precedents and concluded, "These authorities recognize the power of Congress to construct interstate highways" under the constitutional right to regulate interstate commerce.

The 1907 decision effectively ended the debate over whether the Federal Government could fund road projects. As a result, when Senator Bourne's Joint Committee on Federal Aid in the Construction of Post Road issued its report in January 1915, it dismissed the issue in three brief paragraphs. In sum:

The constitutionality of the appropriations was supported chiefly upon some one or all of the following express Federal powers: To establish post roads, to regulate commerce, to declare war, to provide for the common defense, to promote the general welfare.

A discussion of constitutionality "would no doubt be interesting" to those of legal training, "but we believe the time has long since passed when controversy over this issue could be deemed appropriate." Federal aid road improvement could "accomplish several of the objects indicated by the framers of the Constitution," the report said but, "Above all, it will promote the general welfare."

Nevertheless, the link to "post roads," was strong. The term was used in Article 1, Section 7 of the Constitution ("To establish Post Offices and post Roads"). The institution of rural free delivery of mail, beginning in West Virginia in October 1896, had been one of the most effective means of persuading farmers of the need for good roads. Representative Shackleford's ABC rental bill was based on post roads. Further, the \$500,000 experimental Federal-aid road program under the Post Office Appropriations Act for 1913 had been restricted to roads that are or may be designated for rural free delivery of mail.

The idea of aid to post roads, with its explicit constitutionality, was strong. Given this emphasis on post roads, Judge Lowe decided that clarification of the term was necessary. After quoting the 1912 National Democratic Platform plank on good roads, he asked, "What was a Post Road at that time, which Congress was authorized to establish?" He dismissed the idea that the phrase meant rural free delivery, which involved carrying the mail from the post office to farms, as some had suggested:

Congress has express authority, under this provision to "establish Post Roads," that is, roads leading to the Post Offices, where everybody went to get the mail, and no other.

For support, he noted that Justice Cooley included railroads and steamboats in his definition of "post roads," because, "although not in existence when the Constitution was adopted they now fill the purpose [the Founders] had in view, as roads upon which the mails were carried from Post Office to Post Office." Judge Lowe stressed that rural free delivery "could not have been contemplated by the Constitution, as they nowhere existed at the time of its adoption, and their purpose is exactly opposite to all human experience or intellectual contemplation up to that time, and hence do not come within the ambiguous meaning and purpose of that instrument."

If, therefore, Federal funds were restricted to rural free delivery routes, the roads actually contemplated by the Constitution would be excluded. "Congress must look for authority to other Constitutional provisions than the clause empowering it to establish Post Offices and Post Roads." He cited the commerce clause of the Constitution as justifying construction of roads that are "interstate, or national in character."

"This is no longer an open question," Judge Lowe said, ended by quoting the Supreme Court's 1893 decision: "But the grant of power is the same."

Although the Supreme Court's rulings and the Bourne Committee's findings were not based on the "post roads" provision of the Constitution, the link would remain on the minds of legislators for many years. In April 1928, Thomas H. MacDonald, Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, and his assistant, Herbert S. Fairbank, prepared a 56-page paper on "Federal Aid as a Road Building Policy." From a historic perspective, the paper noted that the modern understanding of "post roads" was "one of those curious inversions of the meaning of words" that occurs over time because of changing habits and customs:

The original "post roads" were the highways over which journeys were made of such length as to necessitate accommodations for the changing of horses and the over-night lodging of travelers. To provide those accommodations post houses or inns were established at convenient intervals and the roads took their name from these posts By reason of the fact that the carriage of parcels and packets necessarily took place over the post roads, the public agency which performed that service became the postal service, and the stations already established for other purposes naturally became the post offices.

This was, the paper asserts, the understanding of the term "in the minds of the framers of the Constitution."

Signposting the National Old Trails Road

The Automobile Club of Southern California had long included signposting among its important activities. Many of O. K. Parker's surveys of southern California roads were combined with signing activities. By May 1914, the association's magazine, *Touring Topics*, was reporting that most of the National Old Trails Road in California had been signed. The signs, which included a reference to the Automobile Club of Southern California, were generating many inquiries about touring conditions. Plans were underway to extend the signing to the Grand Canyon:

With a highway of this character as a lure to the automobilist of the East who contemplates journeying to the Pacific Coast, the Automobile Club has foreseen an opportunity to lend its services toward popularizing the National Old Trails route throughout the nation and to cooperate with the men and the communities that are so successfully endeavoring to put it in good condition for motor travel.

Exploration had taken place as far east as Albuquerque to arrange for signing, but the Automobile Club was considering a more ambitious program of signposting. It would continue the signing east to Chicago and New York and along the lateral highways to connect principal touring centers along the National Old Trails Road with the Lincoln Highway.

The Automobile Club estimated that because of the signing, several thousand automobile parties would journey directly to Los Angeles along the Old Trails route instead of "the more widely advertised Lincoln Highway." The article pointed out that, "Even a few thousand automobiles, with their occupants spending money along the way, means scores of thousands of dollars exchanged for supplies and for service in a territory that is directly tributary to Southern California."

Much preliminary work would be needed before the Club could signpost the Old Trails route and its feeder roads from points along the Lincoln Highway, a total length exceeding 4,000 miles. How much the signs would mean "is problematical." But it was safe to say that "a very considerable portion of the \$40,000,000 estimated expenditure of the motorists who will visit the Coast in 1915 will be made along the National Old Trails route, and a very large part of it will find its way to Southern California."

Secretary Standish L. Mitchell of the Automobile Club stated in April 1914 that the signs, one every mile or two, would be completed in time for 1915

automobile travel bound for the expositions in San Francisco and San Diego. On April 5, 1914, the *Needles Eye* quoted him as saying, "More than \$4,000 has been pledged from Los Angeles to Winslow and indications are that the proposition has swept all territory east The Automobile Club is desirous of completing this work before the thousands of motorists start for California next year, and from all indications, it will be done."

Parker was touring the National Old Trails Road to seek support for the project. Having lined up support in the Southwest, he had moved into Colorado, which was considered the critical State. An article in the June 1914 issue of *Touring Topics* indicated that "it was feared that a lack of knowledge of the work accomplished by the Automobile Club of Southern California and its importance in highway work might result in refusal to cooperate in the Club's sign posting undertaking." Colorado also was important because several east-west routes ended in the State:

If the motor clubs and highway organizations of Colorado cooperate whole-heartedly in the Club's campaign it will make of that state a gigantic relay station through which the eastern tourists will be deflected to the National Old Trails route. It will mean that many hundreds of machines that have been kept in Colorado during the summer season will take the southern route and journey to California in the Fall for winter touring on the Pacific Coast.

Parker found that Colorado enthusiasts already intended to post signs on the route from Trinidad to Denver to intersect one branch of the Lincoln Highway:

The signing of these lateral routes, or feeders, that will serve to divert a large amount of motor traffic from the northern route down through Nebraska and Colorado to the main route of the National Old Trails roadway has been a part of the general project that was earnestly desired but concerning the successful accomplishment of which there was grave doubt.

The success in Colorado left "little doubt" that signs would stretch from the Mississippi River to southern California and "will eventually be placed along the highway through the East and on into New York City." When that happened, "every owner of a motor car in the country will know that there is a transcontinental highway, completely signed and improved for safe and comfortable automobile travel that leads through the most picturesque and scenic portions of America and terminates in the greatest motoring region in the United States."

On July 10, the *Eye* reported that:

More than thirty-seven tons of signs and posts, 3000 signs and 1200 posts and four months of hard labor by an expert crew from the Automobile Club of Southern California will be used in sign-posting a transcontinental highway from Kansas City to Southern California, preparations for which started yesterday.

The July 1914 issue of *Touring Topics* described the project and how it had grown beyond the original idea of signing only the Southwestern portion:

No motoring organization in the world has ever attempted to extend its sign system even a thousand miles beyond the limits of its territory. But the Automobile Club of Southern California has achieved a record for doing things and . . . has little doubt that it will be successful in placing its signs along a continuous automobile thoroughfare that will link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The article stated that the National Old Trails Road intersects "everyone of the important western automobile roads with the single exception of the All Southern Route by way of Fort Worth and Galveston."

The Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, the Borderland Route, the Corn-belt route, the Lincoln Memorial Highway [the Colorado predecessor of the transcontinental Lincoln Highway], the Pike's Peak route, the White Pole route, the Midland route and the Trail to Sunset all converge upon the main route of the National Old Trails road, or connect with its northern feeder through Colorado. Thus, really, it becomes the spout of a giant funnel through which will pour the automobile traffic of the entire Middle West and of the western bound automobilists of the East.

The Automobile Club had chosen to sign the National Old Trails Road for four reasons "aside from the fact that it drains so extensive an automobile territory." First, "the road conditions over this route are better by far than are those of any other western highway of like distance." From Kansas City to the Pacific, the route included less than 200 miles of poor road.

Second, climatic conditions made the route "to all practical purposes a year-round road." It was impassable only for "a few days at a stretch" as a result of snows in Colorado and Kansas.

Third, the club cited the many places of scenic and historic interest along the route:

The beauties of the Rocky Mountain country, the historic associations of the Old Santa Fe Trail, the Indian villages, the cliff dwellers' ruins, the Painted Desert, the petrified forest, the Grand Canyon, these are some of the unique and picturesque attractions that are on the route of the Old Trails road.

The fourth "and one of the very most important" reasons was the fact that hotels and garage accommodations existed along the entire distance:

In this connection it should be said that the Harvey system of hotels extends along the National Old Trails Route from Kansas City westward to Los Angeles and that an itinerary can be arranged that will make one of these excellent hostleries the destination of each day's run.

The first signpost was placed in Los Angeles in front of the Automobile Club's property on Southern Figueroa Street. The event was accompanied by a celebration "befitting the magnitude of the undertaking." According to an article in the September 1914 *Touring Topics*, the ceremony included city officials, the Chamber of Commerce, and officers and members of the Automobile Club:

The first sign of the thousands that will be erected was placed in front of the new building that is being constructed. President Baker and Vice President Miller of the Automobile Club with Miss Trixie Friganza, the famous comedienne, assisted in erecting this first one of the direction signs. The truck was then christened with appropriate ceremony, and, the truck leading, a long procession of motor cars drove to the city hall where acting Mayor Whiffen presented the truck crew with letters addressed to the majors of Denver and Kansas City and the big Moreland rolled out of Los Angeles and took the boulevard for San Bernardino and the actual beginning of a great sign posting project was underway.

The article described the truck as "undoubtedly the best equipped and most complete vehicle for sign posting work that has ever taken the road." The 3-ton chassis had been fitted with a special body that was "subdivided into numerous compartments, each enclosed so that none of the tools or the signs or posts or any part of the equipment of the crew is exposed." Each sign had been numbered and placed in numerical order to save time.

The expedition was expected to last 4 or 5 months, but could be extended if plans to post signs to New York were approved. Still, just signposting to Kansas City would provide Southern California "a trade stimulus of incalculable benefit," according to the August 1914 issue of *Touring Topics*. Signing in California had been completed when the September 1914 issue was published, and through Arizona by the October issue. The club had already received "scores of letters" from motorists stating that the signing thus far was so complete that they had not "found it necessary to refer to their maps at a single point between Los Angeles and the eastern Arizona state line." The current estimate was that the program could be completed in December.

Judge Lowe considered this project a "tremendous work." He explained that the sign posts were guaranteed not to exceed \$6 each and were "to be erected at actual cost." The National Old Trails Road Association was treasurer of the funds, "and therefore actively interested in seeing that the contracts are properly let and executed." It was worth the expense:

This is by far the greatest work of the kind that has ever been undertaken, and means more to the Old Trails Road and to the communities through which it runs than anything which has ever been undertaken, next of course to permanently building the road.

He boasted that "no other transcontinental road in America has made such progress toward permanency as The Old Trails Road." As the Automobile Club had noted, only about 200 miles of the route were in rough or poor condition, but work was "in progress" to improve these bad stretches. He added that, "Many will no doubt be surprised that these bad stretches are principally on the eastern division of the road." He summarized road conditions and plans for improvement:

We are assured that the entire road through the State of Maryland is under contract for first class macadam. The same is true in Pennsylvania; West Virginia has her link of the road under a contract for vitrified brick on a concrete foundation. Much of the road through Ohio is under contract to be built out of the same material, and one continuous twenty-four mile stretch of concrete, and we are assured that the entire road across this State will be under contract and in process of construction during the year. In Indiana, the road is in fairly good shape as far west as Indianapolis, and from Indianapolis to Terre Haute the people are moving to put that end of it in good serviceable shape. Two-thirds of the road across Illinois is under contract for macadam, and active work is progressing. Two-thirds of the road across Missouri

is either built or under contract. From Kansas City to Los Angeles, while the road is principally a dirt road, yet it is in first class condition.

Judge Lowe pointed out that neither the Old Trails Association nor the Automobile Club would place signs on any segment that is not "put in good travelable condition." He added;

Therefore, it becomes the paramount duty of those residing upon these stretches of road which are not in first class shape, to get busy at once or they will not be sign posted as a part of the Old Trails Road, and travel will therefore be diverted and go around such stretches.

He concluded his exhortation by declaring:

"See America First," and see it over The Old Trails Road, and learn how much its grandeur and interest surpasses anything in foreign countries.

The Automobile Club found additional benefits from the early stages of the signposting expedition, as reported in the November 1914 issue of *Touring Topics*:

Each county and community through which the route passes is working with unprecedented energy and enthusiasm for the improvement of the highway. Already these counties are noting the growth in motor traffic that has resulted from the publicity that has been given to the route as a result of the Club's signposting work and realizing the further increase in automobile travel that will follow when the entire roadway is marked they recognize the necessity of placing the road in the best possible condition so that each tourist who traverses it will advertise it to his friends as more than fulfilling the requirements for comfortable automobile travel and accommodations.

Improvements were not confined to the National Old Trails Roads. "Scores of tributary routes are being improved and highways are being made practicable for motor travel that have heretofore been maintained only for wagon traffic." Further, the Automobile Club and the Old Trails Association were receiving letters "daily" seeking their cooperation in other signposting projects:

No other single enterprise has so successfully unified good roads sentiment in the West as has the signing of the

National Old Trails Road and the leaven of highway improvement that has been introduced by this important undertaking may very well produce so great a sentiment for Federal roads as to prove a determining influence when the subject receives the attention of the next Congress.

Touring Topics also reported progress on the crossing of the Colorado River between Arizona and California. At present, the only crossing was the Santa Fe Railroad bridge:

An appropriation of \$75,000 for a vehicle bridge over the Colorado at this point has been made jointly by the states of California and Arizona and the federal government. The construction of this bridge will probably take two years and in the meantime vehicle traffic has crossed the Colorado by means of a ferry, an expensive method both as to time and to cost and one attendant with considerable danger. In order to expedite vehicle traffic and to render the National Old Trails Highway of greater aid to transcontinental motor travel, the Santa Fe Railroad has planked the space between its rails over the bridge and has constructed on the outer side of each rail a gravel and oiled pathway that permits cars to cross the bridge as safely and with as much comfort as any vehicle bridge allows. A charge of three dollars and fifty cents for each car is made, which is less than the former ferry toll, with its great danger and loss of time.

In January 1915, *Touring Topics* reported that the signing crew had reached Pueblo, Colorado, but that the work was "not proving a pleasurable occupation for the Automobile Club's construction crew." The crew had encountered "zero weather but in spite of the severe cold is pushing ahead with the work and abating none of its energy toward completing the big project by early spring."

Work was slowed by the necessity of guarding against a frozen carburetor, radiator, and motor:

Each night all water is drawn from the radiator and the hose line between the radiator and the pump is disconnected and drained. The pump is then drained also and the motor run dry for a minute or two. In the morning it is necessary to pour hot water over the pump to free the shaft enough to crank the motor, then each cylinder is primed and, after replacing the hose connection on the radiator, the carburetor is flooded and the motor is started without water in the radiator.

The next step is to pour warm water into the radiator, followed by hot water until it is filled.

The crew also had to contend with "weak bridges that are not of sufficient strength to bear the heavy weight of a loaded truck." To get around weak bridges, the crew had to construct a temporary road or ford to cross the arroyo or stream.

Fortunately, although some "unavoidable accidents" had occurred, the crew had not had to abandon work because of weather "and this fact is eloquent endorsement of this route as a year-round motor highway." The Moreland truck had passed the "hardest portion of the trip," except for the lateral connection to the Lincoln Highway, and "there remains little mountainous country to be covered."

The men are prepared to carry the work through without unnecessary delay and although the truck has encountered several snow storms these have not been of sufficient severity to prevent continuous signposting.

Despite the crew's determination, the signposting took longer than expected. The July 1915 issue of *Touring Topics* reported that, "Only a few hundred miles remain to be posted" on the way to Kansas City. The Automobile Club had recalled the Moreland truck to help resume the club's signposting in southern California.

The final eastern portion of the transcontinental road will be signed with the aid of the Club's special charting car which has been stored in Kansas City during the past several months and with which the remaining work can be satisfactorily completed.

Few members, the article explained, had an "adequate conception of the difficulties of signposting a transcontinental route for approximately half its length between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans." The article summarized the difficulties:

Snow and rain that hindered progress; culverts too weak for the heavy construction truck and which gave way under its weight; special equipment that was delayed; consignments of posts and markers that failed to arrive at the distributing points at the required time.

Although these and other difficulties had delayed completion of the work, it had "conferred a distinct and definite benefit upon the motorists of the United States." Aside from the many expressions of appreciation from

"Easterners" for the work, traffic was increasing along the route. For example, during all of 1914, officials of Holbrook, Arizona, counted 194 transcontinental automobilists passing through the city. During May 1915, officials had counted 216 cars, 85 percent of which were westbound on the National Old Trails Road.

The results shown thus far on "the greatest single undertaking in which the Automobile Club of Southern California has interested itself" had already compensated the organization for its labors.

American Road Congress

The 4th Annual Meeting of the American Road Congress was held at the Auditorium-Armory in Atlanta, Georgia, on November 9-14, 1914. Several hundred delegates arrived on the evening of November 8 on special trains from New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, Cincinnati, and other points. In all, about 3,300 delegates attended, exceeding the number of delegates to the 1913 American Road Congress in Detroit. An account in the December 1914 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* called it "not only one of the largest, but also one of the most successful road congresses that has ever been held in this country."

Many speakers addressed the need for a national road construction program by the Federal Government. Robert P. Hooper, the former president of AAA, asked that every influence possible be exerted toward construction of a proposed great national highway system across the continent. George Diehl, chairing a session on behalf of AAA, informed delegates that his organization had established an office in Washington to procure legislation for Federal construction of a compact and efficient system of public highways that would be the backbone of transportation facilities in the United States. AAA did not favor the expenditure of millions of dollars over a large area, but rather construction of roads where they can and will do the most good.

Representative Borland also addressed the AAA session. "I believe in a national law for good roads," he said. "The investment of Federal funds in such a cause is the best economy." He added, "I will not vote for a bill which spreads money over a large territory. I want the money centered on some special mileage where it can do real good, whether a cent of it is spent in my county or not." To open up the country, "we will have to follow a system." First would come the "great trunk roads, then the provincial, or county roads, and after they are built, then will come the little by-roads."

Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, North Carolina's State Geologist, emphasized that the Federal Government should build the main roads, with the roads leading to them built by the States. The Federal tax dollars should not be

divided so that each Congressman would get a small slice for his district. A competent commission should be established to decide where the money would be spent.

C. A. Kenyon, president of the Indiana Good Roads Association, agreed:

If you believe in Federal Aid for roads, get after your Washington representatives. Shake your fist under the nose of your congressman and tell him if he is not in favor of Federal Aid, you are not in favor of him. You will find his ear to the ground. See to it also that such a bill is not a "pork-barrel" and do not let your congressman stand for a bill that will spread such a fund over every congressional district in the country. The right way, and the practical way, I think is to put the sum appropriated in the hands of a thoroughly competent commission.

During a session the following day, a letter from President Wilson was read to the delegates, stating in part:

I scarcely need emphasize the social and economic importance of good roads. They are the prerequisite to the betterment of rural life in a number of directions. Improved roads, especially improved community roads from the farm to the nearest railway station, are an urgent necessity. They are essential for the economical marketing of farm products, and for the development of the educational and social institutions of the country.

The President stressed the importance of sound administration of road funds. "When the people are fully convinced that they will receive full value for every dollar expended on roads, they will be brought more easily to the appreciation of the need for further expenditure and will make the requisite provision."

One of the important activities scheduled for the American Road Congress in 1914 was organization of a Women's Auxiliary. Logan Page explained that Mrs. Robert Baker of Washington was Chairman of the women's department of the American Highway Association. The goal was to secure the united efforts of women in every county and in every community to support good roads. "I hope and believe that the women will accomplish marvelous results in bringing about through moral suasion an improvement of road conditions in rural communities, and in so doing help the cause of better schools, better churches, and better homes." He added that their work was "designed to introduce particularly better road management and better maintenance of our public roads."

One of the first speakers during the Women's Conference was Miss Frances Pearl Mitchell, president of Women Farmers' Club in Rocheport, Missouri. She summarized the good roads work of women in Missouri:

As far back as 1909 the D.A.R.'s began working for the selection of historic roads as State and national highways. The result was . . . the organization of a "National Old Trails Road Association" to which were eligible any one interested in historic roads.

After summarizing other activities in Missouri, Miss Mitchell concluded:

Women can do much by their enthusiasm toward getting the right kind of road legislation and by their demand for the wise and honest expenditure of road funds in their respective States and counties. Good roads means the uniting of North and South, the East and West into combined effort toward progress and advancement of the Nation!

Mrs. Shephard Foster, representing Miss Gentry of the National Old Trails Road Committee of the D.A.R., also addressed the Women's Conference. She began by seeking support for the American Revolution Old Trails Act, H.R. 2864, introduced by Representative Borland. It provided for construction of the National Old Trails Road proposed as a national memorial road by the D.A.R. Mrs. Foster summarized the history of the road:

In 1910-11, Mrs. Robert Oliver, State Regent of Missouri, appointed Miss Elizabeth Gentry of Missouri, Chairman of the State Old Trails Road Committee, whose duty it was to urge a State highway across the State following two famous old trails. At Miss Gentry's request Governor Hadley of Missouri dedicated this road and named it the Old Trails Road. Miss Gentry is now chairman of a national committee in the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1000 strong, representing every State in the Union, actively engaged in creating public sentiment for this road. Through the courtesy of the Century Company, the Madonna of the Prairies, renamed the Madonna of the Trail, has been adopted by this committee as its symbol

The National Old Trails Road Association was formed at a national convention at Kansas City, April, 1912. As stated in its By-laws, it was "formed to assist the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution to carry forward its purpose of making the National Old Trails Road the National

Highway." This organization of men has over 7,000 members and handles the business and practical side of the question while the Daughters of the American Revolution handle the historic and sentimental side. Judge J. M. Lowe, of Kansas City, is President of the Association.

The Daughters of the American Revolution were the first to think of a national memorial highway, spanning the continent There are many road bills pending in Congress and we admit the necessity for all of these diverging highways. Nevertheless, because our great road in the next few years will have an unprecedented opportunity to teach American history to Americans and because we claim priority for the idea of transcontinental highway we want our great ocean to ocean road built *first*.

Mrs. Foster explained that, "Our plan has a social and political as well as an economic value, for our road is made up of several old trails that speak one by one of the advance of opportunity, civilization, religion and romance, across our continent." It would promote the concept of "See America First," diverting some of the estimated \$250-300 million that Americans spend in Europe every year.

She summarized the historic origins of the trail, referring to the original concept of a National Old Trails Road that included a branch along the Oregon Trail. But Representative Shackleford's complaint was also on her mind:

This road has been called "Peacock Boulevard," but along this boulevard you may not only see (may I say) beautiful "peacocks," but you can delight in the canvas back ducks and oysters of Maryland, the beaten biscuits and fried chicken of Virginia, the Missouri apple, the Kansas corn and the venison steak of the Northwest as well.

Then she called on the Women's Conference for support:

The committee wants your support because this Old Trails Road is the most practicable outline for an ocean to ocean road yet suggested, because its connection links are made up of old roads and trails that are replete with history, and because there cannot be a route which would be of more picturesque and historic interest.

The old roads have been marked with the crimson blood of our forefathers who through their heroic deeds and

sacrifices, blazed the pathway of American civilization and their history is filled with sacred reminiscences. The Daughters of the American Revolution ask you to lend your influence in behalf of our Old Trails Road Bill as a fitting memorial to our pioneer patriots.

Mrs. Baker, the Conference Chairman, responded that "it is rather difficult to explain the attitude of this new woman's department to these specific highways. Especially after the delicious *menu* offered by the National Old Trails Roads!" She added:

This department, of course, is heartily in sympathy with good roads everywhere that they serve the demands of present day traffic and is deeply sensible of the charm of sentiment and association which clings about the old trails. These transcontinental highways and all others ought however to be built by skillful men, under efficient and economical management, and all the various sections of these costly roads should be permanently maintained after they are built.

She noted that between 20 and 40 percent of road funds are wasted under the present system of State road management. "How much better to stop this enormous leak before pouring out further great streams of money for the roads." When road management is as efficient as the management of any other big modern business, "Then there will be money enough in State treasuries to build the different sections of these splendid roads at the smallest cost and with the least expenditure of time and effort."

Resolutions, 1914

Delegates to the American Road Congress in Atlanta adopted several resolutions. On the subject of Federal road legislation, the delegates agreed on the following:

That the American Road Congress emphatically endorse the principle of federal cooperation toward the construction of main highways and thus assist the several States to build the main market roads in the one-half of the country which is devoted to agriculture-and to build through main roads in the one-half of the country which is not predominantly agricultural, but whose prosperity depends upon mining, the raising of live stock, and the presence of the health seeker and tourist.

Another resolution deplored highway accidents and called on authorities throughout the nation to enact "the necessary rules and regulations to

insure the public safety." The delegates also called on the Federal Government to build highways across all Indian and forest reservations and all other federalized areas to provide connecting links in established routes of travel.

The delegates also adopted a resolution in support of the Lincoln Highway:

That the Lincoln Highway Association be commended for its successful voluntary effort in arranging with counties, cities and townships for a connected series of roads across the United States, thus providing a definite and continuous route to be used wholly or in part by those who wish to become acquainted with the agricultural, mining and scenic advantages of their own land.

A New Highway Organization

While at the convention, State highway officials met to consider forming an organization that would represent their interests. They believed that the American Highway Association, formed by Page as an umbrella organization of many interests, was not the best representative of the States. One State highway official, George Coleman of Virginia, complained that the American Highway Association displayed a "strong and persistent jealousy" of the American Road Builders Association, which covered some of the same ground.

State highway officials had discussed the idea throughout the year. In March, Page had written to Coleman in agreement about the importance of establishing an organization that would allow the U.S. Office of Public Roads to stay in closer touch with the State highway officials. These early discussions resulted in a dinner at the Georgian Terrace Hotel under the auspices of Mr. A. C. Batchelder, Executive Secretary of AAA, and Mr. Diehl. The State officials issued a call to all State highway commissions and departments to meet in Washington at the Raleigh Hotel on December 12, 1914, "to assist in drafting a bill to be presented to Congress, which will embody a plan of Federal cooperation in road construction."

During the December 12 meeting, the State highway officials established the American Association of State Highway Officials, which would play a major role in creation of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916.

END PART 1
to be continued

Special thanks to Rick Roam for providing copies of *Touring Topics* and *The Needles Eye* articles used in this report.

The National Old Trails Road

Photo Gallery

Click on photo for larger version





THE NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD

Part 2: See America First in 1915

by

Richard F. Weingroff

The Lincoln Highway Association, the National Old Trails Road Association, and other groups with an interest in California tourism based a portion of their early promotion on the assumption that long-distance highway traffic would increase significantly in 1915 as motorists headed to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego.

Carl Fisher had cited the Panama-Pacific Exposition in September 1912, when he told his automobile industry associates in Indianapolis about his plan for a coast-to-coast rock highway from New York City to San Francisco. With the \$10 million he expected to raise from the industry, he planned to have the new road, soon to be named the Lincoln Highway, ready for travel so “a corps of 25,000 automobiles can be taken over this road to the opening of the Exposition in San Francisco either in May or June, 1915.”

The proposal was an ambitious idea that, with the help of an impressive public relations initiative, captured the public’s imagination. As Fisher learned within a year, however, it was also an impossible task. He would not be able to raise \$10 million from his auto industry associates or from any other source. Moreover, that amount would not have been enough. And if he had raised that amount, he did not have any means of using it to improve the roads that were connected to become the Lincoln Highway—much less to do so by May 1915.

The National Old Trails Road Association and the Automobile Club of Southern California had begun an extensive campaign in 1914 to post signs on the National Old Trails Road to help motorists find their way to the expositions. They also posted signs on feeder roads from the Lincoln Highway to entice motorists to leave the northern route and take the Old Trails route to California.

The California Expositions

The expositions, which had been in the planning stages for several years, were intended to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. Water passage across North America had motivated North American explorations since colonial days, including Lewis and Clark’s U.S. Army Corps of Discovery beginning in 1803. By mid-century, with no suitable transcontinental water route found, travelers could choose from three unsatisfactory alternatives. They could board ship for the long, dangerous voyage around the southern tip of South America. Alternatively, travelers could leave their ship at Nicaragua and cross the narrow Isthmus of Panama to the Pacific Ocean by a combination of land and river. This saved time, but travelers risked contracting Yellow Fever and other diseases. The third option, overland travel, became possible—just barely—in the late 1840’s.

The Gold Rush of 1849, with thousands of Americans suddenly bound for the west by all their methods of travel, dramatized the need for an alternative. This need was not fully satisfied by the first transcontinental railroad (completed at Promontory Point, Utah, on May 10, 1869) nor the Panama Railroad across the Isthmus (completed in January 1855, although the railroad had been carrying passengers and goods as

early as 1851). Trans-ocean shipping needed a shorter way to move between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

A French company chose Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal (completed in 1869) to build a canal linking the oceans in the 1870's. The effort failed, doomed by Yellow Fever, expense, inadequate equipment, and de Lesseps' incorrect engineering judgments.

During the Spanish-American War in 1898, the difficulty of moving U.S. Navy ships around South America for battles in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines convinced American officials of the military necessity of a shorter sea route. The need for faster communication became even more critical when these three former Spanish territories became part of the United States as a result of the war.

The United States took on the job in 1899 with creation of the Isthmian Canal Commission. While plans for the canal were under development, Dr. William Gorgas of the U.S. Army demonstrated the cure for Yellow Fever in Havana, Cuba, beginning in 1900 (eliminating breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which transmitted the disease). This solution cleared the way for successful construction of the canal.

Construction began in 1904 under Chief Engineer John F. Wallace, a railroad builder who proved to be unsuited to the task. He was replaced by John F. Stevens, another railroad builder, who laid the groundwork for the job, including full support for Dr. Gorgas' efforts to fight Yellow Fever. Finally, in 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Colonel George Washington Goethals of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as Chief Engineer. He would complete the job. The spectacular construction project, a symbol of the Nation's emergence on the international landscape, was completed in August 1914. (For information on construction of the Panama Canal, see David McCullough's *Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914*, Simon & Schuster, 1978.)

Boosters in California's three major coastal cities saw the Panama Canal as a potential bonanza. With a population under 40,000 as of the 1910 census, San Diego was the underdog. Los Angeles (319,000) and San Francisco (416,000) were far ahead of their southern rival. Nevertheless, San Diego expected to be a principal port of call for the Atlantic-Pacific trade. Los Angeles, which had the same idea, annexed the port towns of Wilmington and San Pedro to try to capture the trade that would expand after the opening of the canal. San Francisco, still recovering from the devastation of the Great Earthquake and fire of 1906, also wanted to take advantage of the expected boom in trade.

As the first decade of the 20th century advanced, the idea of a Panama Canal exposition was a common idea in several cities. In San Francisco, the success of the Louisiana Purchase International Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904, the same year construction began on the Panama Canal, spurred thought of an international exposition to celebrate its completion. In the wake of the Great Earthquake, officials saw the exposition as an opportunity to mark the rebirth of their city. Officials of New Orleans, Louisiana, another city that was likely to benefit from the opening of the canal, also sought approval for an exposition.

In San Diego, on July 9, 1909, banker G. Aubrey Davidson addressed the San Diego Chamber of Commerce with a proposal for an exposition in the city park. According to San Diego historian Richard F. Pourade, "This would not only provide for a major attraction but for park development as well" (*Gold in the Sun*, The Union-Tribune Publishing Company, 1965, p. 113). After learning of San Francisco's interest in a similar exposition, city boosters put their plans into effect as quickly as they could. On September 3, 1909, the same day that James McNab, President of the San Francisco Chamber of

Commerce, announced that his city would hold an exposition to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal, San Diego boosters incorporated the Panama-California Exposition Company.

As Pourade noted, “San Diegans were aware that they could not compete with San Francisco in staging a world’s fair and narrowed their ambitions to an exposition that would be regional in character” (p. 127). Delegates from the two cities met in January 1910, with San Francisco urging San Diego to drop its planned exposition. San Diego initially declined. However, in April, when New Orleans sought approval from the United States Congress for an exposition, the two California cities agreed on a compromise. On May 7, stockholders in the San Diego exposition company agreed to support San Francisco’s bid for an international exposition in honor of the Panama Canal while holding a smaller exposition in San Diego based on the history and culture of Southern California. Assurances to San Francisco included dropping the word “international” from promotion of the San Diego exposition.

In 1911, reportedly in return for support from San Francisco interests for his reelection bid in 1912, President William Howard Taft supported the city’s bid to host the international exposition by inviting other countries to participate. San Diego boosters, who had been trying to secure Federal invitations to Mexico and other Latin American countries, felt betrayed by San Francisco’s actions, but had little choice except to continue with their plans.

The Panama-Pacific International Exposition, after three years of construction at a cost of \$25 million, opened in San Francisco on February 20, 1915. After rejecting Golden Gate Park as the site, planners had chosen an undeveloped parcel of land on the bay next to the Presidio military base. The twin themes of the exposition were the opening of the Panama Canal and the 400th anniversary of the day that the explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa became the first European in the New World to see the Pacific Ocean (in September 1513, Balboa had crossed the Isthmus of Panama and claimed what he called the South Sea for Spain). It featured exhibits from 20 States and 23 countries.

Historians Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle described the exposition:

The site was laid out in a series of plazas, or courtyards, rather than along wide avenues as in past expositions, and each of the principal plazas was developed by a different architect and surrounded by exhibition buildings, which also served to block chilly breezes from the bay. The style of the exhibition buildings was generally neoclassical, but each principal structure had a dome, giving rise to the nickname “City of Domes.” Of those domes the most spectacular was the huge glass dome of the Palace of Horticulture, which was larger than the dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. Near the center of the fairgrounds stood the 432-foot high Tower of Jewels, which was laden with allegorical figures and draped with more than one hundred thousand pieces of colored cut glass linked to tiny mirrors. An elaborate system of indirect lighting made the glass look like precious jewels. The fair buildings, which were constructed out of an artificial travertine substance developed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White, were tinted in a palette of pastel shades, and under the direction of John McLaren, a park designer, hundreds of trees and shrubs were transplanted on the site. [*Fair America*, Smithsonian Institute Press, 2000, p. 64-65]

Although the exposition emphasized the fine arts, one of the most popular exhibits was an automotive display that included a Ford assembly line that produced 18 Model T’s every day. *Fair America* mentioned some of the other exhibits:

The fair also displayed a transcontinental telephone line, marking the beginning of long distance telephone service, various aviation demonstrations, color photography, and a working Underwood typewriter that was fifteen feet high and weighed fourteen tons. [p. 65]

In San Diego, construction of the exposition in Balboa Park (formerly City Park) began with a groundbreaking ceremony on July 19, 1911. The exposition opened on January 1, 1915, as described by Pourade:

President Woodrow Wilson, 2600 miles away, touched an electric button that turned on a light suspended by a balloon and bathed an area of three square miles in a glow in which the “Magic City” was visible for miles at sea. The guns of Fort Rosecrans and those of Navy cruisers in the harbor sounded in unison with the explosions of 1000 mines planted around the grounds to herald the opening of the Panama-California Exposition. [p. 183]

Fair America described the grounds:

One of the main features of the San Diego fair was its clear attempt to reinvent history to help build an urban identity for the city. Much of southern California’s population had arrived within a generation of the fair, and the city still had a Midwestern air, especially in its dour Republican politics and imitative Victorian architecture To change the course of the city’s architecture, and therefore its identity, [exposition planners] hit upon this scheme: throughout the fair they would create a romanticized vision of the city’s Spanish heritage, transforming the fair into a Spanish/Mediterranean colonial city—a West Coast “city on a hill” that would rival what the Puritans had tried to accomplish in New England three centuries earlier. [p. 68-69]

The main buildings, designed in an “elaborate baroque Spanish-Mexican colonial style,” lined a single street called the Prado. The site was landscaped to “create an abundant Mediterranean atmosphere.”

The Panama-California Exposition featured technological and industrial exhibits, a midway of live shows, and exhibits contributed by railroad companies seeking tourist business. However, it emphasized the “science of man” by illustrating the evolutionary progress of humans. The anthropologists worked out plans for a three-part presentation that would include separate exhibits on the physical evolution of man, the evolution of culture, and the native races of America.

Although San Diego's population had increased to over 70,000 by the opening of the exposition, it had not attracted exhibits from other countries. Exhibits came from only six other western States.

Motor Routes to the California Expositions

With two expositions in California, highway boosters assumed that motorists wanted to know about the roads to the State.

In May 1915, *The Road-Maker* magazine published "California by Automobile" by Morris N. Rathbun ("Reliable Information in Regard to Trans-Continental Routes"). Rathbun began by stating that "the question of the hour" was: "How are the roads to California?" The Automobile Club of Southern California, he stated, had experienced a 500-percent increase in inquiries about routing, points of interest, and road conditions. Rathbun had traveled several of the main transcontinental routes to gather answers for his readers:

Briefly and generally answered, from Kansas City westward until the coast is reached the road beds for the most part are dirt, with improved stretches ranging from a dozen or two miles [sic] to nearly three hundred. The best months for traveling by auto over the Lincoln highway, the Trans-Colorado or the Northwest Trail are from late in May until October. The Southern route, the National Old Trails, may be taken any month in the year. During July and August the heat makes the Northern route more desirable.

Rathbun had begun in Seattle and traveled to San Diego, so his description was based on travelers heading east:

Two routes are possible in returning east from San Diego, but if the Grand Canyon of Arizona is to be visited, the better way is to return through Los Angeles and take the National Old Trails road east to Williams. Here a good road to the Canyon is found and the return to the Old Trails highways is made at Flagstaff.

The alternative, the Ocean to Ocean Highway from San Diego, would require motorists to depart at Phoenix to reach the National Old Trails Road at Ashfork. Noting the signposting of the National Old Trails Road, he said that, "The Old Trails route is good traveling the year round so far as snow and cold are concerned."

Motorists, Rathbun stated, "will find the roads in better condition than ever before and more provision made for the comfort of touring parties than in the history of the good roads movement in the west." He continued:

It is certain that all of the communities through which the transcontinental highways or their secondary branches pass have made strenuous effort to have their highways in the best possible condition for the California expositions year. Competition has been keen to direct their way on the part of cities, counties and states with the result that the user of western roads is the gainer as well as the communities themselves.

No writer was better qualified than A. L. Westgard to judge the condition of the country's main highways to California. Westgard had been driving the western roads for years, long before the National Old Trails Road and Lincoln Highway had been formed by their backers. He had identified and mapped several routes, including the Trail to Sunset; no one had a more intimate knowledge of road conditions. He

provided his views on “Motor Routes to the California Expositions” in the March 1915 issue of *Motor*.

Westgard began by noting the rigors of the pioneer days of the motor car only a few years earlier:

Yesterday we had the rough trails with unbridged streams and ravines, rocky and steep hills, deep sand or perchance mud and slush, poor or no accommodations for man or car, motor cars of crude design and unknown weakness, and, Presto! today, over night, we have well developed touring routes with fair and fast improving surface condition, bridges and culverts, easy grades, good, or, in most cases, at least, fair hotels, garages, plentiful supplies, and well designed all around dependable cars. Verily, life is decidedly worth while, after all.

On the routes that he would describe, motorists could forget “all fear of danger, insurmountable obstacles or serious discomforts.” Still, in all fairness, he had to warn:

[On] every one of the five routes described in this article there still remains just sufficient lack of a semblance to park boulevards to ensure one of a chance to rough it to some extent, but it is my belief that a month’s living out of doors, the ever changing scenery, besides acquiring a knowledge of our vast country, obtainable no other way, will add sufficient zest to the trip to forget and forgive any minor discomforts encountered.

For transcontinental motorists, he covered the National Old Trails Road, the Lincoln Highway, and the Midland Trail. In his view, the National Old Trails Road “takes first place, looked at either from the standpoint of surface condition, scenery, historic interest or hotel accommodations.” Over \$2 million had been expended to improve the route in 1914, Westgard said, and a like amount was reportedly to be spent in 1915:

It was the first transcontinental route to have an organization created for its improvement, and that this organization has been a live one is amply evidenced by its energetic campaign for yearly betterments.

Much of the money had been used to build “long stretches of perfect macadam roads in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, as well as graveled roads in Ohio and Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri.” Motorists, he said, expected road improvement in “a settled country” such as the eastern States. In the Southwest, the motorist would be surprised by the improved conditions he experienced:

[When] in traveling through arid desert regions, practically uninhabited, one finds graded roads, even though only built of the native soil, bridges over all streams and ravines, culverts over all ditches and washes, one cannot help but ponder over and admire the enterprising spirit shown by the states and counties through which one travels, hence the memory of the trip through New Mexico, Arizona and the Mojave Desert in California will linger long in your mind.

After describing the historic segments that gave the route its name, Westgard commented that, “West of Kansas City the entire distance is well signposted by the Automobile Club of Southern California in conjunction with the Old Trails Association and the counties traversed.”

Westgard then provided a detailed summary of road conditions. Motorists would find “good macadam through Philadelphia and Baltimore to Washington.” Through Frederick, Hagerstown, Cumberland, Maryland, and Uniontown to Washington, Pennsylvania, “the road is mostly new and the route offers

surprisingly good going.” From Washington to Wheeling, West Virginia, the National Old Trails Road was mostly macadam; from Wheeling to Columbus, Ohio, the “surface is mostly pavement.” Good conditions continued with “fine and mostly level graveled roads” to Indianapolis, Indiana, and “more gravel road” to Terre Haute.

Potential problems began in Illinois, where a motorist would “encounter some stretches of clay, which according to whether there has been recent rain or not, will be merely rough or quite bad.” With occasional relief from “hard surface pavement near the towns,” the stretches of clay would prevail until the motorist reached St. Louis, Missouri.

Missouri, home State of the National Old Trails Road, was making progress:

Across the state of Missouri will be found substantial concrete culverts and bridges, built preparatory to macadamizing the entire route. At present, however, there are still several counties where the clayey soil makes bad going when wet, though for the major distance will be found good macadam or well graded and dragged dirt roads, though somewhat hilly.

In this eastern section of the National Old Trails Road, the route “is marked with red, white and blue bands on telephone poles along the road.”

Motorists could choose from two routes between Kansas City, Missouri, and Lyons, Kansas:

Both coincide to Edgerton, where they separate, one following a good graded, well-marked dirt road via Ottawa, Newton, Emporia and Hutchinson, while the other goes via Council Grove, Herrington, and McPherson. While the first follows mostly valley flats, its superior Harvey House system of hotels probably balances the claim of following gravel ridges made by the latter.

The route through Emporia was the New Santa Fe Trail organized by boosters in 1910. The other, via Council Grove, was the Old Santa Fe Trail organized by boosters in 1911. Although the National Old Trails Road Association had adopted the Old Santa Fe Trail as the official route, backers of the New Santa Fe Trail continued to promote their route as superior.

West of Lyons, where the rival Santa Fe Trails met, the roads were graded dirt parallel to the Santa Fe Railroad to La Junta, Colorado:

It may be stated here that there is no paved road on the route west of Kansas City before reaching within a day’s ride of the Pacific Coast, except short stretches near the larger towns, the improvements being confined to grading the natural soil and building bridges and culverts.

From La Junta to Trinidad, recent improvements made the road “at least comfortable.” From Trinidad, the National Old Trails Road ascended “the convict-built scenic road up over Raton Pass,” before crossing the New Mexico state line “over a very winding road into Raton.”

New Mexico and its neighbor, Arizona, were the Nation’s newest States, having attained statehood in 1912. Westgard reported that New Mexico’s “newly-acquired statehood has imbued it with a remarkable enterprise and energy in road betterments and other internal improvements.” The two States, in fact, were “showing the older members of the family how to be ‘up and doing’” despite such “natural obstacles in the way of adobe soil, lava rocks and sandy stretches.”

The road followed the Santa Fe Railroad to East Las Vegas, where motorists would find a new road through Romero Pass. Passing through Tecolote, motorists could “ford the shallow-gravel-bottomed river of the same name and soon drop into Bernal.” The road again followed the railroad to a key decision point:

Three and a half miles west of Bernal it crosses the railroad, and at a fork just beyond one must be sure to take the right fork, no doubt properly signed at this time.

Crisscrossing the railroad at different points, the road continued through a series of small towns to Santa Fe, where the motorist drove “south over a good road.”

Westgard warned motorists to be prepared for a point 19 miles south of Santa Fe where “one almost jerks his car to a stop, and, if I am a judge of human nature, spends a half-hour in admiring contemplation from the rim of La Bajada Hill.” After “taking several photographs” of this “marvelous view,” the motorist would leave “the rim of the precipitous lava hill and gingerly proceeds down a very winding road, where three or four turns are so sharp that with a long wheelbase he will be compelled to back up to make it.” He warned motorists about this critical spot on the National Old Trails Road:

Though the road is good, one had better go slow and use extreme caution, with the hand on the brake, because a couple of the sharpest turns, where he may probably have to back up, simply lead into nothing more substantial than atmosphere, and mighty thin atmosphere at that, should the car refuse to stop at the exact spot on an inch ruler where it is necessary to manipulate for the turn.

Safely on level ground again, the motorist crossed “the desert on a remarkably good road.” Beyond Domingo, “the road passes through a forty-foot-deep cut in a gravel hill which brings home to one with strong emphasis the amount of work accomplished on this [desert] road.” The motorist soon reaches Albuquerque. For conditions leaving Albuquerque, Westgard could offer only speculation:

Though assured by the State Engineer that the new road from Albuquerque to Gallup will be open for traffic this spring, I think it might be well, in case of possible delay of the opening of that route, to state here that a fair road leads from Albuquerque to Socorro, crossing a new bridge over the Rio Grande near the latter town, and thence on good-to-fair road via Magdalena across the Augustine Plains and the Datil Mountains to Springerville, Arizona, thence via St. Johns to Holbrook, where it joins the regular Old Trails Route

To avoid the “difficult Manuelito wash,” the route turned northwest along “a good road” to St. Michaels, Arizona. From St. Michaels to Holbrook, the motorist could “cross the river on the new bridge, if finished,” or ford the river, “which is usually safe in mid-summer.” Either way, the motorist would encounter “some pretty tough going” before encountering “a good road” to Winslow, “at one point crossing on an iron bridge a very deep gash in the earth.”

Between Holbrook and Flagstaff, the motorist would follow “a new graded road” and a “safe crossing of Canyon Diablo and over a magnificent concrete bridge spanning Canyon Padre.” The National Old Trails Road followed “the railroad pretty closely on good-to-fair roads” to Topock, where the motorist paid \$3.50 to cross the planked ties of the railroad bridge across the Colorado River.

Once in California, the motorist would find a “fine road sixteen miles to Needles.”

A new road, following the railroad more or less closely, leads from Needles 166 miles along the length of the Mojave Desert to Barstow, where it turns south, and soon the motorist descends a splendid highway through Cajon Pass to San Bernardino From San Bernardino one may either follow the fine highways, 65 miles via Pomona and Pasadena direct, to Los Angeles and then drop down along the coast 131 miles to San Diego or go direct via Riverside to the San Diego Exposition first and then up the coast to Los Angeles. The roads are fine either way.

Westgard concluded his tour of the National Old Trails Road with practical advice for motorists considering the trip. He warned that the best months to travel were June through October. He added, "Don't leave the East later than October tenth, or one is liable to find snow on Raton Pass or around Flagstaff." Hotel accommodations were good throughout the trip, with much of the route lined by Harvey System hotels "at convenient intervals." In addition, he said, "Garages, gasoline and oil are available all along the route."

Motorists could also take the Lincoln Highway, which "was selected and named by an organization which has for its object the permanent improvement of the route by funds obtained from private subscription and membership fees." They would find the route "well marked in most sections by red, white and blue bands on telegraph poles, fenceposts or bridge railings, the letter 'L' being painted in the middle of the white band." He thought, however, that most motorists leaving New York would depart from the designated route and take a northern route via Albany and Buffalo, New York; Erie, Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Ohio; and South Bend, Indiana, to Chicago. Despite at least one section near Willoughby, Ohio, that was "still quite bad," motorists would find this northern route to be "very good."

From Chicago to the Mississippi River, the Lincoln Highway was "mostly macadam." Across Iowa between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, the road was a "good graded road, graveled on stretches." However, conditions began to deteriorate west of Omaha, Nebraska:

Some macadam is encountered just west of Omaha to Fremont. From this point the tourist follows the valley of the Platte River, on level graded dirt road through Columbia, Kearney and Gottenburg to North Platte, located at the junction of North and South Platte Rivers. West of here is encountered rougher going, relieved by some graded stretches and following the valley of the South Platte River to Big Spring Proceeding west from Big Spring, the tourist leaves the river and passes through Chappell and Kimball on fair gravelly road, crossing the Wyoming state line just before reaching Pine Bluff.

Between Laramie and Rawlins, motorists encountered river routes. The Lincoln Highway followed the shorter route via Elk Mountain. The alternative followed the railroad via Medicine Bow "using some abandoned railroad grades to good advantage." It was 20 miles longer, but was "favored by the state authorities because, it is said, it serves a greater local population." The road west of Rawlins was "good, bad or indifferent, following the railroad" to Wamsutter. After crossing the Continental Divide, the Lincoln Highway avoided "the worst of the very rough Bitter Creek country in the Red Desert, although from Point of Rocks to Rock Springs "one gets a taste of it." The Lincoln Highway was a good "gravel dirt road from Rock Springs to Green River," but was "rough going to Granger." After crossing "some bad clay flats" on the way to Bridger, motorists would find a "good dirt and graded road" to Evanston.

In Utah, the road was "fair" to Salt Lake City, where Westgard indicated that a routing controversy was brewing about the best way to Reno, Nevada:

A serious discussion of the relative merits of routes between Salt Lake City and Reno, Nevada, has disturbed the horizon for some time. The route via Ogden and around the north end of the lake has been much improved in the state of Utah, and, while in view of these improvements and some in Nevada, coupled with the fact that this route follows the railroad all the way across Nevada, and never is over ten miles from a habitation, leads me to recommend that route to a man traveling with his wife and children, still I do not consider the regular Lincoln Highway route between these points dangerous, nor even hazardous, and especially not for tourists prepared for the eventuality of having to rough it in case of bad weather or a breakdown.

Following, then, the Lincoln Highway on the 300 miles to Ely, Nevada, motorists would “encounter much desert and some rather hard going.” The virtue of a road with good accommodations would become clear on this stretch of road. The distance was “too great for one day, and, as there is no hotel accommodation between, the best the traveler can do is bunk at a ranch house displaying a sign carrying the legend ‘Hotel’ at Kearney’s Ranch.” Gasoline was another problem:

At the Fish Springs Ranch motorists are charged fifty cents a gallon for gasoline, should they need any, and it is probable, for they have gone 147 miles since leaving Salt Lake City.

At Antelope Valley, the motorist came to a fork in the road. In choosing between the routes via Kinsley Pass and Schellbourne Pass into Steptoe Valley, the motorist had “little choice in the two, both are very rough.” West of Steptoe Valley to Ely, however, the road was good all the way.

Leaving Ely, the road was through desert country, “and it is up and down, over summits and across valleys, with water scarce between towns” to Eureka. The Lincoln Highway crossed Desert Valley, Alkali Flat and several summits to Austin in the Toiyaba Mountains, then along rugged terrain, including a 12-mile borax flat, to Fallon. “This flat is very dusty and cut up into ruts when dry and practically impassable when wet.” The Lincoln Highway followed the railroad across a government irrigation project to Wadsworth. At this point, Westgard assured potential travelers:

Now the tourist is past most of the bad going, as the road continuing along the Truckee River between the Virginia and Washoe Mountains is improving as you near Reno, 185 miles from Austin.

From Reno to Carson City, the Lincoln Highway was good, but soon took motorists “up King’s Canyon grade on a good, but steep and winding road to Glenbrook.”

Entering California west of Edgewood, the tourist started “to mount the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and it is certainly some stiff climb for the two miles to the summit, 7,500 feet above sea level.” Descending, the Lincoln Highway was a “fair gravel road all the way” to Placerville. Between Folsom and Sacramento, the Lincoln Highway changed from gravel to macadam. Motorists would encounter “fine macadam roads” through Stockton and Livermore to Oakland, where the ferry crossed the bay to San Francisco.

On the Lincoln Highway, Westgard found good hotel accommodations in most places west of Chicago, but “fair-to-poor” in some areas “and quite bad in most of Western Nebraska and Wyoming towns.” However, he found that garages, gasoline and oil were available “everywhere.” Because of snow in the Sierra Nevada Mountains from November to May, the best months to travel the Lincoln Highway were June through September.

Westgard provided similar coverage of the Midland Trail (New York City to Los Angeles) and the Oceanic Highway (Galveston, Texas, to San Diego) along with brief descriptions of the Pacific Highway and an unspecified route to the Northwest.

In general, the transcontinental routes had been improved to the point that “it is no longer necessary to load one’s car down with all sorts of paraphernalia to combat the many difficulties which formerly were strewn along the path, nor is it, in this day of dependable motor cars, necessary to carry a multiplicity of parts.” Nevertheless, the motorist would be well advised “to outfit with a reasonably limited equipment to provide against mud, possible breakdowns and climatic changes.” Whether on the National Old Trails Road, the Lincoln Highway, or another route, the motorist would want to prepare carefully for the drive to the California expositions:

To begin with, limit your personal outfit to a minimum, allowing only a suitcase to each person, and ship your trunk. Use khaki or old loose clothing. Some wraps and a tarpaulin to protect you against cool nights and provide cover in the case of being compelled to sleep outdoors are essential. Amber glasses, not too dark, will protect your eyes against the glare of the desert. You will, of course, want a camera, but remember that the high lights of the far west will require a smaller shutter opening and shorter exposure than the eastern atmosphere.

Carry sixty feet of 5/8-inch Manila rope, a pointed spade, small axe with the blade protected by a leather sheet, a camp lantern, a collapsible canvas bucket with spout and a duffle bag for the extra clothing and wraps. Start out with new tires all around, of the same size if possible, and two extra tires also, with four extra inner tubes. Select a tire with tough fabric; this is economical and will save annoyance. Use only the best grade of lubricating oil and carry a couple of one-gallon cans on running-board as extra supply, because you may not always be able to get the good oil you ought to use.

And, mark this well, carry two three-gallon canvas desert waterbags, then see that they are filled each morning. Give your car a careful inspection each day for loose bolts or nuts and watch grease cups and oilcups. Carry two sets of chains and two jacks, and add to your usual tool equipment a coil of soft iron wire, a spool of copper wire and some extra spark plugs.

West of the Missouri carry a small commissary of provisions, consisting of canned meat, sardines, crackers, fresh fruit or canned pineapples and some milk chocolate for lunches. The lack of humidity in the desert sections, combined with the prevalence of hard water west of the Missouri River is liable to cause the hair to become dry and to cause chaps and blisters on the face and hands as well as cause the fingernails to become brittle and easily broken. To prevent this, carry a jar or outing [sic] cream and a good hair cleanser. Use them every night.

Westgard’s complete article can be found at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/westgard.htm>

The Bourne Committee Report

The Joint Committee on Federal Aid in the Construction of Post Roads had been appointed in August 1912, with Senator Jonathan Bourne, Jr., of Oregon as Chairman. The committee issued several reports describing road conditions, administration of road improvements, and funding in the States and other countries. In addition to drawing on information from the U.S. Office of Public Roads (OPR), the committee received testimony on the effect of bad roads on education, quality of rural life, and the

migration of young people to cities. Testimony also covered the impact of roads on farm life and how motor vehicles had changed farm transportation.

The committee summarized its conclusions in a report released on January 21, 1915. The committee, with its membership spanning the spectrum of views on Federal involvement in road building, concluded that Federal involvement was desirable, but expressed concern about the possibility that any program would result in a dictatorial Federal bureaucracy. The Federal role would, inevitably, lead to higher standards:

The more direct participation of the National Government . . . should bring the attention of road builders throughout the country to the highest standards of road construction. We believe that this can be accomplished without building up an autocratic bureau vested with dictatorial power to which the road authorities of the United States would be subservient.

The committee was aware of the criticism by opponents of a Federal-aid approach:

To undertake Federal aid to good roads in a small way means a continuation of the policy of patchwork and consequent waste of funds, with slight permanent results to show for the expenditure. The adoption of such a policy would also within a very few years subject Congress to the criticism of having established what is commonly called a “pork barrel,” from which the several States would receive annually a small contribution of funds distributed over a large mileage of roads and without producing the high class of public roads which are so much needed and desired.

While wanting to avoid legislation of a “pork-barrel” character, the committee did not want to give too much power to Federal officials:

That Congress should avoid criticism of the character above mentioned is no more important than that it should make careful provision for such administration of the Federal highway participation as will protect the several States in their right to control their local highway affairs and guard against dictatorship from a Federal bureau in Washington.

Thus, the members rejected centralization of control over the road program in Washington, as advocated by Judge Lowe, the National Highways Association, and others during their testimony before the committee. “The bestowal of such power upon a Federal bureau would make the head of the bureau the practical dictator of road matters throughout the United States.” To avoid this prospect, the committee recommended that if a Federal Highway Commission were established, it should consist entirely of Members of Congress who, as representatives of the people, would avoid “arbitrary rulings.”

Although the report strongly endorsed the need for a Federal-aid program, the committee was unable to agree on how the program should operate—other than that it should not result in a pork-barrel program or Federal domination. Representative William P. Borland of Missouri, who was not on the committee, explained the contrast in a letter to the Lincoln Highway Association:

The question is whether federal aid shall be used as a means to secure a better system of roads; or shall the federal money be frittered away in small payments scattered into every congressional district and every road district of the United States. The people are in favor of the former and the politicians of the latter plan. The latter plan is known as the pork barrel plan of federal appropriation, by which everybody gets something and nobody gets anything worth having.

The Third Session of the 63rd Congress, which had begun December 7, 1914, adjourned on March 3, 1915, without completing action on a Federal road bill and without resolving the long-running debate between advocates of Federal-aid and advocates of national roads. Resolution of the debate would be delayed at least until the first session of the 64th Congress, which would not begin until December 6, 1915.

Good Roads Work on the National Old Trails Road in the Southwest

On March 1, 1915, Judge Lowe wrote to Jesse Taylor, editor-in-chief of *Better Roads and Streets*. The letter reported that the States and counties had spent \$2,134,447.17 for construction, repair, and maintenance of the National Old Trails Road from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles in 1914. He reported that in 1915, a total of \$2,021,470.67 was to be expended on the road. "The people," Judge Lowe said, "are spending more money on it than any other road in the world."

Taylor reprinted the brief letter in the March 1915 issue along with an article by O. K. Parker on "Good Road Work along the Santa Fe-Grand Canyon-Needles Branch of the National Old Trails." Parker began:

If those who motored over the Grand Canyon route two years ago—yes, even one year ago—could go over the same road to-day, they would hardly believe they were journeying through the same land. They would recognize the topography, to be sure, but they would never know the road. As a matter of fact, the route they would travel now, hardly touches the old, rambling road except in a few localities, so radical has been the change.

To illustrate the changes, Parker cited New Mexico, where motorists who had traveled the National Old Trails Road would be interested to know that:

[South] of Albuquerque the present-day transcontinental motorist does not have to go to Carthage and then across the Rio Grande on the combination railway and wagon bridge to San Antonio and then double back north to Socorro, a total distance of 118 miles. Nor does he have to fight that dreaded ten miles of sand just out of Albuquerque, where so many of those who were westward bound two years ago, had to get the assistance of teams [of horses or mules] to pull them through.

Instead, motorists could use a "firm, well-graded and direct road" from Albuquerque to Socorro, cross the Rio Grande 20 miles north of the old bridge, and save nearly 40 miles.

The "steep and rough road over the mountains" between Socorro and Magdalena, had been replaced with a route up the Blue Canyon. The new route, which the State had built with convict labor, could be traveled "at any desired speed without the thought of shifting a gear." The road to Springerville, Arizona, had been "straightened and improved" to eliminate "hundreds of unnecessary kinks." When kinks did occur, the improvements "throw the road up on firm ground and away from the danger of washouts." Parker added that although the Continental Divide was 52 miles west of Magdalena, the area rarely had "sufficient snow to materially interfere with transcontinental motoring." He explained:

That is, by the way, one of the decided advantages of the National Old Trails Route as an all-the-year-round road to the Pacific Coast, using the Socorro-Springerville-St. Johns detour as a branch of the Old Trails at present until the Albuquerque-Gallup main line is put in as good shape, and which by this time next year will probably be done.

The 65 miles from north of Springerville to Holbrook, was the longest stretch of road west of Albuquerque that had not been “decidedly improved throughout its entire length.” Even so, except in heavy rain, the road was “in such fair condition that an average of twenty miles an hour can easily be made.” West of Holbrook, the State had built a new road to Flagstaff. Parker explained that the old road had been north of the railroad tracks; the new route south of the tracks shortened the distance by 20 miles. The road had just been completed, he said, and he had been among the first to travel it, so “I can speak from personal knowledge.”

Parker also noted construction on segments west of Williams:

As an example, from Williams to Ashfork the road has been entirely reconstructed for twenty-three miles and is now a graded and gravelled pike as fine as one wants to drive over. From Ashfork to Seligman, another twenty-three miles, an entirely new road has been built, and though that stretch is not gravelled as yet, it is a twenty-mile [an hour] road right now.

The next thirty miles west of Seligman, through Yavapai County, has not been improved, except in the way of removing boulders from the road that might menace a low-clearance car

Mojave County, Arizona, the next one to the west, has . . . voted \$100,000 in bonds for the reconstruction of the National Old Trails Road across their county There the motorist will find a sixty mile-an-hour boulevard if he wants to travel that fast

Parker, like Westgard, was impressed by the new road from Needles to Barstow. He said the new road, “does not touch the old one except where it occasionally happens to cross it,” adding:

I well remember driving over the old road in October, 1912, from Barstow to Needles, California, and it took me four days of constant struggle, fighting every mile of the way through deep sands, alkali marshes, and talus slopes where the cross washes cut the road into thousands of transverse ditches. I made the same drive last month over the new road, 164 miles, in perfect comfort, taking it easy and without shifting gears once, in eight hours.

Parker felt safe in recommending the route--with the Socorro and Springerville detour--for the “many thousands” of motorists planning to travel to the expositions in San Diego and San Francisco. He added that because of the Harvey House hotels every 100 miles or so all the way west of Kansas City, “every night the motorist can be assured of better accommodations than can be had on any other route across America.”

National Highway Transcontinental Tour

In April 1915, the National Highways Association announced that it planned to sponsor a transcontinental tour to the California expositions under the direction of A. L. Westgard. The goal was to “demonstrate in a striking and interesting way the improvement which the last few years has brought about in American highways and American motor cars.” Westgard proposed to guide seven passenger cars along the National Old Trails Road to the Panama-California Exposition and the Panama-Pacific Expositions. He planned to return via the Lincoln Highway.

An article about the plan in *The Automobile Journal* (April 25, 1915) said of the National Highways Association that there was “no more important organization engaged in propaganda for good roads in America.” It added:

To a large extent the impressive demonstration of the improvement in American roads which the tour will constitute, will be also a demonstration of the success attained by the National Highways Association and its allied organizations in the work for which they were organized.

The California expositions were an opportunity for good roads advocates:

This is an exceptionally opportune time for a transcontinental tour on a grand scale. It will give the participants an opportunity to see the two great expositions under way on the Pacific coast and will aid materially in the “See America” movement which is very active just now and with which every good roads worker is in sympathy.

The tour would begin at National Highways Association headquarters at 18 Old Slip in New York City on June 15 at 12:30 pm., and reach Philadelphia later that day. Motorists were to arrive in San Diego on July 16, with 2 days scheduled for attending the Panama-California Exposition. The cars would then drive to Los Angeles on July 18 and reach San Francisco for the Panama-Pacific Exposition on July 22.

Notices advertising the tour stated that, “Only new, six-cylinder, seven passenger cars will be used, and as only four passengers will be taken in each car the capacity of the trip is necessarily limited.” Only “especially efficient and careful drivers,” each experienced in cross-country touring, would be used. Hotel accommodations had been arranged by Thomas Cook and Company, one of the country’s best known travel agencies, thus eliminating the hardships facing motorists “even as late as five years ago,” according to the *Journal*. The tour cost \$780 per passenger. Hot meals were not included in the fee. Since the tour was not limited to members of the National Highways Association, the *Journal* added:

Everyone who goes on the trip will be made a member of the National Highways Association and will be supplied with a badge of the organization and copies of articles published by it. It is hoped in this way to add many recruits to the association who will thereafter actively support its work everywhere.

Each passenger was limited to one suitcase; trunks, if desired, could be shipped by railroad. Tour planners suggested that participants consider what to wear and bring on the trip:

Khaki or other thin and loose fitting material for suits and light shoes with canvas leggings are suggested for clothing. Shirts should be loose flannel or linen, with attached collars for the men, and dark shirtwaists should be worn by the ladies.

A linen duster is advised as an aid to comfort, thin gauntlets, caps with large visors for the men and veils with the ladies' hats. Amber glasses, not too dark, are advised to protect the eyes from the glare of the high lights in the southwest. A jar of cold cream and a good hair cleanser is desirable in the equipment for both sexes. Other items are thermos bottles, thin, water proof, light weight overcoats and a camera.

A notice in the June 1915 issue of *Southern Good Roads* explained that:

The daily exercise and fresh air of such a trip puts new life into the jaded, creates new enthusiasm for this great country of ours which they are seeing, makes patriots of the coldest blooded. Best of all you travel only while you are awake so that you see it all [in contrast to a train trip].

Charles Henry Davis, President of the National Highways Association, issued a statement regarding the trip. After a paragraph explaining the value of national highways everywhere, Davis said:

“See America” is almost a duty of all patriotic citizens. At least, see all one can is a duty. The motor car offers the most exhilarating, the most interesting, the most enjoyable, the most instructive means of “seeing.” Having thus covered over 250,000 miles, I speak from experience.

To give an opportunity of seeing a goodly part of America, the National Highways Association, the National Old Trails Road Association, and the Automobile Club of Southern California, and the Lincoln Highway Association have indorsed a proposed trip over the National Old Trails road to the Pacific coast, returning via the Lincoln highway This route will give the tourist the best road conditions and hotel accommodations. An infinite variety of scenic and historic attractions will abound from start to finish. And not the least, the cause of good roads everywhere will be advanced by the participants, as well as their “Seeing America.”

The Lincoln Highway Association also arranged a tour to the Panama-Pacific Exposition. The primary purpose was to make a motion picture of the road as part of the association’s campaign to keep the public interested in the highway. The tour began in New York on May 15, 1915, and reached San Francisco at the end of August. According to the association’s official history:

Everywhere elaborate preparations were made to show each city at its best Automobile parades, scenes of road improvement, dedications of bridges and of newly constructed sections of highway, processions of school-children, every sort of function, celebration and activity connected and unconnected with highway building was arranged for them to photograph.

The association, in fact, had to ask communities to replace the fire and police displays with “scenes having a real interest, scenes tending to make it safe, easy, and pleasant to come your way and call on you.”

Between cities, the party busied itself taking photographs of scenery, historic sites, road construction, maintenance, improvement, and anything else tending to interest the traveler and stimulate touring.

When the touring automobiles reached San Francisco, they were placed on display between the Transportation Palace and the Palace of Manufacturers. After the exposition, the Lincoln Highway Association used the film in an eastbound publicity tour of one-night stands. “It met with high enthusiasm everywhere,” according to the official history. [*The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935, p. 122-124]

Tribute to Judge Lowe

On April 1, 1915, the *Kansas City Star* published a tribute to Judge Lowe:

There is a citizen of Kansas City who has retired from the active practice of his profession, but who still feels the obligation of public service. He might have devoted himself to travel, or to finding

enjoyment in various ways, without assuming any responsibilities. He could readily have made the excuse that he had done his share while he was younger and that he had earned the right to recreation.

But he chose instead to give himself to the cause of good roads. There was no possible personal advantage for him to gain. He was not a candidate for any office. He was not personally interested. But he saw the opportunity to do something that needed to be done and he accepted the responsibility.

He studied the subject of good roads and became one of the authorities on their history and construction. He attended good roads conventions. He became the moving spirit of the organization to promote the building of trans-continental highways. He gave effective support to every well-directed governmental effort in road building, and just as effective opposition to every wrong measure. He was one of the most effective opponents, for instance, of the Shackleford "pork barrel" road bill in Congress.

In the midst of these activities which made him president of the National Old Trails Road Association, he found time to support every municipal movement for better government and for city building. Party allegiance never kept him from co-operating with any group of citizens that was working for the public good.

This high regard for the obligations of citizenship has made Judge J. M. Lowe one of the most useful, influential, and honored men of Kansas City. His life is an inspiration to young men, and an example to men of the older generations who are under a heavier obligation to society than they often realize and who ought to give to some form of public service the benefit of the experience and resources which they have accumulated through the opportunities offered them by American life.

Continental Congress of the D.A.R.

On April 19, 1915, Elizabeth Butler Gentry, National Chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee of the D.A.R., presented a report on the committee's activities to the 24th Annual D.A.R. Congress. She began enthusiastically:

Excelsior is the triumphant cry of the National Old Trails Road Committee for 1915; our road is open across the Continent; our dream has come and our vision has crystallized into a fact!

In our little brochure of 1911 we set our goal for an open road to San Francisco by 1915, and suggested a D.A.R. motor pilgrimage to the San Francisco Exposition.

Today the road is not only open, it is sign posted almost the entire distance from Washington to San Francisco; a motorist can start at New York and with safe and comfortable travel, stopping each night in a hotel recommended by Thos. Cook & Son, reach San Francisco in five weeks. West of Kansas City many of the famous Harvey Hotels may be reached for the night stops.

Miss Gentry explained that the committee's slogan was "See America First, because textbooks taught, but to inculcate the love of our country, "send children down the open road." She quoted her testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture in April 1912:

A scenic and historic highway across our country will advertise America to foreigners. Instead of the annual egress of Americans to Europe, we may look for a speedy influx of Europeans to see the wonders of the New World—possible if this project be carried out.

With a war underway in Europe, few European tourists were able to visit America and, more important, “the American people are this year forced to seek new pastures.” She was confident that “the wanderlust of American tourists may be quenched at home.”

Miss Gentry summarized the history of the committee, which continued to advocate not only the designated National Old Trails Road but the California and Oregon Trails that had been part of the original vision. She emphasized the “mutuality of purpose and work” between the Committee and the National Old Trails Road Association. She recalled her comments after being elected Honorary Vice-President of the Association at the May 1913 convention in Kansas City:

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and your organization in behalf of the D.A.R. . . . We have recognized you as the “better half” in a very happy partnership for a mutual and patriotic purpose. We have looked to you as the head of the house, and have enjoyed seeing you crystallize our ideas into facts.

This road work is a new departure for the D.A.R., but I maintain that making history is as important as preserving history; that to be a factor in the building of a national highway is the noblest effort we may ever put forth; for the highway that we advocate will not only preserve history and conserve national ideals, but it will add to the sum total of human welfare.

She emphasized, however, the primacy of the Committee’s work:

While our Committee gave the first organized impetus to this plan of a pioneer highway across the continent and issued the first map, named the road, originated the road sign and painted it on the telephone poles, and introduced a bill in Congress calling upon the Government to build the road, we gratefully acknowledge the impetus and the far-reaching power given to this movement by the National Old Trails Road Association, which states in its by-laws that it is organized to “assist the D.A.R. in carrying forward their plan.”

This coöperation, this translating of a vision into a fact, this following of a gleam together, by men and women who live along the road, has crystallized a neighborliness of feeling and an [sic] unity of thought which has served a better national purpose, perhaps, than the mere building of any physical road.

Referring to the original map showing the committee’s historic trail, she added that the trail west of Flagstaff had been changed to conform with the National Old Trail Road Association’s decision in 1913 to route the trail over the Santa Fe-Grand Canyon-Needles route. This route and the original route through Phoenix to San Diego were shown on the current map as dotted lines “pending further investigation, and road improvements now in progress.” She added that the Oregon Trail branch “had not had the concentrated effort of our members.”

Miss Gentry described one of the joint promotional activities of the Committee and the Association:

Motion pictures of the road were taken by direction of the National Old Trails Road Association. Many of our members posed in these pictures at historical places near their homes. These pictures were later shown in cities along the route in an effort to raise funds for the Association.

She cautioned that, "Should we again pose for motion pictures, we will reserve the use of them for the benefit of our own Committee."

She reported on several other matters, including the road bill, H.R. 17919, introduced by Representative Borland in 1912. It had, she acknowledged, failed of passage. Because she expected the Congressman to reintroduce the bill "if conditions are favorable," she encouraged each member of the D.A.R. to "do all in her power to secure influence for the bill, after it is introduced." Although the bill might not pass, "interest may be aroused in the project by discussion of it."

Miss Gentry also discussed road signs. She endorsed the Kansas law for registering the name, emblem, colors, and routes of the named trails through the State. In this way, the State prohibited other trail associations from "using the same insignia or color combination" as one of the registered routes; the State law would paint out the markers or destroy the signs of other associations that may use the same roadway. Miss Gentry added that the Committee was seeking a copyright for its road sign and pennant to protect them from road boosters who would "borrow" the name and colors and carry them down by-roads in order to divert travel to inferior towns."

The Committee had carried on its work for less than \$500 a year, so Miss Gentry suggested that not less than that amount be budgeted for the coming year. "For efficiency, the regular services of a stenographer, at least twice a week, are a necessity. The rent or purchase of a typewriter should be provided for." She thanked the members of the Committee, but added:

I would also recommend that only such members be appointed on the respective State Committees as have a natural aptitude for this work, and whose efficiency will be an aid to the Chairman.

Miss Gentry's report concluded with brief reports by each State Chairman.

The Maryland State Chairman, Mrs. William H. Talbott, reported that most of the route in Maryland "is already macadamized, and this season's work will complete all but a few short stretches of it." The chapter was focused on signing, having asked the telephone companies for permission to place signs on poles along the road. The chapter also had focused on placing markers along Braddock Road from Georgetown in the District of Columbia to Rockville, "the first link in the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway." British General Edward Braddock, a young aide named George Washington, and their troops had followed this route into an unsuccessful fight, one that cost Braddock his life, near the future site of Pittsburgh during the French and Indian War in 1755.

Mrs. Edwin C. Horn, the Pennsylvania Chairman, reported that:

Pennsylvania had 81.8 miles of the National Road within its borders, all but 30½ miles of which are improved, and the remainder will be completed or rendered passable by the close of 1915.

The most important work of the past year had been completion of the toll-free Monongahela River bridge at Brownsville, completed at a cost of \$250,000 and dedicated on October 8, 1914. "This bridge," Mrs. Horn said, "fills a long felt want, it having been necessary to descend a very steep and rather dangerous

bank in order to ferry across the river.” The State highway department had placed signs along the route, but the D.A.R. was seeking permission to place its signs on the telegraph and telephone poles over the entire distance.

In Ohio, Mrs. John T. Mack noted that the route across the State was identical with the National Road. “Many of the old stone bridges, built by the Government, and the old stone mile posts are today serving the traveling public as well as they did when Henry Clay rode down the old pike.” The county chairmen had prepared a history of the road, county-by-county, and sent it to Miss. Gentry, who had arranged for a series of illustrated lectures on the National Old Trails Road. The chapter had also worked, through the State’s congressional delegation, to secure passage of H.R. 17919.

Indiana’s chapter, according to Mrs. Caleb S. Denny, had focused on signing the nearly 200 miles of the National Old Trails Road, in some cases doing the work on their own:

That part of it which the Chairman assisted in painting attracted no little attention, and comment by the farmers and travelers who happened to pass as the work progressed. All those to whom opportunity permitted us to explain the purpose of the marking gave their most hearty approval.

The Indiana Good Roads Association accompanied the chapter during some of this work to advocate for the marking of the National Road and to work up support for good roads. (“Miss Emily Goldthwaite agitated.”) Work had gone well in the cities, but Mrs. Denny was particularly proud of the work in the country, where farmers “walked miles through the dust and the extreme heat” to attend good roads meetings. “These farmer women have since had more to think about,” Mrs. Denny said, adding that “we have distributed a little sunshine, and in return we have received a most ample reward.” The result was that most of the marking was done, and would soon be completed.

Mrs. L. H. Bissell, the Illinois State Chairman, provided a two-sentence summary of the work in that State:

We are making a strenuous endeavor to carry out the plans of the Committee. We will soon pull Illinois out of the mud, which keeps Indiana and Missouri from being closer neighbors.

The focus in Missouri had been on the marking of the State’s 200-mile stretch of the National Old Trails Road. Mrs. John S. Kochtitzky reported that signs along the route across Missouri are “being repainted for the trans-continental motor travel to the San Francisco Exposition.” Arrangements had been made to repaint the signs on the trolley and telephone poles in the Kansas City area. She added:

Our members report that the road has been dragged, culverts widened, fences, houses, and farm buildings painted, flowers planted, and vistas cut through the trees, dangerous crossings have been marked, sharp curves eliminated, historical places marked, camping grounds established, and everything made ready for the tourist travel to California this summer.

The Kansas chapter, under Miss Clara Francis, had worked during the year to procure an appropriation from the State Legislature “for the marking of the Oregon Trail through our State, thus filling in the last link in our historic highways.” Although the Daughters had been “earnest and indefatigable” in their lobbying, the bill had not passed. Nevertheless, they had obtained several stencils for the road-sign and would soon begin repainting the telephone poles across the 500-mile stretch of the road in Kansas.

Colorado's chapters were "small and far apart," but Mrs. John A. Ewing stated that they had done much to mark the historic Rainbow Route (La Junta to Grand Junction and on to the Utah State line) and the Santa Fe Trail on the National Old Trails Road. The Santa Fe Trail "has been marked for sixty-five miles with red, white and blue bands," she said, adding that she expected the chapter to complete the work by adding the insignia during the spring.

Miss Gentry's report did not include information from the State Chapter in New Mexico, but Arizona's Mrs. George W. Vickers was planning to put a bronze tablet on a granite or tufa rock on the National Old Trails Road in Flagstaff in honor of the Pioneer Women of Arizona. It would be placed "at the point where the new motor road to the canon [Grand Canyon] leaves the old road." The plan was to dedicate the tablet when the National Old Trails Road Association held its annual convention at the Grand Canyon in July 1915.

Mrs. E. S. C. Forbes of South Pasadena, California, summarized road conditions in the State:

Beginning at the Needles and extending to Barstow, a distance of 164 miles, a new road has been constructed of malapai gravel mixed and bound with clay with the result that there is a firm, durable road to that point. From Barstow to Cajon Pass the road has not been greatly improved, but the Pass is in excellent condition, as is the balance of the Old Trails Road clear into Los Angeles.

The signing work of the Automobile Club of Southern California was just getting underway at the time of Mrs. Forbes' report. She had, however, another important activity to report:

I have also to report that I have prepared a large wall map of the National Old Trails Road for display in the D.A.R. rest room in the San Francisco Exposition grounds. We believe that this map will be of general interest and will assist the traveler in identifying the different routes. I have prepared also a large album of beautiful photos of scenes along El Camino Real and the National Trail Road through California to exhibit in the D.A.R. room at the San Francisco Exposition.

In response to the addresses to the D.A.R.'s California chapters, Mrs. Forbes had found "great interest and enthusiasm" about the National Old Trails Road.

Fourth of July Celebration

As Mrs. Vickers had noted in her Arizona report, the National Old Trails Road Association had announced plans to hold its annual convention at Grand Canyon on July 15. However, Judge Lowe issued an Official Call for an earlier event. His call summarized the history of the National Road, noting that President Thomas Jefferson had said the purpose of the road was "to cement the States and thus preserve the Union." Judge Lowe continued:

Whereas . . . For full forty years this policy was adhered to, and Congress, in turning the road back to some of the States through which it ran, expressly retained the right to resume control and management whenever it saw fit; and it did more perhaps, than any other one thing to permanently establish and preserve the Union; and

Whereas, the people have now highly resolved to rebuild and rededicate the Old National Road to the end that the original purpose of its conception may be preserved and fulfilled.

Now, therefore, we call upon the people of every county through which the National Old Trails Road extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to hold a National Old Trails Memorial Fourth of July Celebration in 1915, and thus ratify the establishment and preservation of the American Union, to which patriotic purpose the Old Road contributed so materially. As a part of such Memorial Celebration we respectfully request that all schools and colleges, civic, commercial, and patriotic organizations of every character shall unite and make this the grandest and most enthusiastic Red Letter Day in the Nation's history.

See America First

The May 1915 issue of *Travel* contained an article by Charles Henry Davis, President of the National Highways Association, on "The National Old Trails Road." After summarizing the historic links along the road and the pioneers who traveled them, Davis turned to his favorite subject with a reference to 19th century statesman John C. Calhoun (1782-1850), who had served as a Congressman, Secretary of War, Vice President, United States Senator, and Secretary of State. As a Congressman, he had unsuccessfully advocated what was known as the "American System" of protective tariffs, internal transportation improvements, and a national bank. Davis said:

A century in our national life has slipped away since these hardy pioneers first conceived of a trans-continental highway; a conception "to bind the States together in a common brotherhood, and thus perpetuate and preserve the Union." Had Calhoun's prophetic words been heeded, and in the full knowledge thereof had we, as a nation, built roads, might not the great struggle between North and South been avoided? There are some who believe a perpetuation of this indifference to the building of national roads may result in another such attempt at separation, but with a far different alignment . . . May our beloved land be gridironed by National Highways, among them the National Old Trails Road, in time to prevent a recurrence of such scenes of strife!

Now, Davis said, more than 100 years after the birth of that first National Highway, and many years in which the Federal Government "has been idle in that regard," people were demanding construction of National Highways across "the length and breadth of these United States of America." He referred to the social, moral, commercial, industrial, material, educational, and personal benefits that would result from construction of National Highways, as illustrated by the good roads found in Europe.

Of the seven modes of intercommunication—water, roads, postal, railroad, telegraph, telephone and wireless—only one, roads, is free to all the people of the earth. Roads are the most universally used and are therefore the most beneficial to the greatest number of people.

As if realizing he had strayed from his subject, Davis continued, "But to go back more specifically to the National Old Trails Road":

During 1915 our people will, more than ever before, determine upon seeing America. This, because of our two expositions at San Diego and San Francisco coming during the height of the European struggle. See America First? Yes, most decidedly yes. But what part of America shall do the seeing—the East or the West, the North or the South. The East proposes to see the West! And this is as it should be, for "See America First" usually is intended to mean go West instead of to Europe.

He did not object to the reverse, in view of the many attractions in the East. In fact, he encouraged the East to "copy Europe and get busy for the business the West is more than ready to give us." Easterners

should make the westerners “feel at home and that they were wanted.” After all, he said, “They do all this for us. So does Europe. Why do we not reciprocate?”

The National Old Trails Road Association, the Lincoln Highway Association, and other named trail associations had adopted “See America First” as a slogan in the promotion of auto travel. However, the phrase dated to an earlier period, as documented by Marguerite Sands Shaffer in her 1994 Ph.D thesis for Harvard University, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1905-1930*. (Also see Shaffer’s *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940*, Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001.)

Shaffer explained that the phrase had been coined in 1905 by Fisher Harris, General Manager and Secretary of the Salt Lake City Commercial Club. Harris, a native of Fauquier County, Virginia, began moving west seeking work during the economic downturn of the early 1880’s. Working in railroad construction, he gradually moved further west as commercial development followed the railroads to Salt Lake City, where he became manager of a new luxury hotel, the Knutsford. As a hotel man with an interest in tourism, he joined the Salt Lake City Commercial Club in 1902, working “not only to bring business to Salt Lake, but to make the people of Salt Lake and Utah proud of their city and state.” Shaffer described his activities:

Through his speeches, through his attendance at meetings, through his participation in social gatherings, and through his work at the Commercial Club, Harris, like other boosters, tried to unite the business community and civic leaders in celebration of Salt Lake and Utah for the sake of commercial progress. In this context, Harris concocted the See America First idea, which came to embody his notion of the ideal America.

In promoting his idea, he wanted to go beyond even his home State and personal interest; he wanted, as Shaffer quoted him, to begin “boosting the country on a big business basis.”

Shaffer summarized the initial promotional efforts by Harris and the Commercial Club, initiated in early October 1905 in the form of a circular letter addressed to organizations and newspapers:

Press releases distributed by the club described the plan as a method of advertising “the beauties and resources of the Western states through a campaign of education extending over a period of five or six years.” They argued that many of the western railroads had already laid the foundations for this type of promotional work by advertising the scenery along their routes and amenities of final destination points. The popularity of the Southern Pacific’s *Sunset* magazine presented a perfect example of the benefits that this kind of publicity could produce. Harris and his fellows at the Commercial Club wanted to unite all of these divergent interests. They wanted the western roads to boost the West as a region, not simply one particular location or sight. They wanted chambers of commerce, commercial clubs and tourist organizations to work together, to combine their interests and pool their resources. They argued that through these efforts the West could present itself as a unified region, and attract the attention of the East.

Even Harris was surprised by the response, which Shaffer called “phenomenal.” Letters and editorials from around the country endorsed the idea:

Newspapers across the country from New York to California ran editorials promoting the idea of advertising the West and keeping American tourists at home. The deluge of responses surprised

Harris and the men at the Salt Lake Commercial Club; they began to work on giving shape to this cooperative boosting idea.

A motto for the initiative emerged by the end of October: "See Europe If You Will, But See America First." This motto "captured the imaginations of businessmen and boosters throughout the West." Shortened to "See America First," the slogan soon became, in Shaffer's view, "much more than the desire to encourage tourism in the West; it became an expression of national identity."

The Salt Lake City Commercial Club's second circular letter, dated October 24, 1905, displayed a See America First logo and detailed the promotional plan:

The letter explained that during the 1904-1905 tourist season, United States citizens had spent \$150,000,000 on foreign travel; that being at best a conservative estimate. In response, the circular noted, "this club has undertaken the work of awakening interest in this subject among business men of the western part of the United States and the Republic of Mexico."

On January 25-27, 1906, 125 delegates met in Salt Lake City to develop a formal See America First plan. The delegates, described as "western businessmen, boosters, railroad men and politicians," adopted a plan to promote a "propaganda of patriotism" by establishing a permanent committee that would be at the heart of a new organization, the See America First League. The delegates pledged to raise \$50,000 in 6 months to finance the propaganda and to hold public gatherings to present the campaign to a wider audience.

Harris, appointed Executive Secretary of the new League, embarked on a 6-week promotional tour around the country, including a speech at the Gridiron Club in Washington. He also met with President Theodore Roosevelt, who pronounced himself heartily in favor of the work. However, another economic downturn hurt the fund raising and promotional thrust of the initiative.

Shaffer states:

Although the See America First slogan did capture the imaginations of a few railroad companies and tourist organizations between 1905 and 1910, the See America First League failed to become an established publicity organization for the west. A unified See America First movement never emerged.

Further, its originator, Fisher Harris, died on November 7, 1909, at the age of 44. Shaffer explained:

As an obituary explained, Harris died of "laryngitis complicated with tuberculosis of the throat" apparently contracted while boosting for the cause of See America First and Salt Lake City. "It was while touring America in the interest of the plan [to promote See America First] that his voice failed him at Denver . . . He returned to Salt Lake and the tragic years that followed are well known to Salt Lakers." From 1908 to 1909, during the years of his sickness, Harris had tried to promote the See America First League through the pages of *The Western Monthly*. After his death the League and his cause were all but forgotten. *The Western Monthly* dropped the See America First slogan from their byline and returned to their earlier mission as an urban and regional boosting magazine shortly after Harris' death. The historical record of the See America First League does not extend beyond the 1906 conference and *The Western Monthly* magazine. It appears that lack of financial support combined with the loss of Fisher Harris doomed the League to failure.

Shaffer added that despite the death of Fisher Harris and the demise of the League, “the See America First slogan was caught up by the nascent tourist industry and the traveling public.” Harris, the League, and the boosters at the Salt Lake Commercial Club “would be forgotten,” she said, but See America First “would continue to be used to evoke the ideal of united nation.”

Initially, the railroads pursued the concept. The Great Northern Railway adopted the slogan, and, in 1912, considered securing a copyright on the phrase so it would primarily signify tourism to Glacier National Park on the Great Northern Railway; under copyright law, the company found, it could use the slogan, but could not secure its exclusive use. As a result, the company’s extensive promotional use of the slogan transformed it into a “generic tourist slogan,” according to Shaffer.

(Shaffer dismissed the claim in 1912 by Charles Lummis, the writer and ardent Southwest booster, to have originated the phrase “See America First” 20 years earlier in his book *Some Strange Corners of our Country*. “Although Lummis did encourage Americans to see the Southwest, the fact of the matter is that he appropriated ‘See America First’ and linked it to his earlier work and his continued promotion of Southern California and the Southwest in order to capitalize on the revived See America First idea.”)

When the introduction of Henry Ford’s low-priced, durable Model T in 1908 increased the popularity of the automobile, the good roads and named trail promoters adopted See America First as one of their themes. To illustrate, Shaffer quoted Miss Gentry’s testimony before the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives on April 19, 1912. Miss Gentry had explained that the D.A.R.’s interest in the National Old Trails Road was to perpetuate pioneer history “and to conserve the ideals of the Nation by building a National highway over the trails of the pioneer.” She added:

There is a phrase, “See America First,” . . . [that] has sprouted in light of to-day’s Nationalism. The Department of Commerce and Labor statistics show that \$290,000,000 was left in Europe last year by American tourists. Switzerland is not an agricultural country, but is supported by its crop of tourists; that nation practically exists because Americans prefer the Alps to the Rockies.”

After listing some of the American West’s scenic attractions, Miss Gentry stated that a historic transcontinental road would keep American dollars in America and attract foreign money.

Shaffer summarized:

In linking the National Old Trails Road to the sentiments of nationhood, the DAR in cooperation with Good Roads advocates, state highway departments and boosters throughout the states traversed by the route appropriated the See America First idea to bring together the growing enthusiasm for good roads, transcontinental automobile touring, and American history. They argued that transcontinental highways—especially the National Old Trails Road—transcended commercial interests and concerns, and reinforced national unity by commemorating a shared national history.

By 1913, AAA had begun to link its promotion of auto tourism with See America First. The link had been crystallized by the 1913 AAA Annual Reliability Tour from St. Paul-Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Glacier National Park. The Great Northern Railway, which had been promoting travel to the park, cosponsored the event by arranging two special hotel trains to accompany the motorists. Even with the luxury of the hotel trains for stops, the motorist confronted what A. G. Batchelder, Chairman of AAA’s Executive Committee, referred to as “average country roads, gumbo roads that were dragged, and gumbo roads that

were rain-soaked and treacherous, prairie roads that were ‘unimproved’ and enjoyable, and prairie roads that were ‘improved’ and joyless.” The reliability tours had begun in 1904, but of this one, he said:

Never . . . has it served more thoroughly the reason for its existence in demonstrating the dependability of automobiles, the crying need for travelable roads, in calling attention to the scenic wonders of our country, and finally in augmenting a healthy nationalism which carries with it realization of the fact that the State units are as interdependent on one another as are the counties of a commonwealth.

American Motorist, AAA’s monthly magazine, began promoting transcontinental tourism, as in a May 1914 article by W. D. Rishel, who predicted that transcontinental tourism “will soon push baseball for first honors as the great National Pastime.” He said:

The year 1912 saw the movement start, 1913 will see the big advance guard, and by 1915, when the Panama Exposition opens, transcontinental touring will be a mania.

He estimated that 5,000 people had crossed the country by automobile in 1912:

Those 5,000 people are following the advice of the late Fisher Harris of Salt Lake, who coined the phrase which means more to the prosperity of this country than any set of laws that can be placed upon statute books by Congress.

Rishel amended the phrase, “See Europe if you will, but see America first,” by adding, “and the automobile is the proper means of doing it.”

The Lincoln Highway Association had also adopted the phrase as one of the rallying cries for travel on its route. Shaffer quoted from *The Official Guide to the Lincoln Highway*, 1915, which argued that See America First had “become more than an appeal”—it was “a necessity” in view of the funding Americans spent touring Europe. She said:

[The] guide suggested that Seeing America First on the Lincoln Highway was about escaping the routines and restrictions associated with the overly civilized qualities of the Pullman Palace Car and European travel. It was about directly experiencing the people, the places, and the history that made America unique.

Shaffer also cited a series of articles about the Lincoln Highway by Newton A. Fuessle in *Travel* magazine. The articles referred to the war that had broken out in Europe in August 1914:

Using the chaos of the European war as a backdrop, Fuessle noted that Americans were finally beginning to discover the wonders of their own country. “The tremendous significance which the whirl of sinister developments in Europe’s theater of war has given to the ‘See America First’ movement, has clothed the project of the Lincoln Highway Association with singular importance.”

Fuessle, Shaffer said, “most clearly defined the significance of the See America First idea as it was used by the Lincoln Highway Association and other proponents of Good Roads.” She explained:

He revealed that the phrase underscored the intimacy and the authenticity experienced through transcontinental automobile touring. As a mode of tourist transportation, the automobile and the road

network that emerged to accommodate it objectified the See America First idea. Not only did the automobile allow the individual to exercise complete control over the touring experience, thus gaining a more intimate interaction with the people and places across America, but also the emerging road network vastly increased the number of potential tourist attractions. In effect the automobile completely transformed the tourist experience and in the process served to actualize the See America First idea.

Shaffer referred to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915 as the climactic event in the “solidification of the See America First idea.” After Congress recognized San Francisco as the official fair site, Charles C. Moore, President of the exposition, said in February 1912:

I know men who have never been west of Buffalo, New York, yet who go frequently to Europe, perhaps once a year. Such men would become better citizens of this country were they to see the West.

Publicity by the exposition organizers, the railroads, and others emphasized the possibility of visiting the two expositions and then touring the other attractions of the West. Shaffer pointed out that some exposition exhibits emphasized the same theme, with the transcontinental railroads contributing elaborate displays on the scenic wonders along their lines. Road builders did not miss their opportunity, either. At the San Francisco exposition, the OPR staged its largest road exhibit to date in the Machinery Palace. The exhibit used models, scaled to one-twelfth actual size, to illustrate location, drainage, construction, aesthetics, and maintenance of roads. A miniature crushing plant and power roller were part of the exhibit, as were enlarged photographs and lantern slides showing the economic effects of good roads. M. O. Eldridge, who had joined the U.S. Office of Road Inquiry in 1894, lectured on road building each day in the Liberal Arts Palace.

Summarizing the impact of the two California expositions, Shaffer said:

The publicity of the fair itself combined with the exhibits sponsored by a variety of tourist industries and tourist organizations, worked to popularize and legitimize the idea of touring in America The closing of Europe to tourists combined with the barrage of publicity associated with both the San Francisco fair and the San Diego fair succeeded in popularizing the See America First idea. After the summer of 1915, See America First had become fully established in the public domain as a patriotic tourist slogan.

The National Old Trails Road in Missouri

The February 1915 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* contained a brief item about traffic on the National Old Trails Road in Missouri on the Cross-State Highway:

Since the agitation for a cross-State highway in Missouri, three years ago, exactly 7,351 automobiles have crossed the State along that road, not counting local travel. In other words, 2,500 tourists have passed through Missouri each year, viewing the best farming section and some of the best cities and towns in the State, and giving publicity to the State which cannot be valued in dollars.

A brief separate item pointed out the “good bit of information for tourists” that the Lincoln Highway is “being marked” and the National Old Trails Road Association had combined with the Automobile Club of Southern California to mark its route:

The friendly rivalry which now exists between the friends of the several trans-continental routes means the largest improvement and careful maintenance of all of them, all of which is a fine thing for all the roads, for the tourists, for the people who live along the routes, and for the general public.

In April, Missouri's State Highway Commissioner, Colonel Frank W. Buffum, made a commitment to get the "jolts" out of his State's segment of the National Old Trails Road. He said:

We must make the Old Trails Road through Missouri so good that travelers to the fair this year can run their cars over it without an engine—run them on the car's reputation.

Southern Good Roads magazine (May 1915) explained that the road was "either hard surfaced or being kept dragged," but Colonel Buffum was in favor of "making better roads of good roads. The magazine explained how he proposed to do so:

Colonel Buffum is undertaking the heaviest mail campaign for better roads that the state ever has witnessed. Two weeks ago he wrote a letter to every man living alongside the Old Trails Road from St. Louis to Kansas City, urging the importance of getting the road in shape for the fifty thousand motorists who are expected to pass over it this summer on their way to the Pacific Coast. Now he is writing more letters to residents along the road that require the most dragging and repairing, and urging that only the most thorough work be accepted.

The Colonel's letter explained how the State would help:

We are working out a system of gravel hauling by means of motor trucks, which will make it possible to haul gravel ten miles as cheaply as it can now be hauled three miles with horses.

Better Roads and Streets, in its June 1915, contained a brief item encouraging Colonel Buffum in his work:

In speaking of the Old Trails Road in Missouri, Colonel Buffum, State Highway Commissioner, says, "We will keep after this highway until we get it in shape." Go to it, Colonel, and make it ready for trans-continental travel or Missouri will not be on the map. Your State is known as the "SHOW ME" State, but this time Missouri must SHOW travelers that they will not get stuck in the mud.

By August, *Southern Good Roads* was reporting good progress:

The campaign to macadamize the cross-state highway from Kansas City to St. Louis is going steadily ahead and construction work on certain sections of the eastern end will begin soon. That information came to the office of Judge J. M. Lowe, president of the National Old Trails Road association, recently in a letter from Frank W. Buffum, state highway commissioner.

Mr. Buffum has taken personal control of completing the improvement from the eastern boundary line of Boone county to the western end of the already improved section of road leading from St. Charles county into St. Louis. He now is bending his efforts to bring about the completion of the 6-mile stretch yet unimproved in St. Charles county.

His letter to Judge Lowe indicates about half of the stretch will be contracted immediately for completion this fall. Further contracts are to be let then to finish up the work early next spring. That will complete the road from St. Louis to the eastern line of Warren county.

The 1915 Convention

In preparation for the 1915 convention, Judge Lowe released a bulletin on July 6 regarding conditions on the National Old Trails Road. Most of the entries related to surface (for example, of Maryland, the bulletin stated "Fine macadam full length of State. Rain does not affect.") and detours ("Auto clubs at Columbus and Wheeling will furnish detours around construction work in progress.), a few entries are worth noting:

- MISSOURI Kansas City, July 6. Just returned from trip over west half of Mo. section of the National Old Trails Road and found the road in good condition Frank A. Davis, Sec. Kansas City, July 6. A tourist recently in the office stated that on his trip between Los Angeles and K.C. he was enabled to take a bath every night except two in a Harvey Eating House. Mr. Ford Harvey has issued instructions to all his houses to make it a particular point to see that motor parties traveling the National Old Trails Road are taken care of to the very best of their ability.
- KANSAS Delavan, July 1st. We are getting about from 12 to 25 cars daily. We have our free camp at Delevan completed, have had in all an average of one car a day since its completion. We have it pretty nicely arranged, have a daily paper delivered daily, free telephone service, nice amount of furniture for convenience of the tourists, quite a number of road maps and other little convenience. W. W. Ray.
- NEW MEXICO Albuquerque, June 23. Getting along fine, roads dry, but little rough. Making 150 to 200 miles per day without trouble. R. L. Winter, Tourist enroute to Pacific. Albuquerque, June 26. Roads from Trinidad, OK. Went over Glorietta and Raton passes without a struggle, thanks to my auxillary intake for air. A. U. Morse (Tourist enroute to the Pacific)
- ARIZONA Springerville, July 2. That part of the Santa Fe, Grand Canyon, Needles route lying between Magdalena, Springerville and Holbrook is still in fine condition for automobile travel, from 8 to 10 cars going over this road every day. The construction of a permanent rain proof highway through this county is not under full swing and will continue until completed. Gustav Becker.

The National Old Trails Road Association held its 1915 convention on July 15 at the Grand Canyon. A brief account of the convention, published in the September 1915 issue of *Better Roads and Streets*, pointed out that the convention "was well attended by representatives from a majority of the States through which the road runs."

An important feature of the convention was a series of reports on the condition of the road, which the magazine summarized:

The entire road from ocean to ocean is graded, more than one-third of it is permanently built, and fully two-thirds of the remainder is under contract. It is permanently sign-posted from Los Angeles to Kansas City, and work has been commenced from Kansas City east, averaging one sign every mile across the continent

The slogan of the National Old Trails Road Association, universally adopted, is: "Lift the National Old Trails Road out of the mud and DO IT NOW."

It is just as easy to do this in twelve months as it is in twelve years. All such words as building it "eventually" or "sometime," or any other word of like indefiniteness, has been cut out of the National Old Trails vocabulary. Such expressions are too meaningless to be employed by the association. If they said "ten years," they would doubtless consider the proposition for at least nine years, and then jump in and finish it. *Why not DO IT NOW?*

Friends of the highway east of the Mississippi River, the article stated, "would have been well repaid if they could have seen what is transpiring on the western section of the road."

California: "the west seventy-mile stretch of the road ending at Los Angeles, is built of concrete twenty-four feet wide, and is one of the finest pieces of road building in the United States. It is also finished to Barstow, and a bond issue, to be passed upon in September, which will undoubtedly carry, provides for building the balance of the road—315 miles—of the same high-class construction to the eastern line of California, at Needles."

Arizona: "The road has been entirely graded across Arizona (421 miles) and from Flagstaff to the Grand Canyon and back to Williams (142 miles), making a grand total in Arizona of 563 miles, all graded and partially constructed, chiefly of lava cinders." The State "intended to do all in their power to complete their section of the road within the time limit, to wit, twelve months."

New Mexico: "Across New Mexico, the road has been graded 452 miles and much of it in splendid condition." Governor W. C. McDonald had provided assurances that "if the bond issue now pending before the Supreme Court is sustained, of which he had little doubt, he would guarantee that New Mexico would finish her section." The result might not be "the ideal class" the association hoped for, but "at least with gravel."

Colorado: The State promised "to finish her section."

Kansas: The State had "500 miles already graded and ready for permanent construction, and they are agitating finishing her stretch also within the time limit."

Missouri: As in Kansas, the road was graded across the State "and there is not a doubt that it will be permanently built."

The article summarized the remaining States: "Reports from Illinois are encouraging, as they are from every State east of the Mississippi."

The Annual Race

The Los Angeles to Phoenix race had been held since 1908. A White steam car had won the first 418-mile race with a running time of just over 24 hours for an average speed of 17½ miles per hour. The route had varied over the years. In 1911, the contestants followed the Coast Road to San Diego before turning east to Phoenix. The Los Angeles contestants followed the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway in 1912, while San

Diego boosters sponsored a similar race to Phoenix on the same day. In 1913, the Coast Road to San Diego had again been followed.

The 7th annual race in November 1915 would follow the National Old Trails Road from Los Angeles to Ash Fork, Arizona, before turning toward Phoenix, a total distance of 710 miles. Instead of starting the race in Los Angeles at midnight, the contestants left at daylight at 5 am. The starting point was El Monte Road at the Los Angeles city limits about 1 mile beyond Eastlake Park. The first day's run would end at Needles. The second day's run was to Prescott. According to an article in the October 1914 issue of *Touring Topics*, "the cars that remain in the race at this point" would leave Prescott on the morning of the third day:

The final dash into Phoenix, which is one hundred and thirty-two miles from Prescott, should furnish some racing thrills that have been lacking from the other Phoenix races, for in practically every one of these contests the leading car has finished the long grind far ahead of its nearest competitor as to rob the finish of any excitement.

The change in routing prompted the Automobile Club to deny an "unfortunate rumor" that it had diverted the race from the more southerly routes of past years. The change had been made by the organizations that sponsored the races, the Western Automobile Association and the Maricopa Automobile Club.

As a matter of absolute fact, neither the Automobile Club nor any of its representatives were consulted concerning the race course and would not have stated a preference for any one of the routes, had they been consulted The reasons for choosing the new route this year are not known to the officers of the Automobile Club and the fact that the course followed is part of a highway which the Automobile Club is signposting is only a coincidence. The Club did not know that this route was selected or even considered except as it derived its knowledge from the daily press and it had absolutely no more voice in the selection of the course than it had in the declaration of war between France and Germany.

Seeing America on Foot

The spirit of See America First struck Edward J. Smith while he was visiting his friend Chris Fallon in Connecticut. When Fallon suggested, "how about hiking to the Exposition," Smith said he "would be there at the start with bells on." Smith explained:

My enthusiasm was awakened, for was I not to see America and all her haunts? Was I not to see all those historic places and the wonderful scenic beauty that I had read so much of at school and many times longed to see?

As explained in his account of the first half of the trip (*Better Roads and Streets*, October 1915), he explored maps and road guides before deciding to put the Lincoln Highway "to the test."

Fallon, as it turned out, could not make the trip "for some reason or other." Smith, therefore, advertised in the *New York American* for a traveling partner and chose C. N. Miller from close to 100 applicants. "I made it clear that once the get-together, work-together idea was understood by both of us, the venture was success certain."

The walk began at City Hall on July 15, the day of the Grand Canyon Convention of the National Old Trails Road Association. The Mayor and Miller's and Smith's families bid the two travelers farewell and they walked off amid the crowds of people who paid little attention to them. They carried their belongings and supplies in a rectangular box on a two-wheel handcart. Lettering on the front of the box informed passersby:

WALKING

N.Y. TO CAL.
E. J. SMITH
AND
C. A. MILLER

Below WALKING, Smith and Miller placed the name of the State they were passing through. On the side of the box, they had painted:

SEE AMERICA
N.Y. to CAL.

On July 16, they reached the Lincoln Highway at Elizabeth, New Jersey. In greeting the highway, "We took our hats off to it." However, the Lincoln Highway proved a disappointment:

We found people living on the highway that didn't know it was the Lincoln Highway, because of the fact that it is not signposted in many places. Many motorists asked us whether they were on the Lincoln Highway. This did not appeal to us as being a credit to the management of the Lincoln Highway Association. The advertising done implies better things.

Traveling across New Jersey, they stopped in the State Capitol, where the Governor's secretary greeted them and urged them to be careful because of the very hot weather.

Entering Pennsylvania, they had to take a detour because the Lincoln Highway was being repaired. Walking across the State from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, they enjoyed the many historic sites, including the battlefield at Gettysburg. West of Pittsburgh, Smith and Miller made an important decision:

We were noticing that the Lincoln Highway signs on the posts were diminishing and we thought that if this was happening to the signs, what would happen to the roads? This, together with some good pointers on the Ocean-to-Ocean transcontinental over the Old National Trails, we decided to forsake the Lincoln Highway for the Old Trails.

At Washington, Pennsylvania, they came upon the National Old Trails Road and followed it into Ohio. In Columbus, they attended the State Fair and met the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. They also met Jesse Taylor, editor of *Better Roads and Streets* and State Vice President of the National Old Trails Road Association.

Throughout the trip, Smith and Miller took advantage of the opportunity to speak about good roads:

In the different cities we have spoken to the people on the public square about our trip and told them the benefits of better roads. We spoke to farmers who couldn't sell their crop of potatoes for any

price on account of the bad roads and the difficulty of getting their things over the roads. I think I have a case against some road in Ohio along by Morristown. The ruts and mud was a foot deep. You could not take a step without lifting an abnormal portion of the county with you. The suction of the wet and soggy mud snapped off a sole of my shoe and it was lost in the deep mire.

Smith also observed one effect of good—and bad—roads:

It was very easy for us to see the difference in the dispositions of the people along the different roads. On the good roads the people would be very pleasant and well satisfied, while along a bad road the people had a haphazard way about them and were not well disposed. The bad road keeps travelers away and keeps education at a distance. We found that the children along the good roads were more healthy than the bad-roads children because they could not get out and romp around the way the others did.

He was convinced of the value of good roads. With them, “America would be the greatest place in the world.”

Smith’s article was written part way through their transcontinental journey. *Better Roads and Streets* did not report on the remainder of the trip, but the December 1915 issue contained this notice:

The boys who are walking from New York to San Francisco, a full account of which was published in a recent issue of *Better Roads and Streets*, are still happy on the way, and mail addressed to “Smith and Miller” will reach them, “General Delivery, Dodge City, Kansas.” They started from New York City with but five dollars, and have made their way by selling post-cards. They are “seeing America on foot,” and report many interesting experiences.

The Road to the Expositions

Emily Post would become well known to later generations as an arbiter of etiquette. That would come in 1922 after she published *Etiquette in Society, in Business, in Politics and At Home* (later renamed *Etiquette: The Blue Book of Social Usage*). It went through numerous editions and resulted in a syndicated newspaper column and radio show. Her name became synonymous with “etiquette.”

In 1915, Emily Post was a socialite and the daughter of a wealthy architect. She had married wealthy banker Edwin Main Post, but they had divorced after he lost his fortune in the Panic of 1901, leaving Emily to earn a living. Writing became one of her lifelong activities, including novels and magazine articles. Drake Hokanson, in his book on the Lincoln Highway, described Post and why she decided to drive across country to see the California Expositions:

Emily Post was a woman of New York society, a woman accustomed to society teas, debutante balls, and nearby servants. Her life so far had been conducted in the homes and watering places of the well-known well-to-do of New York and Europe. Although her most famous contribution to the literary work, *Emily Post’s Etiquette*, was still seven years in the future, she had proven herself a worthy writer with the publishing of two novels. An editor and friend, Frank Crowninshield of *Collier’s*, asked her to take this motor trip across the country and report on what she found. [Hokanson, Drake, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America*, University of Iowa Press, 1988, p. 23]

It seemed, she said, “the simplest sort of thing to undertake.” Travel across country, write about her experiences, and go on to some other project. She had, after all, motored all over Europe. Her friends tried to discourage her, many expressing amazement that she would even consider such a trip. “Why,” her New York friends asked, “do anything so dreary?” As described in her book, *By Motor to the Golden Gate* (D. Appleton and Company, 1916), Post was asked, “Whatever put it into your head to undertake such a trip?” She replied:

“The advertisements!” I answered promptly. They were all so optimistic, that they went to my head. “New York to San Francisco in an X—car for thirty-eight dollars!” We were not going in an X—car, but the thought of any machine’s running such a distance at such a price immediately lowered the expenditure allowance for our own. “Cheapest way to go to the coast!” agreed another folder. “Travel luxuriously in your own car from your own front door over the world’s greatest highway to the Pacific Shore.” Could any motor enthusiasts resist such suggestions? We couldn’t.

Finally, she agreed to go as far as the trip was pleasurable. She ruled out motor camping, the common travel experience in an era for before the roadside infrastructure of restaurants, hotels, motels, and gas stations had been built. And like so many wealthy motorists of the day, Emily Post had never driven a car, so she enlisted her son Ned as driver and mechanic.

The Lincoln Highway seemed to be the best choice, so a friend contacted the Lincoln Highway Association on her behalf to inquire about road conditions and hotel accommodations. The association responded by assuring her that a woman in Brooklyn had traveled the Lincoln Highway and written a glowing letter about it. Post was skeptical since even the association’s travel guide made clear that in 1914 “the road was as yet not a road, and hotels along the sparsely settled districts had not been built.” She concluded that perhaps the woman from Brooklyn had the “idea of a perfect motor trip [that] was independent of roads or stopping-places.”

At Brentano’s bookstore, she examined a map showing four routes crossing the United States. When a friend who had crossed the continent 160 times happened by, Post asked, “Can you tell me which is the best road to California?”

Without hesitation, the friend answers, “The Union Pacific.”

When Post explained that she meant a motor road, her friend responded “pityingly”: “Motor road to California? There isn’t any.”

Post pointed at the map showing “four beautiful ones” and explained that based on the literature, she found it “impossible to make a choice of the beauties and comforts of each.”

Before responding, her friend “looked steadily into my face as though to force calmness to my poor deluded mind. “You! A woman like you to undertake such a trip! Why, you couldn’t live through it!”

Literature still in mind, Post replied, “It can’t be difficult; the Lincoln Highway goes straight across.”

Her friend pointed at the map showing the Lincoln Highway, describing it as “an imaginary line like the equator!” She went on:

Once you get beyond the Mississippi the roads are trails of mud and sand. This district along here by the Platte River is wild and dangerous; full of the most terrible people, outlaws and “bad men” who would think nothing of killing you if they were drunk and felt like it. There isn’t any hotel. Tell me, where do you think you are going to stop? These are not towns; they are only names on a map, or at best two shacks and a saloon! This place North Platte why, you *couldn’t* stay in a place like that!

When Post protested that, “Hundreds of people have motored across,” her friend cut her short, saying, “Hundreds and thousands of people have done things that it would kill you to do.”

Finally, she consulted “a celebrated touring authority.” (Post did not identify the authority.) He assured her that if she could put up with less than Ritz Hotels every few miles and an absence of Central Park roads all the way, “you can go—easy.!” He recommended the Lincoln Highway, but advised her to take a northern route and reach the highway in Chicago. Because of the construction that Smith and Miller had observed in Pennsylvania, if she insisted on following the Lincoln Highway, she would find only “bad grades and mud over your hubs!”

With the expert’s help, she completed the mapping for the trip, which began in April. She, her son Ned, and cousin Alice Beadleston began their adventure. “Heaped in the Posts’ car,” Hokanson explained, “was an endless array of the wrong items for a long-distance motor tour.” Eventually, they would ship many of the items home, including the wicker picnic basket, the tea service, and impractical clothing.

The trip went smoothly until the party left the elegant Blackstone Hotel in Chicago and found the Lincoln Highway 30 miles to the west. As they would discover, Spring 1915 in the Midwest was unusually rainy, making for a difficult trip. She summed up her disappointment:

If it were called the cross continent trail you would expect little, and be philosophical about less, but the very word “highway” suggests macadam at the least. And with such titles as “Transcontinental” and “Lincoln” put before it, you dream of a wide straight road like the Route National of France, or state roads in the East, and you wake rather unhappily to the actuality of a meandering dirt road that become mud half a foot deep after a day or two of rain!

Post almost abandoned the trip after 2 days stuck in Rochelle, Illinois, but finally the three loaded the car and turned west again on May 8. Driving west, she concluded that, although rain turned “good roads turned into mud slides in a few minutes, a few hours of sun and wind transformed them into good ones again.” Still, the delays and detours disillusioned her about the Lincoln Highway. By the time they Cheyenne, Wyoming, she had had enough. They turned south and drove through Denver to Colorado Springs (“the road was uneventfully excellent all the way”).

They met the National Old Trails Road (the Trailing Highway, according to Post) in Trinidad, Colorado, and followed it across Raton Pass into New Mexico. In Colorado Springs, they had met a native of Raton who warned them about what to expect after they crossed Raton pass and reached the town, “Well, I’ll tell you, they have no streets, and they have no drainage, and when it rains the mud is so soft you can go out in a boat and sail from house to house.” He added, “Well, they say they have fixed the road up some since I was down there but I guess the best thing you can do is to let your chauffeur take the automobile down, and you walk behind it with the wreath!” To which Post told her readers, “somehow these alarms no longer terrify!”

While in Colorado, they did not encounter another motorist until Trinidad and then they encountered two vehicles. One of the two cars carried a “Kansas City to Los Angeles” pennant. The other was bound from Lincoln, Nebraska, to San Francisco. Like many passing motorists in that era, they exchanged information about road conditions. Post’s new friends were skeptical about her expensive, hand-made touring car. One asked, “Are you going to try to take that machine down the Bajada?” He added, “I’m glad I haven’t the job of driving her even over the Raton!” Post and her two companions were encouraged when the other motorist said, “Don’t you have no fear, mister! The stage coaches they used to go over this road to Santa Fé; if they could get over, I guess *you* can!” In any event, Post could not see how the “ugly, snub-nosed tin kettles” driven by these motorists could be better hill climbers than “our beautiful, big, long engine.”

Her theory held true in Colorado, but as soon as they crossed into New Mexico, “our beautiful great, long, powerful machine lay down perfectly flat on its stomach and could not budge until one of these despised snub-nosed” cars pulled it out. The Post vehicle had too little clearance; the “New Mexico ruts held us fast.”

The rest of the trip to Santa Fé on the National Old Trails Road was “one long wail.” To be fair to the roads of New Mexico, she admitted that she had reached the State “in the very early spring after the worst of the thaw” before any repairs had been made. She also admitted that the equipment they had brought with them “could not by any possibility have been worse.” The touring car was too low to the ground; great ingenuity was needed to stay out of trouble:

For instance, over deep-rutted roads we have to stay balanced on the ridges on either side, like walking a sort of double tight rope; if we slide down into the rut, we have to be jacked up and a bridge of stones put under to lift us out again. On many of the sharp corners of the mountain passes we have to back and fill two and often four times

Their “particular horror” was the two-plank ditch crossings where the planks were too narrow for the touring car. They had to build a riding surface for the alternate wheels. “Another joy to us is sliding down into and clambering out of arroyos, on the edge of which the car loves to make believe it is a seesaw.” She summarized:

After three days of this sort of experience, you can’t help wincing at the very sight of ruts or rocks or river beds, in exactly the same way that you wince at the close approach of the dentist’s instruments.

During a sudden blizzard of rain, hail, and snow, they became lost miles from the main road. They finally reached Las Vegas, New Mexico, where the likelihood of rain made for a grim prospect. They encountered several other motorists who were pessimistic:

“What did you start so early in the season for?” we heard one driver ask another.

“Well,” said the second, “I don’t mind a little speculation as to what you’re going to run into. If you know the road ahead of you is all fine and dandy, what’s to keep your interest up?”

Sudden rain storms plagued Post, Ned, and Alice after they left Las Vegas. At one point, they came to a ford where “some Mexicans standing beside it motioned us to make a wide sweep,” which landed them in deep soft sand. The bystanders hitched their horses to the car and pulled it through. The road to Santa Fé “was the worst yet,” as she explained:

Washed-out roads, arroyos, rocky stretches, and nubby hills. We just about smashed everything, cracked and broke the exhaust, lost bolts and screws, and scraped along on the pan all of the way.

All this, Post noted, and they still faced “the dread Bajada Hill, in which we are to drop nine hundred feet in one mile and long cars are warned in every guidebook of the sharp and precipitous turns.” If ever they came this way again, it would be in a “very different type of car—or best of all, on the backs of little sure-footed burros!”

She was in for a surprise:

The Bajada Hill, which for days Celia [Alice] and I dreaded so much that we did not dare speak of it for fear of making E. M. [Ned] nervous, was magnificently built. There is no difficulty in going down it, even in a very long car that has to back and fill at corners; there are low stone curbs at bad elbows, and the turns are all well banked so that you feel no tendency to plunge off.

As a result, the 66 miles from Santa Fé to Albuquerque took less than 3 hours to drive, compared with the 6 hours needed to drive the 73 miles from Las Vegas to Santa Fé. The ride across Sandoval County was “an easy drive over a smooth road.” Further, having had varying accommodations along the way, some dreadful, Post was happy to encounter the well-run and comfortable Harvey hotels that were one of the enticements of the National Old Trails Road.

After enjoying tourist activities in Albuquerque, the Post party intended to ship their car to California. However, the good road they had just encountered gave them incentive to continue by car so they could enjoy additional western sites, including some off the main road:

Our idea is to go, if we can, as far as Winslow. It seems rather funny that we, who nearly failed to stay intact over the well-worn Santa Fé trail, are branching into the unbeaten byway of the desert!

They visited the Enchanted Mesa and Acoma before driving to Gallup “long and tediously but without serious hindrance.” They traveled through the Navajo Indian Reservation and the Painted Desert. On the way to Holbrook, Arizona, the road was “difficult in places.” She added, “I’m sure we lost our way several times, a perfectly dispiriting thing to do, as it was much like being lost in a rowboat out in the middle of the ocean.” The drive to Winslow was “without any adventures over a traveled road.”

She was grateful for the experiences, but after the difficulties they had encountered, “no hotel ever seemed so enchanting as the Harvey” at Winslow. She realized that if the car had broken down on the way, they would have been “marooned out in a wilderness” and, without a living soul anywhere, “we might quite easily have been dust before anyone would have passed our way.”

They wanted to continue by car, but had little choice in the matter:

The car was in a seriously crippled condition; any more arroyos and there really would be no more motoring for us this trip. So, all things considered, we hailed our freight car resignedly, put the motor on it and sent it ahead of us to Los Angeles, while we ourselves took the train to the Grand Canyon.

When they finally reached Los Angeles by train, Post found the excellent hotels and roads she had been accustomed to before this trip. Driving down the coast to San Diego in their repaired car, she found “one long succession of big ocean resort hotels on a boulevard that seemed too smooth and perfect to be true.” She added, “We had forgotten that such road smoothness existed for our poor long-tortured engine to glide over.”

San Diego did not disappoint:

The San Diego Exposition was a pure delight. Its simplicity and faultless harmony of color brought out all its values startlingly.

Returning north, Post was delighted by the “beautiful drive” to Santa Barbara north of Los Angeles. She had been on many good roads in Europe, she said, but the road to Santa Barbara was in a class by itself. “I thought I should like to live where I could drive up and down that road forever!”

The roads north to San Francisco were good, as were, of course, the accommodations in the city—an important consideration for Emily Post. The Panama-Pacific International Exposition was the primary reason for the trip, and it was all she had expected:

With merely a phrase, you can make a picture of the little fair at San Diego; cloister-like gray buildings with clumps of dense green, and a vivid stroke of blue and orange. But to visualize the Pan-American Exposition in a few sentences is impossible. You could begin its description from a hundred different points and miss the best one; you can say one thing about it and the next moment find you were quite wrong.

The entire trip, from New York City to San Francisco, had taken 26 days. At the start, her attitude had been contrary to the See America First spirit:

I had an idea that, keen though we were to undertake the journey, we would find it probably difficult, possibly tiring, and surely monotonous—to travel on and on and on over the same American road, through towns that must be more or less replicas, and hearing always the same language and seeing the same types of people doing much the same things.

Friends who had never made such a trip warned her of the “unending sameness” she would encounter, but her experience had been quite different. She exclaimed, “Sameness! Was there ever such variety?”

Still, she did not recommend such a trip for everyone:

It goes without saying that only those who love motoring should ever undertake such a journey, nor is the crossing of our continent as smoothly easy as crossing Europe. But given good weather, *and the right kind of a machine*, there are no difficulties, in any sense, anywhere.

She explained one aspect of the trip that had most surprised her:

There couldn’t be a worse tenderfoot than I am, there really couldn’t. I’m very dependent upon comfort, have little strength, less endurance, and hate “roughing it” in every sense of the word. Yet not for a moment was I exhausted or in any way distressed, except about the unfitness of our car and its consequent injuries, a situation which others, differently equipped, would not experience.

Post concluded her book with a short chapter titled “How Far Can You Go in Comfort?” After suggesting that motorists ship their automobile by freight train to avoid the two long stretches where high-class hotels did not exist (Omaha to Cheyenne, and Albuquerque to Winslow), she explained that “some day,” she would make the drive again. She would learn from experience:

When we go again, we are going in two cars—one to help the other in case of need, and, if possible, a third car to carry a camping outfit—and camp! Celia and I both hate camping, so this proves the change that can come over you as you go out into the West. I say “out into,” because I don’t in the least mean being tunneled through on a limited train! The steel-walled Pullman carefully preserves for you the attitude you started with. Plunging into an uninhabited land is not unlike plunging into the surf. A first shock! To which you quickly become accustomed, and find invigoratingly delicious. Why difficulties seem to disappear; and why that magic land leaves you afterwards with a persistent longing to go back, I can’t explain; I only know that it is true.

In the preface, Post warned that while “insurmountable difficulties” had been eliminated from transcontinental travel by automobile, she did not want readers to misunderstand:

[If] I, who after all *am* a New Yorker, were to pronounce the Jackson House perfect, the City of Minesburg beautiful, the Trailing Highway splendid, everyone would naturally suppose the Jackson House a Ritz, Minesburg and upper Fifth Avenue, and the Trailing Highway a duplicate of our own state roads, to say the least!

Another Lincoln Highway Traveler

In addition to summarizing the Lincoln Highway portion of Emily Post’s trip, Hokanson described a trip at about the same time by Henry Joy, A. F. Bement, and Ernie Eisenhut of the Lincoln Highway Association. Joy, President of Packard Motor Car Company, had secured a new Packard 1-35 touring car for the trip. They left Detroit on May 27, 1915, and soon encountered the rainy conditions that had delayed Post. What was normally a 3-day trip from Chicago to Cheyenne took the experienced, well-equipped Lincoln Highway veterans 11 days. “They had been,” Hokanson said, “on the road, either at the end of a shovel or in the car, for twelve to eighteen hours each day.” The remainder of their trip was completed “with ease.” Hokanson described journey’s end:

Henry Joy and his companions made a more triumphant entrance to San Francisco and the exposition. Their unkempt car was the center of attention as it crossed San Francisco Bay on the ferry, rumbled through the city, and entered the exposition grounds. Covered with mud and road grime, filled with dirty camping equipment, it was promptly placed on display in the Palace of Transportation, where it soon drew a crowd.

Those who gathered at the ropes to view the Packard couldn’t help but see several states’ worth of the Lincoln Highway caked and plastered to its wheels, running boards, and sides This muddy display was certainly a great testimonial for the Packard, but it was no promotion for the Lincoln Highway Some twenty-five thousand people passed through the Palace of Transportation during the two days that Joy’s Packard stood there in muddy glory. Among them no doubt were many who pondered an automobile trip of their own, a trip longer than the usual Sunday drive. They stood and looked at this earth-colored car, resting as it did among flawless and polished new

automobiles of every manufacturer. Certainly this exhibit convinced the faint of heart that the train was the better way to get from place to place.

The Liberty Bell

Charles Henry Davis was always in search of opportunities to promote his cause of National Highways and Good Roads Everywhere. The California expositions offered an opportunity.

The June 1915 issue of *Southern Good Roads* contained an editorial commenting on Davis' proposal to transport the Liberty Bell from Philadelphia to San Francisco by motor truck. Because the Liberty Bell, at that time, was owned by the city, he had asked the Mayor of Philadelphia for permission to transport the bell, offering "to safeguard the famous bell in every way possible and carry it through without expense to the city of Philadelphia." The article explained the rationale for transporting the Liberty Bell by truck:

Mr. David [sic] points out that if the Bell is carried through the nation by motor truck, it may be seen by 22,162,528 people, counting only those who live in the counties that will be traversed. Counting the people who live in adjacent counties, more than 33,000,000 will be enabled to see the bell.

The editor considered the request to transport the Liberty Bell by truck "a reasonable one" because of the comparatively small number of people who would be able to make it to Philadelphia or San Francisco:

It would be a fine thing to carry the Bell to San Francisco over the Lincoln Highway and return by way of the Southern National Highway, so that all sections of the nation might have the opportunity of seeing it.

The Liberty Bell and all that it stands for, is very dear to the hearts of all of the people.

The July 1915 issue of *Dependable Highways* (the magazine of the brick paving industry) reported that the Liberty Bell had arrived in San Francisco without damage "after a 3,000 mile joy ride. The brief article continued:

The National Highway Association transported the bell from Philadelphia to the fair, after the petition of a half million school children had won Mayor Blankenburg's consent to the trip. It went by truck over the route of the Lincoln Highway and will return by the Old Trails route.

Philadelphia had loaned it to several earlier expositions, including the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904. Each time, the trip had been by train. (On a rail excursion to the South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition in 1902, the Liberty Bell Special had crashed in Virginia during a collision with a freight train, but the bell was not damaged.) Philadelphia officials were reluctant to send the Liberty Bell to the West Coast, which was farther than it had ever been from the city, but agreed after seeing editorial support from newspapers and receiving a petition signed by several hundred thousand school children.

Contrary to Davis' hope, however, and the report in *Dependable Highways*, the Liberty Bell traveled to the Panama-Pacific Exposition by train. The western trip took the Liberty Bell to the Northwest before traveling to San Francisco. On the southern return trip, the Liberty Bell reached the Panama-California

Exposition in San Diego on November 12 and was displayed in the Plaza de Panama until November 14. According to Richard F. Pourade, in *Gold in The Sun: The History of San Diego*:

It was William Randolph Hearst, the publisher, who was instrumental in seeing that the Liberty Bell was sent to the San Diego exposition in November, as he had helped to defray the expense of bringing it to the Pacific Coast and the San Francisco fair. [The Union-Tribune Publishing Company, 1965, p. 199]

The Liberty Bell completed its 10,000-mile journey after being seen by patriotic crowds at every stop. Photographs of the trip can be found at <http://www.ushistory.org/libertybell/essay/1915.htm>

Log Rolling vs Pork Barrel

The October 1915 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* reprinted a speech that Judge Lowe had delivered in St. Paul, Minnesota, on November 16, 1914. The topic was “‘Log Rolling’ and ‘Pork Barrel’ Measures.” With Congress likely to consider the long-awaited Federal road legislation in 1916, reproduction of the speech at this time was timely. In it, Judge Lowe continued his examination of 19th century history to support Federal road construction and demonstrate the debt the Federal Government owed to the National Road/National Old Trails Road. He also reiterated his opposition to the Federal-aid concept.

He began:

The danger we, who favor Federal activity in road building, have to meet is the same now as it always has been. But for the threat of what [President James] Monroe characterized as “local” and neighborhood roads, and therefore outside the jurisdiction and power of Congress to legislate in their favor, concurred in by [President] Andrew Jackson and [U.S. Senator] Thomas H. Benton [of Missouri]—termed “over-expansion” by Abraham Lincoln, and now popularly called “log rolling,” “Pork barrel” measures—we would now have a great system of National Highways ramifying every nook and corner and reaching every part of the United States.

Backers of the National Road had to contend with this “selfish and narrow principle,” which Judge Lowe said had defeated “the National campaign of 1824, when a general system of National highways to be built and maintained out of the National revenues swept the country.”

In 1824, Congress considered a bill that would authorize \$30,000 for the President’s use in selecting and defining a system of roads that were national in character from a military, postal, or commercial point of view. As had been the case with the legislation authorizing the National Road, the bill called for the Federal Government to secure State consent to Federal construction, thereby getting around the fact that the land on which the roads would be built was owned by the States. (This same technique had been used to advance the National Road.)

Road and canals, Senator Benton had said, “belong to that class of benefits which it is the noblest ambition of the statesman to bestow upon his country.” Judge Lowe explained that the Senator offered a substitute bill that followed the outline of the original bill, but differed in specifying the national roads to be included in the system. Benton thought it was unfair and wrong to give additional duties, such as identifying roads that were national in character, to the President, who “has enough under the Constitution.” Moreover, local interest would lead to disappointment for all those parts of the country not included in the national system, leading to defeat of any congressional legislation to build the roads.

Inevitably, some would want to divide funds on the basis of tax payments from each State, population, land area, or whichever method was best suited to increase their State's share. Senator Benton said he had a different idea:

The amendment which I have submitted adopts a rule of division different from all these; it proposes to apply the fund *nationally*, to make roads and canals where the *national interest requires them*, without regard to population, direct taxes, or the size of the States.

Benton's amendment proposed five roads, including four with a terminus in Washington, D.C. The four would be built to Florida, Maine, through Virginia to Tennessee, and to Missouri (completion of the National Road). The fifth road was from New Orleans to Columbus, Ohio. Judge Lowe explained that these roads "followed the direction of traveling, whether for business or pleasure, the direction of the great mails, and the lines upon which troops would be marched for the defense of the country."

Senator Benton estimated the cost at \$25 to \$30 million, but to avoid shocking the other Senators, he pointed out that the amount was not needed in a single year. It could be expended at the more reasonable rate of \$2 to \$3 million a year. With the States adding State and local roads to connect with the national roads, "the whole would redound to the benefit of all parts of the country, and of every individual of community."

Benton's amendment was defeated. Congress passed the original version, which President Monroe approved on April 30, 1824. He also sent a message to Congress on the subject, a message that Judge Lowe considered "one of the greatest messages ever delivered to Congress." Seeing no Constitutional objection to Federal road construction, President Monroe summarized the advantages of good roads to "very important National purposes," such as the conduct of war and the transportation of mail. Of "still more importance" was their effect "on the bond of union itself." Although divided by many factors, a country linked by a connecting network of roads and canals "would soon become so compacted and bound together that nothing could break it."

In the presidential election of 1824, Judge Lowe said, John Quincy Adams campaigned, in part, on the issue of internal improvements of national interest. Judge Lowe indicated he did not have time in his speech to cite the new President's Inaugural Address. However, in President Adams' Inaugural Address on March 4, 1825, he summarized the accomplishments of his predecessor's 8 years in office, during which Adams had been Secretary of State. The accomplishments included progress on "the great system of internal improvements within the limits of the constitutional power of the Union" and "preparing by scientific researches and surveys for further application of our national resources to the internal improvement of our country." President Adams explained the approach of the new Administration:

To pursue to their consummation those purposes of improvement in our common condition instituted or recommended by him [referring to former President Monroe] will embrace the whole sphere of my obligations. To the topic of internal improvements, emphatically urged by him at his inauguration, I recur with peculiar satisfaction. It is that from which I am convinced that the unborn millions of our posterity who are in future ages to people this continent will derive their most fervent gratitude to the founders of the Union; that in which the beneficent action of its Government will be most deeply felt and acknowledged Some diversity of opinion has prevailed with regard to the powers of Congress for legislation upon objects of this nature. The most respectful deference is due to doubts originating in pure patriotism and sustained by venerated authority. But nearly twenty years have passed since the construction of the first national road was commenced. The authority for its

construction was then questioned. To how many thousands of our countrymen has it proved a benefit? Repeated, liberal, and candid discussions in the Legislature have conciliated the sentiments and approximated the opinions of enlightened minds upon the question of constitutional power. I can not but hope that by the same process of friendly, patient, and persevering deliberation all constitutional objections will ultimately be removed. The extent and limitation of the powers of the General Government in relation to this transcendently important interest will be settled and acknowledged to the common satisfaction of all, and every speculative scruple will be solved by a practical public blessing.

Under President Adams, the commission established by the 1824 law submitted its report. Judge Lowe summarized the “disastrous report” by saying it supported “ninety roads—odds and ends of roads, having no semblance of nationality.” He added:

Suffice it to say that the purposes of that selfish, sordid, narrow-minded Board of Pot-house Politicians prevailed, and thus the great, far-seeing and patriotic purposes of Gallatin, Jefferson, Calhoun, Monroe, Jackson, Clay, and Adams were destroyed.

Judge Lowe brought the story to the present:

We have proposed a bill modeled after Senator Benton’s bill, providing for a system of fifty thousand miles of National highways, to be built and maintained by the general Government without levying one dollar of additional taxes. This may seem large, but it is less than two per cent of our roads and will serve sixty-six per cent of our population, and if those living in adjoining counties are included, this system will serve ninety-two per cent of our people.

Noting that 6 percent of the roads in France, generally regarded as having the best roads in the world, are national roads, he asked, “Can’t we build two per cent?” As for the cost, he asked: “To what better purpose can it be applied?”

The following month, November 1915, *Better Roads and Streets* reported that the good roads boosters of Lexington, Missouri, proposed to erect a bronze monument to Judge Lowe “as a tribute to him for the splendid work done and being done by him in the re-building of the National Old Trails Road.” Upon being informed of the proposed honor, Judge Lowe sent a letter informing the leader of the movement, “Build the road, and that will be the best monument and one in which everybody can share alike.”

The magazine agreed with Judge Lowe’s idea:

Better Roads and Streets believes the road boosters along the National Old Trails Road in every State should follow the example set by the Lexington, Missouri, association and erect a monument to the Judge—do it while he is yet alive and laboring for the re-building of the road, and show to the Judge himself, while he is yet alive, our appreciation of his splendid work.

The Pan-American Road Congress

Good roads advocates expected 1916 to be the year a good roads bill—whether Federal-aid or National Highways—would be enacted. They did not foresee the role the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco would play in the debate.

Each year, highway officials, contractors, and good roads boosters had to decide which good roads conventions to attend. The annual meetings of the American Highway Association (AHA) and the American Road Builders Association (ARBA), the two largest conventions, overlapped in subject matter to some extent. When topics considered during the AHA's first American Road Congress in 1911 included construction and maintenance, ARBA protested that these subjects had been its territory since its founding in 1902. The two associations tried to combine for one convention in 1912, but had been unable to reach agreement. The 1915 expositions offered an opportunity to try again to combine the two major national meetings into one, to be held in California. The key to agreement on a single convention was that both organizations agreed not to hold a separate national meeting in 1915.

On March 18, 1915, the Joint Committee of ARBA and the AHA met in Montpelier, Vermont, to plan the convention, to be called the Pan-American Road Congress in connection with the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. The Joint Committee had been working on the plan since late 1914, with its membership consisting of two representatives from each association. During the March meeting, a fifth member, Vermont Governor Charles W. Gates, was added. Because Governor Gates, a former State Highway Commissioner, was not affiliated with either association, he was considered the tie breaker who could help the Joint Committee complete its work.

The Pan-American Road Congress was tentatively set for the week of September 6, but during a meeting of the Joint Committee on April 16 in New York City, the opening date was moved to Monday, September 13, in the Municipal Auditorium of Oakland, California. A notice in *Good Roads* (April 24, 1915) explained the decision:

The date has been selected because of the advantageous arrangements that can be made for halls and meeting places, and also because it was felt that this date would enable engineers planning to attend the International Engineering Congress to attend the Pan-American Road Congress as well.

The congress would run through Friday, September 17. Exposition officials agreed to designate September 15 as "Pan-American Road Congress Day." On that day, the congress would meet in Festival Hall on the exposition grounds, with tours of the road machinery and material exhibits planned for that evening. Expectations were high for this meeting of what *Good Roads* referred to as "the two road organizations ranking first in importance on this continent, in their respective fields."

The August 7, 1915, issue of *Good Roads* explained the elaborate arrangements made for transportation to the Pan-American Road Congress:

A special train will be run from Chicago to Oakland, leaving Chicago on September 2 over the Chicago and Northwest Railway and arriving at Oakland on the morning of September 12. Stops will be made at St. Paul, Minn., Banff and Lake Louise, Canada, Seattle, Wash., and Portland, Ore

A return tour through Los Angeles, San Diego, the Grand Canyon of Arizona, Denver and Kansas City was under consideration.

The good roads press usually described conventions in glowing terms, citing large attendance, great enthusiasm, and major importance. Each convention was the best ever. This one would be an exception. The Pan-American Road Congress holds the distinction of being one of the least successful road

conventions held during the years of the Good Roads Movement. The account in *Better Roads and Streets*, stated:

It cannot be said that it was a huge success, particularly from the standpoint of attendance, for the attendance was smaller than that of any national congress that has been held within the limits of the memory of the writer; another thing that tended materially to detract from the success of the meeting, which should have been the greatest that has ever been held in this country, was the noticeably large number of absentees who were listed on the official program.

Chairman James H. MacDonald [Connecticut's State highway commissioner] admitted that it was one of the most trying periods of his life when, at the first session, out of the total of eight speakers who were scheduled on the official program, but one was present.

The problem, the magazine speculated, was that the construction season was underway in many parts of the country, preventing officials and contractors from leaving their duties.

One of those absent for the first session was Logan Page, Director of the U.S. Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering (OPRRE, as OPR had been renamed on July 1, 1915) and President of the AHA. He was scheduled to read the first paper during the first business session of the Congress. (The chairman of the session, Fairfax Harrison of the AHA and president of the Southern Railway, was also absent, so the session was chaired by Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt of North Carolina.) With only about 150 people in attendance, Major W. W. Crosby of Maryland read Page's paper, "The History and Future of Highway Improvement." The speech reflected Page's longstanding view that "the same sort of business management and business expediency that make for success in private enterprise" should be applied to road building at the State and especially the county level. However, his text read by Major Crosby provided no comment on the prospect for Federal participation in road improvement.

In addition to being widely considered unsuccessful, the Pan-American Road Congress led to a rupture between Page and ARBA later that year. In November 1915, he learned that ARBA had announced plans for its annual meeting, to be held in early 1916 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Page objected in a letter to ARBA on November 10, 1915:

The whole point and effort in bringing about the Pan-American Road Congress was that neither association should hold an independent convention this season. This was the argument used by the officials of the congress in soliciting funds to finance the convention.

It seems to me that in view of the above facts, for the Road Builders to hold their annual meeting a month or two later than is the usual custom, so as to have the date fall just within another calendar year, *constitutes a breach of faith*. The present plan for holding this convention will simply mean that the Road Builders will have given up no annual convention, but merely deferred the usual convention a month of two.

In view of this breach of faith, Page submitted his resignation as a member of ARBA's Board of Directors. (When the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) held its annual meeting at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago on December 7 and 8, 1915, the members adopted a resolution urging ARBA and the AHA to "amalgamate into one organization, or . . . at least arrange to hold jointly one annual road congress." The resolution urged member State highway agencies not to send representatives to any National Road Congress held before December 1, 1916.)

Despite the poor attendance at the Pan-American Road Congress and the breach it caused between Page and ARBA, the congress served an important purpose prior to the 1916 congressional debate on a good roads bill. This result occurred because key members of AASHO attended the Congress.

When AASHO had formed in December 1914 as a voice for State highway officials, its members directed the Executive Committee to prepare and present a bill to Congress representing AASHO's plan for Federal cooperation. The committee, dominated by members from heavily populated States with well-developed highway networks, collaborated with AAA's president, A. G. Batchelder, on the draft of a Federal-aid bill that called for a national system of highways. The draft was sent to Congress.

Midwestern members of AASHO, many from States with less developed networks, objected to the plan and the fact that they had not been consulted before the AASHO proposal was submitted to Congress. To settle the dispute, AASHO's Executive Committee met in Oakland on September 11, 1915, just before the Pan-American Road Congress. The committee consisted of:

George P. Coleman, Chairman, Virginia.
W. D. Sohler, Massachusetts.
Thomas H. MacDonald, Iowa.
E. A. Stevens, New Jersey.
Lamar Cobb, Arizona.
Joseph Hyde Pratt, North Carolina
Henry G. Shirley, Maryland (President of AASHO).

MacDonald took the lead in drafting a proposal that would be consistent with Page's ideas of a Federal-aid program based on a Federal-State partnership rather than Federal construction of national roads. (Whether Page attended this meeting is unclear.) During AASHO's annual meeting, the States adopted the new version in place of the earlier bill. The only change was elimination of the amount to be appropriated (\$25 million a year); the figure was best left to the House and Senate appropriations committees. In 1916, AASHO's bill would become the foundation for the Federal-aid highway program.

Condition of the National Old Trails Road

The October 1915 issue of *Touring Topics* reported on the condition of transcontinental highways in California. For the National Old Trails Road, the summary stated:

Reports received daily from our construction crew enroute from Kansas City to Los Angeles, indicate that conditions are rapidly improving throughout the entire length of this road. During the early part of September, heavy rains were experienced throughout western Kansas and Colorado, but the weather has cleared and roads are again in normal condition. All cars are coming through without difficulty.

As for the Lincoln Highway, the summary reported:

The Lincoln Highway from San Francisco east . . . is in fair condition, although some very bad sections will be encountered in Nevada, Utah and south Wyoming and Nebraska. This highway has had much transcontinental travel during the present season, and although cars have been coming through without any extraordinary difficulties, very few cars pronounce it an entirely feasible

transcontinental route at present. The worst spots of this road are reported as follows: The crossing of the Fallon Sink between Fallon and Eureka, the crossing of the old Salt Lake between the Nevada State Line and Salt Lake City, and the road along the North Platte River between North Platte and Omaha. During the summer's rainy season, these sections were very badly washed and practically no reconstruction work has been done.

In January 1916, *Touring Topics* had a more detailed report on the western end of the National Old Trails Road. The road was in "good shape as far east as Seligman in Arizona," but the magazine added that, "rains and stormy weather may change route conditions at any time." Conditions from Seligman to Los Angeles were good with exceptions. From Seligman to the Colorado River, the road was "in good shape with the exception of some rough work near Seligman." After crossing the river on the Santa Fe Railroad bridge, motorists would find the road from Needles to Cadiz "in good condition," but from Cadiz to Ludlow, motorists would find a "fair dirt road with the exception of the last six or seven miles into Cadiz which has numerous chuck holes and is very sandy."

Continuing west, the motorist would discover that the road to Barstow, particularly the last 10 miles, "has been badly rutted by heavy auto trucks." In addition to being "quite sandy," this section of the National Old Trails Road had "numerous chuck holes which necessitates slow driving." The road through Cajon Pass between Barstow and San Bernardino over Mount Vernon Avenue was "a first class road with the exception of the four miles in the Cajon Pass which is almost impassable on account of snow and mud." From San Bernardino to Los Angeles, the motorist would travel over "continuous pavement with the exception of one mile of dirt road west of Upland, which is excellently maintained."

National Old Trails Road in Ohio

In the second half of 1915, several good roads magazines covered Ohio's aggressive plan to improve the National Old Trails Road.

The August 1915 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* reprinted a speech by Arch W. Smith of the State Highway Department on "Ohio's Road Program." Smith had delivered the speech on June 9, 1915, before the Ohio and Michigan Association of Undertakers. It began:

Ohio's road program is a definite one, and is proving to be a very practical one. In a nutshell, it contemplates the improvement and continuous maintenance of the system of inter-county highways embracing a network of the main thoroughfares of the State totaling 9,874 miles. This system connects every county-seat with the seats of adjoining counties, and also serves directly all other important cities and villages.

After a general discussion of the State's initiative, Smith discussed the status of Ohio's three transcontinental highways, the National Old Trails Road, the Lincoln Highway, and the Dixie Highway. In doing so, he emphasized that the State had no connection to the organizations backing these highways and had not given official recognition to any of them. He added:

The department has tendered every assistance and encouragement within its proper sphere, and shall continue to do so on behalf of any movement for better roads, whether it is national in scope, or merely a township improvement.

Smith described the route of the National Old Trails Road, noting that in Ohio, it passed through Bridgeport, Cambridge, Zanesville, Columbus, London, Springfield, Dayton, and Eaton. He continued:

Its promoters claim that in 1914, \$2,124,000 was expended for improvements along this route, and that Ohio furnished 22.2% of this amount, Maryland ranking second with 21.8%, and California, third, with 17.8%. It is claimed also that for 1915 moneys have been appropriated for further improvements to the amount of \$2,021,000. Of this amount Ohio is credited with supplying 52%, California 22.2%, and Maryland 10.3%.

It is asserted that over one-third of the entire 3,600 miles has already been constructed. In Ohio the entire mileage has been improved with brick, concrete, water-bound macadam, bituminous-bound macadam and gravel. At the present time, out of a total of 191 miles outside of municipal limits, there are about thirty-eight miles of old improvements, made by local authorities, which are in need of reconstruction, not counting improvements which are now under way.

In Licking and Muskingum counties, the United States government is co-operating with the State and county on the improvement of a continuous stretch of twenty-four miles of this highway, of the concrete type, which leads west from Zanesville, and is to be the model concrete road of the world.

The concrete paving project west of Zanesville was a result of the experimental post road program added to the Post Office Department Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 1913. It had appropriated \$500,000, to be used by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Postmaster General to improve selected post roads. State or local governments were to provide two-thirds of the total cost of projects, with the two Federal departments asked to report to Congress in 1 year with the results of the experimental program. As part of the drive to determine the appropriate Federal role in highway improvement, the post road program was seen as way of exploring how a Federal-aid program might work. (The same legislation also authorized creation of the Joint Committee on Federal Aid in the Construction of Post Roads, otherwise known as the Bourne Committee.) The experimental program was not successful if measured by mileage improved, but did provide valuable experience that helped Logan Page shape his views on Federal-aid. For example, it convinced him that the program should be a partnership between the OPRRE and State highway agencies because cooperating with the more than 3,000 counties would be too burdensome.

By comparison with the National Old Trails Road, Smith said of the Lincoln Highway:

The total distance across Ohio on this route is 262.4 miles, of which 224 miles are outside of municipal limits, and of this, 147 miles of road are improved with brick, macadam, and gravel. There are nineteen miles under contract uncompleted, and forty-six of new improvements are under contemplation.

Carl Fisher, who had launched the Lincoln Highway, was also the inspiration for the Dixie Highway. The idea had been to identify a road from the Lincoln Highway in Chicago, to Miami, Florida, where Fisher now lived as a developer and promoter of Miami Beach. The Dixie Highway Association was organized during a meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on April 3, 1915. By the time of a meeting in Chattanooga on May 22, the routing commissioners had settled on a northern extension to Mackinaw, Michigan, and a Dixie Highway System rather than a single highway alignment. The association had solved routing disputes by incorporating rival alignments on the theory that motorists could take one

route south and the other route north for variety. In Ohio, the routing was via Toledo, Lima, Dayton, and Cincinnati.

Smith informed the undertakers of the brief history of the Dixie Highway, pointing out that Ohio might benefit from a resolution adopted by the Dixie Highway Association stating that the association reserved the right to relocate any portion of the highway where a county or municipality failed to complete its link within a year. Smith stated, "This may mean that Ohio is to pull the Dixie Highway eastward." Dayton and Montgomery Counties were already near contract letting for their sections. "No doubt you will hear more of this project when the movement reaches Toledo and Detroit."

The December 1915 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* contained George D. Steele's description of Ohio's work on the National Old Trails Road in an article on "How Construction is Progressing on National Pike." Steele summarized the history of the National Road, pointing out that after 1838, the road had been turned over to the States "and since that time, so far as can be learned, it has never received even honorable mention in a Federal Appropriation Act." However, under the post road program, he said, \$120,000 had been allotted to improve a 24-mile section of the National Road/National Old Trails Road west of Zanesville:

The improvement consists in regrading the old road to a width of thirty-four feet and reducing grades to a maximum of seven per cent, and laying a concrete pavement sixteen feet in width along the central portion of the grade.

The concrete was 8 inches thick at the center of the pavement, 6 inches at the sides, the difference providing for drainage. The project had another unique feature:

One of the novel features of the construction of this section consisted in giving the pavement a super-elevation on the curves. These elevations are computed for a velocity of thirty miles per hour, but do not exceed eight inches in any case. This feature, it was found, added very little to the cost of the work, but adds greatly to the feeling of security of automobilists going around the curves.

The State Highway Department of Ohio and the OPRRE had designed the project "with extreme care" and carried out the construction contract under joint supervision "with the same extreme care." Construction by the H. E. Culbertson Company began in May 1914, with concrete placed on a 15-mile section between June 17 and November 14, when work was halted because of unfavorable weather.

By the time of Steele's article, Culbertson had completed the work, which included five new bridges and 59 new culverts. The cost in Muskingum County had been \$181,920, and in Licking County, \$258,080.

Steele reported on construction in the other National Old Trails Road counties in Ohio:

- Belmont County: Under a contract awarded in May 1914, the State reconstructed a 4-mile segment with a 16-foot wide brick pavement on a concrete foundation. The State had also built four stone arch bridges. Another section, a little over 4 miles long, had been similarly repaved, with the maximum grade reduced from 13 percent to 7.88 percent. A 16-mile section had also been repaved and the grade reduced from 11 percent to 7.86 percent.
- Guernsey County: Segments totaling 14 miles had been repaved with brick, 15 feet wide, on a rolled stone foundation. Maximum grade had been reduced to 7.9 percent.

- Licking County: Beyond the post road project, three other sections of the National Old Trails Road, totaling 16 miles, had been improved. Concrete paving, 16 feet wide, was extended through the town of Hebron (.89 miles). On the succeeding two sections, the pavement was 16 feet wide, but bids were taken on concrete, tar-bound macadam and asphalt-bound macadam surfaces. The award for the second section was for a tar-bound macadam, while asphalt-bound macadam was selected for the third section.

The construction in Belmont County, which is Ohio's easternmost county, was featured in an article about "The National Road" in the December 1915 issue of *Dependable Highways*. The article acknowledged the Nation's diversified interests and the difficulty of rallying support for a "matter, therefore, of great single national importance." It added:

In spite of all this there are in the list but few undertakings which would more greatly benefit the vast majority, in an economic, social and material way, than the improvement to a high standard of a few great thoroughfares throughout the country. The time may come when, as a matter of military preparedness, the expenditure therefore will be worth more than any other object for which an equal amount of money might be expended.

Given the National Road's continued "relative place as the most logical and important route to be improved," the article focused on the plan to pave the entire Belmont County segment of the highway with brick pavement, 16 feet wide. Henry E. Rice, county surveyor of Belmont County, was directly involved in the work:

Watchful care, direction, instruction from the grading to the finished surface, will make possible the hope of splendid construction. The engineer was caught in the act [in the accompanying photograph]. It may seem a little thing to have the subgrade prepared with exact care but the effort is worth while.

When the article was written, the work was not complete:

Several short sections are yet uncompleted in this county—the larger pieces awaiting the heavy roller to crush and smooth the broken stone base will be noticed with peculiar interest by most engineers.

The article also discussed repair of a bridge built 90 years earlier as part of the National Road:

Whether the crooks, and the turns, the bumps, the irregular lines were made to harmonize with all surrounding nature, or whether it was shaped to suit the mere whim of the builder, cannot be proved. It is a curiosity to say the least. It would scarcely be expected, however, that the fruit of some antique whim would be in keeping with the influences of the last hundred years. It required but little repair to restore this bridge to its original worth.

If the same care expended on the bridge were expended on the road, "wear and tear upon this brick road will impart no serious injury for another hundred years."

The article recommended that other counties in Ohio, as well as Indiana and Illinois, adopt brick paving for their portions of the National Old Trails Road. "It would be a great regret—waste of money—in fact a calamity if any less durable type of road improvement should be undertaken." If officials did not have "the courage to deal with at least this road as a purely business proposition," they would be "brought to

stand before the bar of public opinion and receive a condemnation that will smirch them forever and justly so.”

Closing the Expositions

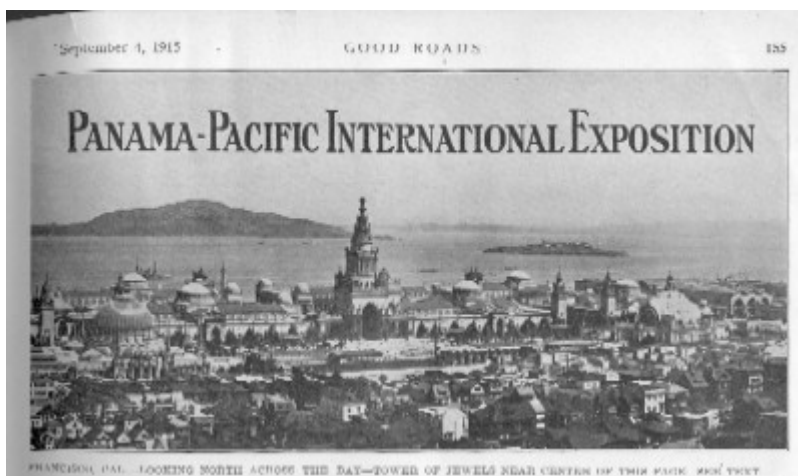
San Francisco’s Panama-Pacific Exposition, which had opened on February 20, 1915, closed on December 4. Nearly 19 million people had visited the exposition. Although the more centrally located expositions in Chicago (1893) and St. Louis (1904) had enjoyed higher attendance, the Panama-Pacific Exposition was financially successful, making a profit of \$2.4 million.

The smaller Panama-California Exposition in San Diego had also been a success, counting over 2 million admissions by tickets and passes as well as a net profit of \$56,570. The exposition ended on December 31, 1915, but resumed on January 1, 1916 as the Panama-California International Exposition. With additional exhibits borrowed from the San Francisco exposition, the Panama-California International Exposition continued until January 1, 1917, having attracted 1.7 million attendees. Finally, the exposition ended in the black, with profits under \$50,000.

How many eastern motorists traveled to the expositions by automobile is not known. In the 1916 edition of *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway*, the Lincoln Highway Association estimated that 1915 had seen an increase in transcontinental touring of 300 to 600 percent. The guide quoted D. E. Watkins, Secretary of the California State Automobile Association (northern California’s equivalent of the Automobile Association of Southern California): “Conservatively estimated, I would say, fully 25,000 automobile parties have toured to California.”

The National Old Trails Road Part 2

Gallery: Section 1 of 4



The Panama-Pacific International Exposition, shown here in photographs that appeared in the September 4, 1915, issue of Good Roads magazine, was the focus of promotion by the National Old Trails Road Association, the Lincoln Highway Association, and others.

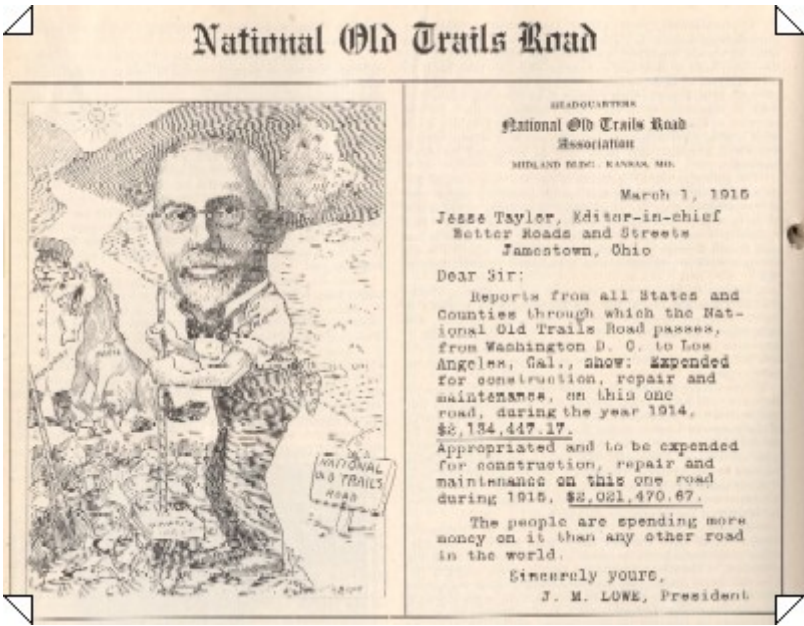
[Return to Text](#)



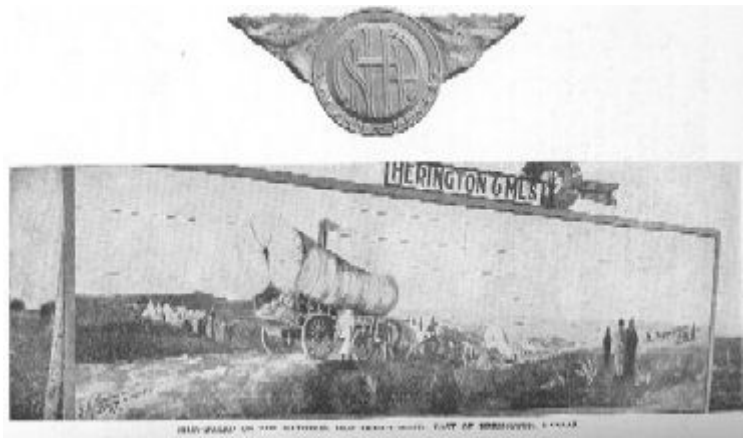
The Panama-Pacific International Exposition, shown here in photographs that appeared in the September 4, 1915, issue of Good Roads magazine, was the focus of promotion by the National Old Trails Road Association, the Lincoln Highway Association, and others.

[Return to Text](#)

Gallery: Section 2 of 4

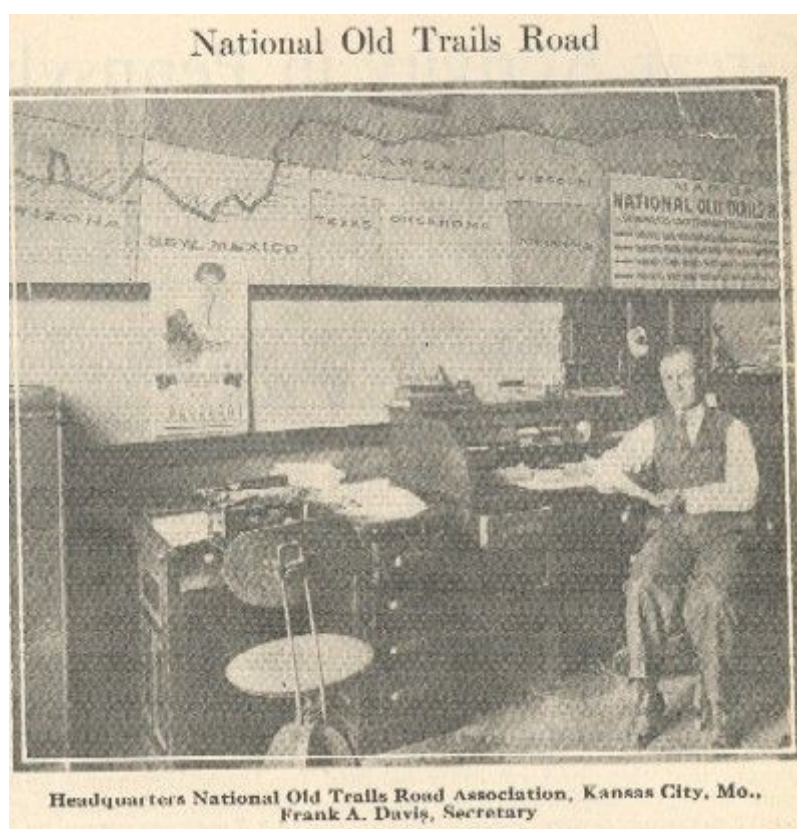


Better Roads and Streets printed a letter by Judge J. M. Lowe citing over \$2 million in improvements for the National Old Trails Road in 1914. An accompanying editorial cartoon depicted Judge Lowe at work creating



A sign along the National Old Trails Road east of Herington, Kansas, depicted a wagon train moving west, part of the heritage of the old trail.

Gallery: Section 3 of 4



Frank Davis, who served the National Old Trails Road Association for many years, is shown in the Association's headquarters in front of a map of the trail.



Oakland's Municipal Auditorium, shown here, was the site of the Pan-American Road Congress. Although the Congress was a failure in some respects, members of AASHO took time from the event to develop a draft bill that was the foundation for the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, which Judge Lowe opposed.

Gallery: Section 4 of 4



During the Panama-Pacific Exposition, the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads' exhibit (shown here) in the Machinery Palace was the most comprehensive exhibit in its history to that point. The exhibit was intended to stimulate road building and encourage better methods of construction and maintenance.

[Return to Text](#)



In 1915, Ohio was aggressive in building concrete pavements along the National Old Trails Road, as shown in this photo, taken west of Zanesville, showing a U.S. Mail truck on the road.

[Return to Text](#)



Two vehicles are shown on the concrete pavement of the National Old Trails Road in Licking County, Ohio.

[Return to Text](#)

THE NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD

PART 3: Promoting the Road During a War

By
Richard F. Weingroff

Setting The Stage

President Woodrow Wilson was up for reelection in 1916. While many issues would be raised during the campaign, one overall concern was whether the United States would enter the war in Europe that had begun in August 1914. The issues that resulted in the war seemed far removed from America's concerns, but nevertheless affected many aspects of life, including international travel. German U-boats continued to sink ships in Atlantic waters, a threat that had been most dramatically illustrated on May 7, 1915. On that date, a German U-boat sank the RMS Lusitania when it was only 11 miles off the coast of Ireland. As the luxury ship sank, 1,198 people died, including 128 Americans.

President Wilson and the Department of State worked through diplomatic channels with the German government to reduce the threat to American shipping and lives, but whether an agreement could be reached remained uncertain in 1916. While the President would campaign in the fall on keeping America out of the war, the threat of war prompted many organizations to think about how their interest could benefit from preparations for American entry into the Great War.

The Good Roads Movement was no exception.

By 1916, the automobile was transforming the country (population: 91.6 million). The U.S. Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering (OPRRE) stated in 1915:

During the past 10 years the State registration of motor cars, including commercial vehicles, has increased 5,000 per cent or from 48,000 in 1906 to 2,445,664 in 1915. The motor vehicle has not only developed at an astonishing rate as a factor in transportation, but has in an equally remarkable development served to augment very materially our revenues for road purpose. Thus, while in 1906, less than three-tenths of 1 per cent of the total rural road and bridge expenditures in the United States was derived from the motor-vehicle revenues, nearly 7 per cent was secured from this source in 1915. [*Automobile Registrations, Licenses, and Revenues in the United States*, 1915, Division of Road Economics, Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Circular No. 59, page 1]

(In a reorganization of the Department of Agriculture intended to put all engineering activities in one place, rural engineering activities, such as drainage and construction of farm buildings, were added by the Department's appropriation act for 1916 to the Office of Public Roads (OPR) on July 1, 1915, creating OPRRE.)

In 1908, Henry Ford had introduced the Model T, which was built for the rough rural roads of its era but was sold at a low price that made it affordable for people who previously could only dream of owning a motor car. Demand for the Model T was so great that Ford, in 1910, began transitioning to mass production techniques that would soon be adopted throughout the industry and spread to other fields. In 1909, Ford sold 10,609 vehicles; in 1916, Ford would sell nearly 600,000 Model Ts. Historian Douglas Brinkley explained the impact:

In large part due to the Model T's electrifying effect on the car-buying public, in 1914 the automobile business was by far the fastest-growing industry in the country. In 1913, it had been the 7th largest; fifteen years before that it had ranked a distant 50th. Total production across the country had grown by 28 percent from 1912 to 1913 alone. Even that was but a gust of wind compared with the gale blowing through Ford: in the same year, its production increased by a full 100 percent. [Brinkley, Douglas, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress*, Viking, 2003, pages 185-186]

Revenue from automobile taxes had increased as well, with much of it applied to road improvement. New York, the first State to collect vehicle taxes, took in \$954 in the first year, 1901. By 1916, the States were collecting over \$18 million, with about 90 percent of this revenue applied to road improvement. [Circular No. 59, page 1]

In 1904, when the U.S. Office of Public Road Inquiries conducted the first inventory of roads outside of cities, it reported that the country included 2,151,570 miles of rural public roads, plus 1,598 miles of stone-surfaced toll roads. Only 153,662 miles of the other rural public roads had any kind of surface, including earth, gravel, stone, shells, and sand-clay. Only 276,920 miles had any kind of artificial surface. [*America's Highways 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program*, Federal Highway Administration, 1976, page 50]

Meanwhile, from 1904 through 1915, annual expenditures on rural road had increased from about \$80 million to \$282 million – an increase of more than 250 percent. The 1904 figure does not entirely reflect expenditures. About \$20 million of the \$80 million was paid in labor provided by those along the roads who worked to smooth them out or remove obstacles in lieu of paying poll taxes. An OPRRE report documented the change:

The remarkably rapid increase in our road expenditures during the past 12 years, however, is not all due to increased activity in construction. A large portion must be charged to the demand for better and consequently more expensive types of construction, as well as greatly increased maintenance costs made necessary by the changed traffic conditions. The effect of the motor vehicle on the cost of road construction and maintenance had not become apparent in 1904. To-day many of our roads carry a motor traffic far in excess of the total traffic of all classes carried 12 years ago. At the present time there are about 2,500,000 motor vehicles in use on our public roads, or about one motor vehicle for every mile of road. This motor traffic is not uniformly distributed but largely concentrated on certain roads. This is the underlying reason why maintenance

and reconstruction costs have increased so rapidly on many of our roads and why the total road expenditures have increased so much more rapidly than the mileage of improved roads. [*State Highway Mileage and Expenditures for the Calendar year 1915*, Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Circular No. 63, page 1-2]

Interstate named trails were a relatively new development. Automobile clubs had provided names for early interstate roads, such as the Trail to Sunset (discussed in part 1), but these were mainly lines on a map, not a movement with advocates. The National Old Trails Road Association dated only to 1912, just as Congress began serious, if unsuccessful, consideration of legislation on national road funding. The influential Lincoln Highway Association, formed by automobile industry officials to back a “rock” road from New York City to San Francisco, had been formed in 1913. The Lincoln Highway Association was one of the few associations that actually built at least a small part of the trail as “object lessons” demonstrating what could be accomplished. For the most part, the growing number of associations depended on State and county officials to fund improvement of the road.

These two and other early interstate named trail associations provided the model for hundreds of other named trails over the next decade and a half. Each had a colorful or descriptive name and a chamber-of-commerce type organization to promote its trail. They encouraged State and local governments to improve the road and issued maps and travel guides inviting motorists to use the road and patronize the businesses along the roadway that paid dues to the association. By the mid-1920s, enterprising good roads backers had created approximately 250 named trails. Many of the trails overlapped, especially where alternatives were few as in the far Southeast; routes sometimes shifted to communities more willing to pay dues or improve the road; and some associations were launched by fly-by-night operators.

System of National Highways

Aside from the contribution these groups made to the improvement of their roads, they contributed to the general interest in road improvements and growth in auto travel. Advocates for long distance roads made their case to Congress that the country needed an interstate network of good highways. The National Highways Association, discussed in part 1, was an example, with its proposed 50,000-mile network of interstate roads.

Judge Lowe, president of the National Old Trails Road Association and a founding member of the National Highways Association in 1912, had introduced his own map in 1913 of a System of National Highways:

Connecting State Capitols and All Cities of over 20,000 with the NATIONAL CAPITOL.
[sic]

A caution on the map stated:

This map shows TENTATIVE locations for the System of National Highways following

substantially lines suggested by Hon. S. Warburton of Wash. and map compiled by National Highways Association.

The plan, as described in the April 1913 issue of *The Road-Maker*, explained financing:

Under this scheme the necessary money for the payment of this work will be collected by the Government within five years after the act takes effect. The proposed plan contemplated the construction of about 18,000 miles of road. I estimate the cost will not exceed \$15,000 a mile or \$17,500 at the maximum.

I propose to raise the fund by approximately restoring the internal revenue tax of 1879 on tobacco, and set aside the additional income from this source as a National Road fund.

The main difference is the tax on cigars. The law of 1879, as all our recent laws, fixed the same tax in all grades of cigars; the tax was six dollars a thousand regardless of whether the wholesale price was \$35, \$75, or \$150 a thousand. I have always contended that this was a wholly unfair system of tax; that the tax ought to be graded so that the man who smokes a five-cent, the man who smokes a ten-cent, and the man who smokes a twenty-cent cigar would pay about the same per cent tax.

The additional tax so provided would amount to about sixty million dollars a year. It would not quite double the present internal revenue tax on tobacco. If the proposed roads should cost \$15,000 a mile the roads will be paid for in about five years.

The article concluded:

The proposed scheme of roads I think is a most important one from every point of view. It is not necessary to state the advantages of such a system of roads; they will readily appeal to every one. If you will observe the map it will be seen that every state reaps an equal, or about an equal, advantage from the construction of such a system of roads. Any administration that passes such a law will not experience hard times during such administration and will have the everlasting gratitude of the people of this country.

Not only so, but the immense saving in the transportation of farm products, the increased value of all land along such highways, the increased revenues derived by the Government by reason thereof, the object lesson in road building extending throughout the country, the energy and enthusiasm it would inspire in the States and Counties, the community of effort, the unity of interest, and the patriotism of the people thus enabled to meet and to know all divisions and parts of a common country makes this easily the greatest movement ever conceived by the mind of man. ["The Proposed Inter-State Highway System," *The Road-Maker*, April 1913, pages 4-6]

Judge Lowe also prepared a bill that was introduced in Congress:

A Bill to Provide for the Construction, Maintenance and Improvement of a System of

National Highways and to Provide Funds for Their Construction and Maintenance.

It proposed a National Highways Commission “consisting of the Director of the Bureau of the Office of Public Roads, and four other members to be appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the consent of the Senate.” No more than three of the Commissioners “shall belong to the same political party as the President. The OPR Director “who shall also be a member of the President’s Cabinet, was to be Chairman of the commission:

That said National Highways Commission shall have supervision of the construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of said roads, their bridges and their general construction; shall determine the manner thereof and material thereof, the plans and specifications necessary thereto, and the times and manner of letting contracts for the same, and the time and manner of payment therefor.

To assist in this effort, the commission “may apply to the Secretary of War for such part of the engineering force not now needed in the completion of the Panama Canal, and for such machinery or material no longer needed in such work and such as may be useful in the construction of said highways.”

The bill directed all revenue from taxes on cigars, chewing, and smoking tobacco of every description “shall be set aside by the Treasurer of the United States and placed in a separate fund, to be known as the National Highways Road Fund.” The commission would draw on the fund for construction expenses.

Section 8 of Judge Lowe’s bill stated that the commission would “lay out and definitely locate, take over, construction and maintain the following National, Commercial and Military Highways and Post Roads.” Road No. 1, of 18 specified in the bill, was the National Old Trails Road. The bill included the map Judge Lowe had prepared for the National System of Highways. [“System of National Highways,” *National Old Trails Road: The Great Historic Highway of America*, National Old Trails Road Association, 1925 (Revised Edition), pages 229-238]

The bill was not adopted.

In Missouri

For Judge Lowe, who lived in Kansas City, Missouri, the progress of the road in Missouri was of particular concern. In January 1916, *Southern Good Roads* magazine reported that, “The work of building a hard surfaced highway from Kansas City to St. Louis along the Old Trails Road, 303 miles in all, is practically half completed”:

Last summer at a good roads meeting held in Kansas City Judge J. M. Lowe, president of the National Old Trails Road Association, proposed that the task of linking the two great cities of Missouri be completed within the year. His enthusiasm was so contagious that the fever of rock road building quickly spread from one road district to another, until now it is safe to predict that another summer will see all of the money needed for the cross-

state highway secured.

When the fight to construct Missouri's first great rock [road] began 119 miles of the Old Trails Road had been hard surfaced. This mileage included the hard roads across Jackson, Boone and St. Louis counties, the rock roads through the Lexington and Fulton special road districts, in Lafayette and Callaway counties respectively, and the gravel and rock roads across St. Charles county.

Since then Wellington special road district, the first east of Kansas City, has voted bonds in the sum of \$55,000 to plug its gap in the trail. Between the Jackson county line and the Wellington district line is a 2-mile stretch not included in any road district, but money has been promised the Old Trails Road Association by Kansas City road boosters to care for that bit of the trail.

Waverly district has approved a bond issue of \$49,000 to be expended in hard surfacing the 10.2 miles of the cross-state highway that cuts that district. This means that in Lafayette county alone within the last few weeks the money has been found to rock 24.2 miles of the Kansas City to St. Louis road.

The Saline county rock roads committee is considering plans for rocking 192 miles of road in that county. This plan includes the mileage of the Old Trails Road through Saline. But if the voters do not approve the bonds, Sherman Houston, of Malta Bend, chairman of the county committee, is the authority for the statement that when Lafayette county brings the rock road to the Saline county line, Saline will carry it across to Howard and Cooper counties.

In St. Charles county 1.8 miles of the trail is being rocked this fall. That means 145 imles [sic] of the trail either has been rocked or the money provided for it. ["Old Trails Road Progress," *Southern Good Roads*, January 1916, page 12]

(In the 1910s, the term "hard surfaced" did not mean a road with an asphalt or concrete pavement. It referred to a road that would not turn to mud in a rain, as was the case with earth roads. A common alternative term for a hard surfaced road was a 365-day highway. For example, a hard surfaced road might include a top coat of crushed gravel or rock over graded earth. In 1914, the country had 2,445,761 miles of rural roads. Only a total of 257,291.54 miles, or 10.52 percent, was surfaced:

- Gravel: 116,058.12 miles (45.11 percent)
- Macadam: 64,898.43 miles (17.16 percent)
- Sand Clay: 44,154.73 miles (17.16 percent)
- Bituminous Macadam: 10,499.79 miles (4.08 percent)
- Concrete: 2,348.43 miles (0.91 percent)
- Brick: 1,593.88 miles (0.62 percent)
- Various 17,738.16 miles (6.90 percent)

[*Public Road Mileage and Revenues in the United States, 1914. A Summary*, Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bulletin No. 390, January 12, 1917, pages 3-4])

American Motorist magazine, published by the American Automobile Association (AAA), added:

St. Louis and Kansas City are taking up definitely the project of an interurban stone-surfaced highway to connect the two cities. The road to be constructed follows the "Old Trail" route and has a total length of 303 miles, one-third of which has already been surfaced with stone. The road passes through St. Charles, Warrenton, Fulton, Columbia, Glasgow, Lexington, and Independence.

The Business Men's League of St. Louis has begun the organizing of a road-building campaign in each community along the route, and the plan of campaign provides for the raising of funds in each county by means of a bond issue where current revenues are insufficient to carry out the project. It is planned that after the people in the different counties have raised as much as is practicable, the cities of St. Louis and Kansas City will make up the remainder needed.

It is estimated that the cost will be \$5,000 per mile and that 200 miles of the route will have to be constructed, making the total outlay necessary about one million dollars. It is anticipated that the counties will provide \$850,000 of this sum and that the two cities will raise the other \$150,000. The government is expected to furnish the engineers for surveys, estimates, and supervision. ["St. Louis and Kansas City to Help Build 'Old Trail,'" *American Motorist*, April 1916, page 44]

(Although the Missouri State Highway Department dates to 1913, State funds from general or special funds available for road improvement were apportioned among the counties that had the funds to pay for at least one-half the cost of any road improvement or construction project. The role of State Highway Commissioner F. W. Buffum (1913-1917) was mainly advisory, with a primary responsibility to encourage the counties to improve their roads. In 1917, the Hawes Law, named after State Representative Henry B. Hawes, assented to the Federal Aid Road Act, created the position of State Highway Engineer, and established a four-member bipartisan State Highway Board. The State did not assume responsibility for the road work until 1921. [*Serving Missouri's Transportation Needs for 75 Years*, Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission, 1996, page 3])

In the Southwest

During the 1910s, construction of California's State highway system involved three main acts. The State Highway Act of 1909 called for designation of a system of State Highways to be constructed at a cost not to exceed \$18 million. All funds from the State sale of highway bonds would go into a State Highway Fund in the State Treasury. The routes included in the system were "to be selected by the Department of engineering . . . as to constitute a continuous and connected State Highway system running north and south through the State, traversing the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys and along the Pacific Coast, by the

most direct and practicable routes, connecting the county seats of the several counties through which it passes and joining the centers of population, together with such branch roads as may be necessary to connect therewith the several county seats lying east and west of such State Highway.” The highways were to be “permanent in character,” with the exact character and type of paving left to the Department. The 1909 Act was ratified during the general election of November 1910 and became effective on December 31, 1910.

As of June 30, 1920, the mileage completed with the \$18 million totaled 1,100 miles of paved road and 400 miles of graded highway, the latter with culverts and structures. The mileage included a 53.5-mile road from San Fernando in the Los Angeles area to San Bernardino.

The State Highways Act of 1915 called for an additional debt of \$12 million for work on the uncompleted portions of the State system and \$3 million for additional roads listed in the legislation. The voters approved it in November 1916. One of the routes improved was a 76.33-mile route from San Bernardino to Barstow.

The State Highways Act of 1919 involved a \$40 million bond issue, and covered a 255-mile route from Needles, via Barstow, to Mohave. [*The State Highways of California – An Engineering Study*, conducted jointly by the California State Automobile Association and the Automobile Club of Southern California, July 1920-January 1921, pages 11-16]

Ben Blow, manager of the Good Roads Bureau of the California State Automobile Association, wrote in 1920 that the bond funds were far below what was needed. Of the first bond issue, he wrote that, “all was easy sailing, as easy as it could be when the fact that the Highway Commission was charged with building about \$50,000,000 worth of roads for \$18,000,000 is taken into consideration.” The first work began on August 7, 1912, in San Mateo County on the road from San Francisco to the south.

The second bond issue was easily approved, but immediately ran into problems:

The United States began to experience abnormal conditions, prices went up – of labor and all sorts of supplies. And then the United States plunged into war and a multitude of boards and commissions and dollar-a-year men appeared like mushrooms, earnestly and sincerely, in the main, trying to help win the war but gumming things up in relation to construction work until in practically every section of the United States highway building was halted, the work done by the California Highway Commission being the only work of magnitude which was carried on. [Blow, Ben, *California Highways – A Descriptive Record of Road Development by the State and by Such Counties as Have Paved Highways*, The H. S. Crocker Company, Ltd., 1920, pages 1-3]

In January 1916, the Automobile Club of Southern California’s magazine, *Touring Topics*, discussed the condition of the western end of the National Old Trails Road:

This highway as far east as Seligman in Arizona is reported in good shape at present but rains and stormy weather may change route conditions at any time. From Los Angeles to

San Bernardino by way of Foothill Boulevard, [is] continuous pavement with the exception of one mile of dirt road west of Upland which is excellently maintained. From San Bernardino over Mount Vernon Avenue and through Cajon Pass to Barstow there is a first class road with the exception of the four miles in the Cajon Pass which is almost impassable on account of snow and mud. The last ten miles into Barstow has been badly cut up by heavy freighting.

From Barstow to Ludlow the road surface has been badly rutted by heavy auto trucks. This portion of the road is quite sandy and contains numerous chuck holes which necessitates slow driving. From Ludlow to Cadiz, fair dirt road with the exception of the last six or seven miles into Cadiz which has numerous chuck holes and is very sandy. Between Cadiz and Needles the road is in good condition. From Needles it is advisable to turn to the right into Topoc, at which point the Colorado River is crossed on the Santa Fe Railroad bridge (a charge of \$3.50 is made for crossing.) From the river the route extends eastward through Yucca, Kingman, thence by Hackberry, Peach Springs to Seligman. The road is in good shape with the exception of some rough work near Seligman. [“Trans-Continental Highways: National Old Trails Road,” *Touring Topics*, January 1916, page 23]

The magazine updated its report a month later:

This all-year route has withstood rains and travel has not been interfered with to great extent. Cajon Pass, beyond San Bernardino is passable and in fair shape. There is one creek to be crossed four miles above Devore but this is causing no trouble – also a creek crossing one mile beyond Victorville which required team assistance on February first but with a few days of clear weather this crossing will cause no trouble. From Barstow to Needles roads will be found passable although numerous cross washes will be encountered. [“Transcontinental Routes: National Old Trails Highway,” *Touring Topics*, February 1916, page 22]

San Bernardino County

Writer Nick Cataldo has examined the history of the National Old Trails Road in San Bernardino County. As a result of a special election on October 14, 1914, the road was improved “at 16 feet wide with crushed limestone aggregate and asphaltic binding.” The road through the San Bernardino Valley, he wrote, “meandered through the Cajon Pass before continuing into the Mojave Desert heading east.” As motor vehicle traffic increased along the road – 419 vehicles in 1914, 1,367 in 1915, 1,774 in 1916, 2,607 in 1917, and 4,240 in 1918 – stores, gasoline stations, and tourist camps opened:

The most pressing need for climbing the Cajon grade from San Bernardino was water for overheated engines. Automobiles in those days did not have the super cooling systems of today’s vehicles, and many were the motor cars that were obliged to pull to the side of the road with steam rising from their boiling radiators.

The driver proceeding up the National Old Trails Road from San Bernardino came first to the small railroad siding of Verdemon, eight miles from town (but now part of San Bernardino),

where water for radiators was available. Two and a half miles further was the small community of Devore, where gasoline, water and groceries could be obtained.

Beyond Devore, Cajon Canyon narrowed considerably as mountains closed in on both sides.

Motorists continued 4 miles to Keenbrook, a railroad siding with water available. “Just beyond, the highway and the Santa Fe tracks close on the left twisted through the narrow defile of Blue Cut to Cozy Dell, shaded by great oaks, with its grocery store and gas station.” Fuel and supplies were available a mile and a half later at Cajon Station, with a public campground called Camp Cajon a half mile further east. In this era before roadside “motels,” a term that was not coined until the 1920s, communities often established camping areas for motorists to keep them from camping on private property along the way. Camp Cajon provided “50 cement tables, stoves and restrooms built by William Bristol, a wealthy citrus rancher from East Highlands. The AAA rated Camp Cajon, dedicated on July 4, 1919, as one of the best in the west.”

Also in 1919, Marion Meeker established a café and garage called Meeker’s Store a mile and a half beyond Camp Cajon:

Two miles further on, the National Old Trails Road crossed the Santa Fe tracks and passed Alray Station, the last water stop before the final climb to the 4,200 foot Cajon Summit. If the driver didn’t tank up before this stretch, his engine would be boiling well before he reached the top.

Finally, if the driver made it to the summit, 25 miles or so from San Bernardino a welcome “oasis” greeted him known as the original Summit Inn. Established in the early 1920s, it was here that the weary traveler was accommodated with a café, store, gasoline station and garage. Serving as the main stopping point on the highway before dipping down into the Mojave Desert, the Summit Inn was a popular rest stop. Needless to say, the Summit Inn garage did one heck of a business fixing overheated engines.

Columnist L. Burr Beldon of the *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin* interviewed Sam McNabb, a former mayor of San Bernardino, in 1964. Mayor McNabb recalled the early days of travel on the National Old Trail Road:

It left San Bernardino on Fourth Street and continued straight west through Rialto and on to Etiwanda. Near Rochester, between Etiwanda and Cucamonga, there was a slight bend. In Cucamonga proper, the road jogged north a block and headed for Cucamonga Creek which was crossed from 300 feet north of the present bridge. Dips were frequent and often overflowing with waste irrigation water. The San Antonio Avenue crossing west of Upland was at times so deep that cars would stall out. A nearby resident is said to have kept a team of horses hitched just to pull out cars for which he charged \$2. [Cataldo, Nick, “Taking a trip up the National Old Trails Road,” *The San Bernardino Sun*, July 24, 2017; “Old Trails Road paved the way for Route 66,” *The Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*, April 5, 2010]

An everlasting Debt of Gratitude

As discussed in part 1, the Automobile Club of Southern California had taken on the task of signposting

the National Old Trails Road to Kansas City. The top of the sign was a diamond inside of which was a globe-like circle with the words “National Old Trails Road Association” inside a circular band surrounding latitude/longitude lines with a line depicting the road from “NY” to “LA” with the words “Ocean to Ocean” to the left, top, and right, with “Highway” on the line.

Below the diamond was a directional road sign, topped by a band labeled National Old Trails Road. For example, the sign might read:

KANSAS CITY

ST. LOUIS	302mi.
INDEPENDENCE	8mi.
LA JUNTA	581mi.
OLATHE	24mi.

The signing crew finished in early 1915, as explained in the March 1916 issue of *Touring Topics*:

Early in 1915 our crews completed the enormous task of erecting our signs over the National Old Trails Road between Los Angeles and Kansas City, including branch routes to the Grand Canyon and to Big Springs, Nebraska. This is the longest continuously signposted road in the world, and this vast undertaking has stamped the Automobile Club of Southern California as the most enterprising signposting organization in existence. There are two very significant facts in connection with this work. First, that during the year after the signing of the road was nearing completion, transcontinental travel into Southern California over this route increased over one thousand per cent. In 1914, 194 touring parties traveled over the National Old Trails Road into Southern California, and in 1915, over the same road, but guided by and enjoying the assurance of the Club’s road signs, there were 2,000 parties! No other single enterprise has ever meant more to our community than this. The second interesting fact is that the project was financially self-sustaining – the various counties through which the road runs paying for the signs and posts. [“Roads and Signs,” *Touring Topics*, March 1916, page 13]

Judge Lowe was appreciative of the club’s work. He wrote:

The Automobile Club of Southern California is one of the few Auto Clubs which has arisen to a full conception of its opportunities and an appreciation of the purpose of its organization. Not neglecting the social and technical features pertaining thereto, it has risen to the higher and more paramount issue of road building, rightly conceiving that this should be first on its list of activities, for which this purpose is attained “All things else shall be added to it.”

And its success may be largely and chiefly accounted for because of this fact – it has stood for something. Handicapped at first by an unreasoning opposition to the automobile in rural communities, it steadfastly pressed to the front in its advocacy of every measure for road betterment until it broke down every foolish prejudice and every form of opposition and came to be recognized everywhere as one of the great and leading

factors in a National Campaign for Good Roads everywhere.

During the life of your Association, and due to its ceaseless and untiring energies, Southern California has been grid-ironed with a system of permanent roads which is the pride and wonder of a continent.

Your people have done in five years more than other communities have in a hundred. You have again demonstrated that “When there is a will there is a way.” The splendid achievements in Southern California are the wonder and inspiration of a continent. You have demonstrated over and over again that the money wisely applied to promotion work is the best money which goes into good roads.

California owes you an everlasting debt of gratitude, and no matter whether it seems to be appreciated or not, the name of your Association will be everlastingly linked with the history of better roads throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Among your activities not the least was the permanent signposting of the National Old Trails Road from Kansas City to Los Angeles, since which we have carried it forward to St. Louis, and shall carry it on to Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York this year.

The liveliest imagination cannot conceive what this means to the material interests of Southern California. We are fast hooking up with the N.O.T. every State and county system of highways through which it runs. This means that more than one hundred thousand miles of permanent roads will pour their traffic into the lap of Los Angeles for all time, over this great single artery. Nothing can divert it. [Lowe, Judge J. M., “California Owes You An Everlasting Debt of Gratitude,” *Touring Topics*, March 1916, page 23]

The Topock Bridge

On March 25, 1916, officials dedicated the new \$100,000 automobile bridge over the Colorado River at Topock, Arizona, near Needles, California. As *Touring Topics* pointed out in its April 1916 issue:

It was necessary, formerly, for transcontinental motorists to enter California over the Santa Fe Railroad bridge which was planked and made available for automobiles with a small toll charge. Prior to planking this bridge, cars were ferried across the river.

Funds for the new bridge came from San Bernardino County and the States of Arizona and California:

The bridge itself consists of a single span five hundred and sixty feet in length and two hundred feet above the river bed. It is sufficiently wide for vehicles to pass for its entire length. Not only the bridge itself, but the roadway of approximately fifteen miles in

length between its approach and Needles is an engineering masterpiece. The roadway was built principally through the efforts of Judge L. V. Root, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Needles and an officer of the National Old Trails Road Association. So admirably have the road builders done their work on this stretch of highway that any speed of which a car is capable may be safely taken and the grade to the bridge has been located so scientifically that it is scarcely noticeable.

The dedication ceremony included representatives of the two States, San Bernardino County, the Automobile Club, and chambers of commerce of Los Angeles, Needles, and the county:

The dedication ceremony consisted of an address by Judge Root, a response by J. S. Mitchell, president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and its christening by little Miss Baker, daughter of the Secretary of the Needles Chamber of Commerce. Following this ceremony, a banquet was given to the visitors in Needles at which President Baker of the Automobile Club of Southern California assured the good roads men present that the Association could be counted upon to place direction and mileage signs on all main automobile roads as fast they were placed in condition to encourage motor traffic.

Touring Topics assured readers that the new bridge was “but one step in the record of progress that has been made along the western portion of the National Old Trails road to improve it for local and transcontinental motoring. State and county officials had “cooperated in improving this highway and placing it in such condition that no automobilist need hesitate in undertaking the journey so far as the western part of the roadway is concerned”:

From San Bernardino over the Cajon Pass the roadway is in excellent condition with the exception of a three-mile detour at Pitman Heights, now necessary while concrete is being laid by San Bernardino County. Beyond the Pass as far as Barstow the road is somewhat sandy, but not difficult to travel, and between Barstow and Ludlow, with the exception of a few miles of soft road, the highway has been graded, rolled and packed and readily lends itself to a speed of from twenty-five to thirty miles an hour. Between Ludlow and Needles there are some portions of the roadway that are quite rough due to heavy truck traffic occasioned by the demand for supplies by the new mining camp at Oatman. These poorer parts of the road will soon be a thing of the past, however, as San Bernardino County has a fund of approximately \$150,000 available the improvement of this highway. Road crews are at work along the entire two hundred and fifty miles between San Bernardino and Needles, and it is only a matter of weeks before the California section of the National Old Trails Highway can be traveled by any car almost as easily as a paved road.

To illustrate how good the road already was, the article pointed out that the Packard provided for the Los Angeles officials who attended the ceremony traveled the 316 miles between that city and Needles in 9 hours and 45 minutes – an average speed of 30 miles an hour. To avoid any

misunderstandings, the article added:

In justice to these law-abiding gentlemen, however, it should be stated that the trip over the road through the populous portion of the country was made during the night time when there were no other vehicles on the road and when there was absolutely no danger to other traffic in thus slightly exceeding the speed limit. ["Needles \$100,000 Automobile Bridge Dedicated," *Touring Topics*, April 1916, pages 7-9]

Donald C. Jackson's *Great American Bridges and Dams* discussed the Old Trails Bridge at Topock:

The Topock Bridge is a 592-foot-span steel through arch built to carry highway traffic across the Colorado River between Arizona and California. Originally a component in the Old National Trail Highway, it later became part of the famed U.S. Route 66. In the late 1940s the Santa Fe Railway replaced its nearby Red Rock Cantilever Bridge (1890) with the Topock Bridge and donated the Red Rock span (since demolished) to Arizona and California for highway use. In 1948 the arch bridge was sold to the El Paso Natural Gas Company and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The firms subsequently modified it to carry a gas pipeline over the river. Although no longer serving its original purpose, the main structure of the Topock Bridge retains its historical integrity. It is readily visible from the modern highway bridge that carries Interstate 40 across the Colorado River. [Jackson, Donald C., *Great American Bridges and Dams*, The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1988, page 249]

David Plowden, in his photographic book on bridges, wrote about the Old Trails Bridge. He began by noting that the bridge was, briefly, the longest arch bridge in America.

After it was built in 1916, it exceeded by one foot only the length of the Detroit-Superior Avenue Bridge in Cleveland. It also had the distinction of being both the lightest and longest three-hinged arch. It weighed only 360 tons and had a single 592-foot lattice-rib half through arch span.

A daring method of erecting this arch was used because of the Colorado River's unpredictable nature. The tremendous fluctuations in water level made the use of falsework extremely dangerous and expensive. Instead, each half of the arch was assembled in a horizontal position and then raised into place by tackle from a tower located in midstream. A unique type of ball-and-socket center hinge and the bridge's extreme lightness made this maneuver possible. The idea was conceived by A. M. Meyers, the contracting engineer for the Kansas City Structural Steel Company, who were the fabricators of the steelwork and responsible for carrying out the actual work.

The Old Trails was designed by J. A. Sourwine of San Bernardino, California, who saw the work completed on February 20, 1916 Today this remote and tiny hamlet [of Topock] has no less than five bridges, clustered together in the middle of the empty desert. [Plowden, David, *Bridges: The Spans of North America*, W. W. Norton and Company, 1974, page 178].

The National Park Service says of the bridge:

The steel arch of the Old Trails Bridge simply soars. An innovative piece of engineering, one enormous span of 600 feet supports the 800-foot bridge that crosses the Colorado River in Topock, halfway between Yuma and the Utah border. The bridge carried automobile traffic over the Colorado River from 1916 until 1948.

Calling it “a landmark of American civil engineering,” the discussion continued:

Technologically, the structure is nationally significant as an outstanding example of steel arch construction. The engineers for the Old Trails Bridge had studied the problems builders and engineers encountered while constructing the Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge [at Yuma, Arizona, south of Topock]. They knew the engineers there had found constructing and securing a large span over the deep Colorado gorge difficult, so they tried the task a different way.

In Topock, engineers used a unique cantilever method of construction assembling bridge halves on their sides on the ground and hoisting them into place using a ball-and-socket center hinge. This meant that the structure was not supported by traditional spans from the ground up as it was being built. The use of the cantilever was a daring move for its time, creating the longest arched bridge in America. At 360 tons, it was the lightest and longest bridge of its kind. From the day it opened, this graceful arch and the deck it supported were a pivotal Colorado River crossing, first on the transcontinental National Old Trails Road and, by 1926, on Route 66. [Old Trails Bridge, Topock, Arizona, Route 66, Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary, National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/route66/old_trails_bridge_topock.html]

On September 30, 1988, the Old Trails Bridge was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Following the opening of the Topock bridge in 1916, Mohave County in Arizona took over the private mining road from Kingman to Topock via Oatman. According to Sherry and Richard Mangum’s book about the National Old Trails Road in Arizona, the county “began reducing the grade up the hill to Goldroad, which at the time was a twenty-six percent engine-buster. On the west side of the Black Mountains, Mohave County worked to reduce other steep grades.” [Mangum, Rickard K, and Mangum, Sherry G., *The National Old Trails Road in Arizona*, Hexagon Press, Inc., 2008, page 89]

Retirement?

On March 3, 1916, *Kansas City Post*:

Lack of financial support from road enthusiasts throughout the country has resulted in the resignation of Judge J. M. Lowe, president of the National Old Trails Road association.

The resignation is to take effect April 1. On that date the headquarters of the association in the Midland building will be closed.

For many months Judge Lowe has been standing the expenses and paying the rent of the offices maintained by the association. Appeals for aid in carrying out good road work were in vain and Judge Lowe has become discouraged. He mailed his resignation to the directors of the association yesterday.

Judge Lowe was one of the pioneers in good roads agitation throughout the West. He has held the position of president of the association for more than three years. It was through his efforts that the Santa Fe trail east of Kansas City was marked and to him belongs the credit for making Kansas City the midway point in the ocean to ocean highway.

Whatever the accuracy of this article, Judge Lowe remained president and continued issuing bulletins and fighting for the National Old Trails Road.

Daughters of the American Republic, 1916

The Daughters of the American Republic (D.A.R.) met in Washington on April 17-22, 1916. The new chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee, Mrs. Henry McCleary, reported on the committee's activities. She began:

The National Old Trails Road Committee appointed for the purpose of securing National legislation creating an ocean-to-ocean highway from the old historic roads and trails of our country has been actively engaged in this work for six years. During this period it has created a great interest not alone in the highway for which it labors, but in almost every State in our land the Daughters are searching out the pioneer trails and marking them with boulders, tablets and monuments. While this is subsidiary to the National Old Trails Road it is of inestimable value in creating a sentiment in behalf of the National legislation we desire. No other word of this Society has created greater interest in the early history of our whole country than the work of this committee.

Mrs. McCleary had written to every State chairman seeking their cooperation:

Their replies tell a widespread. Many chapters have one day's program a study of the National Old Trails Road. The reports of the State Chairman, which time will not permit us to read, show that through the efforts of the Daughters in locating pioneer trails many interesting facts of the early history of our country are being brought to light.

The letters were appended to her address in the proceedings.

She commented on the status of the legislation D.A.R. had initiated:

House Bill 4755 introduced in the present session of Congress by Hon. [William] P. Borland [sic] of Kansas City, and known as the Old Trails Act, asks for the enactment of

a law making our road a National highway. It is not known as the D.A.R. bill, but we ask the support of each Daughter for this measure. At the next session of Congress we hope to have this bill introduced under our own name and to enlist the support of each State organization and the National Board.

At a meeting of this Committee held during the present session of this Congress a Committee was appointed to design a permanent marker for our National highway.

Another Committee is designing a seal of the Old Trails Road which we hope will be extensively used by the D.A.R. in their correspondence, thus aiding in giving publicity to our work.

It was also decided at this meeting of our Committee to ask the State societies of the S.A.R. [sic] and State Historical Societies to co-operate with us in securing National legislation for our Old Trails Road.

This is a time of road building – a period when the cry for good roads is more and more persistent, and the demand for a National ocean-to-ocean highway grows strong each year. Undoubtedly it will soon be granted. Why then should not this great highway be the one mapped out by the Daughters of the American Revolution? Every foot of it is rich in history. Its history is the story of the development and civilization of a continent, of the growth of a great people and a world power from a few struggling colonies on the Atlantic Coast

On December 14, 1915, at the start of the first session of the 64th Congress, Representative William P. Borland had introduced several bills, including:

H.R. 4755 – To be known as the old trails act, to provide a national ocean-to-ocean highway over the pioneer trails of the Nation, thus making a continuous trunk-line macadam road from the site of Jamestown, Va., and from the city of New York, N.Y., to the city of Washington, D.C.; thence by way of St. Louis, Mo., to Gardner, Kans., and there to branch, one branch leading through Santa Fe, N. Mex. The other branch leading from Gardner, Kans., through Kearney, Nebr., to Olympia, Wash.; also to aid the States through which the highway herein described as the National Old Trails Road shall run in extending, constructing, rebuilding, and repairing same.

The bill, which offered warrants for one-half the cost of construction to be issued to States on certification of completion of construction through each State, had been referred to the Committee on Agriculture.

After commenting on each segment of the National Old Trails Road, Mrs. McCleary continued:

Make it a great National Highway. Over such a road rural free mail delivery will reach thousands of homes. Farmers will market their products, their children will attend school. Charles Sumner said: “The two greatest forces for the advancement of

civilization are good roads and the schoolmaster.” Thousands of motorists will traverse it and will learn to know our country better. Will be entranced by its natural beauties and amazed at the financial possibilities awaiting development. The dreadful wars of the Old World have forcibly brought to our knowledge the fact of our utter unpreparedness to protect or defend our nation, and in preparation for defense good roads are of inestimable value and have been so proven in the foreign war It is just as patriotic to defend your country and protect the living as to build monuments to commemorate the achievements of a past age. Then let us as a Society use our utmost endeavor to secure the enactment of a National legislation making the Old Trails Roads an ocean-to-ocean highway. As a means of National defense, a memorial to the worthy pioneers, a great factor in the social and commercial development of our country, a practical lesson in patriotism. A monument that not only honors the dead but serves the living. [Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Continental of the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 17-22, 1916, pages 1158-1160]

The Fight for National Roads

Still, the advocates of interstate highways were regarded by many as favoring the "idle rich" or "peacocks" who had time to travel the rigorous miles across the country by auto. An editorial in the *Engineering News* issue of May 6, 1912, had reflected the popular feeling:

We must say frankly that to propose such an expenditure of the public money for the benefit of a few wealthy pleasure seekers at a time when the masses of people are crying out in a protest against the increased cost of living seems like trifling with a grave situation.

Nevertheless, with the growth of automobile traffic, pressure for improved rural roads had grown. Congress had taken up the issue for several years, but had been unable to resolve the different viewpoints, particularly between those who favored Federal construction of national roads versus those who preferred a Federal-aid program of assistance to State and local officials. While the debates continued, a provision of the Post Office Appropriation Act of 1913, signed by President William Howard Taft on August 24, 1912, authorized a \$500,000 experimental post road improvement program as a test of concepts. State or local governments were to pay two-thirds of the cost.

The program produced few physical results, but had the positive outcome of convincing Federal road officials that aid should be limited to the States to avoid the complexities of working with the country's more than 3,000 counties. [*America's Highways 1776-1976*, pages 81-83]

On January 25, 1916, the House of Representatives passed a Federal-aid bill by a vote of 281 to 81. All work would be under the supervision and control of the State highway departments or, if a State did not have one, in such manner as may be agreed to by the Governor and the Secretary of Agriculture. Any State receiving the aid after January 1, 1920, must have a State highway agency. Although States would select Federal-aid projects, the Secretary would examine all surveys, plans, and estimates; make progress payments as the work was underway; and make the

payment of the Federal share only after an inspection of the work. The Federal share would be not less than 30 percent nor more than 50 percent.

Backers of good roads were not uniformly pleased. Many good roads groups were still pulling for construction of national roads, namely their named trails, and opposed the Federal-aid concept that they described as States spreading money over local roads, to no national purpose, in a “pork barrel” waste of the funds.

The possibility that the United States might enter the European war prompted the named trails associations to promote the value of improving the primitive interstate road network to support a potential wartime economy. On April 7, 1916, for example, Judge Lowe wrote to President Wilson:

Dear Mr. President:

In any question of “Preparedness,” either for possible war or peace, it seems to me certain roads should be built and maintained by, and under the sole supervision of, the General Government. In this connection, I call your attention to the “Cumberland,” now called the “National Old Trails Road,” originally built and maintained by the Government for more than a quarter of a century – twice a campaign issue, in 1824 and 1848 – and victorious in each instance. It had the support of such Statesmen as Jefferson, [Virginia Governor William B.] Giles, Gallatin, Randolph, Calhoun, Jackson, Benton and Lincoln.

He enclosed a clipping from April 7, 1916, issue of the *Kansas City Times* and requested “that you glance over it.” The article, titled “To Urge Old Trails Facts,” began:

Facts showing the pre-eminence the National Old Trails Road would have as a military highway have been prepared by Judge J. M. Lowe, president of the Old Trails Association, at the request of C. J. Myers of the Co-Operative Club. This is for use in the campaign which the Co-operative Club is making to raise \$13,000 to finance the road association the ensuing year.

The facts included:

It leads from the seat of government directly through the central and most thickly settled part of the United States.

It directly connects at either end with our Coast system of highways, and with all our military supply stations, and with all our Coast fortifications.

It connects the Atlantic with the Pacific by the shortest route and easiest grades.

It is the most practicable all the year round road.

It is directly connected with the state and county systems of each state through which it runs.

It runs or is closely connected with all the largest centers of population and with the capital of each state through which it runs.

The article listed the mileage of all roads in each Old Trails State from Maryland to California, and noted that the road was directly connected to road system totaling 694,161 miles.

I have elsewhere shown that if only about 122,000 miles (one-fifth) of this system were permanently built, no farm in the states through which it passes would average a greater distance from it than about five miles.

In an emergency the concentration or mobilizing centers would undoubtedly be Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Pittsburgh, Columbia, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Louisville, St. Louis, Kansas City, Topeka, Denver, Santa Fe, Phoenix, Los Angeles and San Francisco, all directly reached over the National Old Trails Road.

It will serve directly one-third of the population of the United States.

He estimated that one-third of the population to total 32,811,745 people.

Edison says: "I cannot overestimate the value of good military roads; the railroads have nothing like their elasticity. With good roads a million men with artillery and supplies can be shifted two hundred miles in twenty-four hours."

Almost one-third of this road was built and maintained by the government as a national and military highway for nearly forty years and more than one-half of it is now either built or the funds are provided without any strings tied to tentative or conditional promises.

Nearly all transcontinental roads suggested connect at some point with the National Old Trails Road. [Found in the National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

The White House received Judge Lowe's letter on April 10 and forwarded it to the Department of Agriculture, which received it on April 12.

The Stationary

Beginning in 1916, the National Old Trails Road Association introduced new stationary for its letters. At the top on the left appeared the names, title, and home town of the Association's Officers, including Judge Lowe, president. On the right, a similar list for executive committee members.

Centered below the list appeared:

HEADQUARTERS NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD ASSOCIATION THE GRAND CANYON ROUTE

DEPARTMENT
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS ASSOCIATION

RAILWAY EXCHANGE BUILDING
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Centered between the two lists appeared the Automobile Club of Southern California's diamond-shaped sign of the road, with the upper point of the diamond just below the "A" in "CANYON." Below the diamond was the directional road sign from Kansas City described earlier.

Arrows pointed the east-west directions for the cities from Kansas City.

To the left and right of the centered road sign was a list of State Vice-Presidents

The Federal Aid Road Act

While advocates for national roads, including Judge Lowe, continued to fight for their cause, the House and Senate voted in favor of the Federal-aid concept of Federal-aid to States along the lines of the draft bill developed in Oakland by a committee of the American Association of State Highways Officials (AASHO) and adopted by AASHO for submission to Congress. Its chief advocate in the Senate was Senator John H. Bankhead of Alabama, chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads.

Senator John D. Works of California, by contrast, was one of the outspoken opponents of the Federal-aid concept. As the Senate debated the bill on April 21, 1916, he began:

I rise to oppose the pending bill. I appreciate the fact that it is an unpopular thing to do, as it is avowedly legislation in the interest of the States and particularly of the farms of the several States. But the bill is so clearly vicious as a matter of policy and to my mind it is so clearly against the spirit if not the letter of the Constitution, that I feel it is incumbent upon me to discuss the bill at some length.

He often had expressed concern, he pointed out, about "the present tendency of legislation in Congress . . . to wipe out almost completely the dividing line between the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the States and the Federal Government, and that this has been brought about largely by the desire of the States to secure appropriations of money from the National Government." He listed dozens of such bills in areas of public health, education, agriculture, and defense highways and public roads.

He considered the present Federal-aid bill "one of the worst of its kind." He went through the provisions before concluding:

I have occupied all the time I think I ought to consume in the discussion of this bill; but I have here a synopsis of the statement made by Judge J. M. Lowe, who is president of the National Old Trails Road Association of Kansas City, Mo., before the Good Roads committee of the House of Representatives, which was prepared by Judge Lowe himself, and which bears upon this question.

He had the statement, initially presented in January 1914, read into the record. The presentation was summarized in part 1. Judge Lowe asked:

As “Federal aid” in some form is being agitated as preferable to a system of national highways, permit me to ask why make the States contribute an equal amount or any other amount as a condition precedent to any action by the General Government?

Why make the State contribute to a national enterprise at all?

If a road is not of national concern, ought the national revenues be appropriated to it?

One argument was that the State share was justified because the States would benefit from the Federal-aid roads. “If this is to be the policy, then why not apply it to rivers and harbors,” as well as public buildings, all of which were developed entirely with Federal funds. He explained:

But “cross-country roads,” “tourists’ roads,” “ocean-to-ocean highways” ought not to be built for fear automobile “joy riders” will use them!

The roads most in favor by these critics are “the rural roads,” the roads in the back districts, in remote sections, where there are no products to market and no people to use them, either for “joy” or necessity – roads that “begin nowhere and end nowhere” – roads of little local value and no general value; these are the roads to which it is proposed by some that the general revenue be applied.

Constitutions in half the States, he had said, prohibited cooperative participation; they would have to be amended.

After going through the long history of debates over internal improvements in the 19th century, he concluded:

But shall those live States and communities which have already awakened to the importance of good roads and have issued road bonds be permitted to participate in this “aid,” or shall it be given as a free bounty or reward only to those backward and slothful communities where there are neither products to market nor people to transport?

If the former are treated at least equally with the latter, then they have already issued \$410,000,000 in road bonds and are ready to wipe up any appropriation Congress may make.

New York alone is ready to take up \$100,000,000 of this “aid.”

Besides, is it not illogical and impracticable to give, or try to give, joint authority and supervision to the States over a national highway or over any highway? The Supreme Court has repeatedly said that there is no difference between a highway on the land and

on the water. What would be the result if every State through which a navigable stream may run had jurisdiction and control over it? There would be no uniformity in its upkeep nor in the navigation laws governing its use.

Joint control and supervision is impracticable and unworkable. Either the State or the General Government must be supreme. If each is supreme over its own system and only over its own system, there will be no friction, no departure from the uniform practice of the Government, no questions of State rights nor of paternal nor concentrated Federal power, no conflict of authority, no dodging of responsibility.

And, after all is said, why tax the State, or the people of the State, before permitting them to have any benefit from taxes already paid? For, twist the whole matter as we may, it all comes back to the ultimate fact that “the people pay the freight,” whether it comes out of the National Treasury or a part of it out of the State treasury. [“Good Roads,” *Congressional Record-Senate*, April 21, 1916, pages 6533, 7225-7226]

The Senate then took up an amendment from Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana to appropriate \$1 million a year, for 10 years, for roads and trails in national forests. After Senator Walsh explained the basis for the amendment, Senator Works endorsed it saying, “it would bring one legitimate provision into this bill, because it does provide for work to be done that is national in its character.” The amendment was “entirely legitimate; and it is the only provision that I have yet noticed in this bill that, in my judgment, is legitimate and proper.”

Despite the efforts of critics, Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act, which President Wilson signed on July 11, 1916. It established the Federal-aid highway program and the Federal-State partnership that remains in place, much altered, to this day. For the story of the legislation, see “Creation of a Landmark: The Federal Aid Road Act of 1916” on this Website at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/highwayhistory/landmark.pdf>.

The 1916 Act authorized \$75 million for Federal-aid projects over a 5-year period, through June 30, 1921, plus \$10 million for forest road improvements spread over 10 years. To participate in the programs, States were required to have effective control of a large measure of road work, to avoid haphazard construction, plus strengthened State participation in maintenance. Each year, the Secretary of Agriculture was to set aside 3 percent of the appropriation for administration of the Act, then to apportion funds among the States based on:

One-third in the ratio which the area of each State bears to the total area of all the States; one-third in the ratio which the population of each State bears to the total population of all the States, as shown by the latest available Federal census; one-third in the ratio which the mileage of rural delivery routes and star routes in each State bears to the total mileage of rural delivery routes and star routes in all the States, at the close of the next preceding fiscal year, as shown by the certificate of the Postmaster General, which he is directed to make and furnish annually to the Secretary of Agriculture.

The Federal share of costs could not exceed 50 percent, and all work required prior Federal

approval.

Projects were restricted to rural post roads, defined as “any public road over which the United States mails now are or may hereafter be transported, excluding every street and road in a place having a population, as shown by the latest available Federal census, of two thousand five hundred or more, except that portion of any such street or road along which the houses average more than two hundred feet apart.”

At the time, several States did not have a highway department (Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Nevada, South Carolina, and Texas), while others did not meet the “effective control” test (Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming). Recognizing that every State might not be able to use the funds apportioned to it, the Act provided:

That in States where the constitution prohibits the State from engaging in any work of internal improvements, then the amount of the appropriation under this act apportioned to any such State shall be turned over to the highway department of the State or to the governor of said State to be expended under the provisions of this act and under the rules and regulations of the Department of Agriculture when any number of counties in any such State shall appropriate or provide the proportion or share needed to be raised in order to entitle such State to its parts of the appropriation apportioned under this act.

The program operated on a reimbursement basis. The State paid the full cost of work with its own funds, or funds provided by the counties, then would be reimbursed for the Federal share, up to 50 percent, if the Secretary found that the work was in compliance with plans and specifications. The Secretary, at his discretion, could make progress payments to the State while the work was underway. However, the Act stated that payments could not exceed “\$10,000 per mile, exclusive of the cost of bridges of more than twenty feet clear span.”

The States were responsible for maintenance of the projects:

To maintain the roads constructed under the provisions of this act shall be the duty of the States, or the laws of the several States. If at any time the Secretary of Agriculture shall find that any road in any State constructed under the provisions of this act is not being properly maintained he shall give notice of such fact to the highway department of such State; and if within four months from the receipt of said notice said road has not been put in a proper condition of maintenance, then the Secretary of Agriculture shall thereafter refuse to approve any project for road construction in said State, or the civil subdivision thereof, as the fact may be, whose duty is to maintain said road, until it has been put in a condition of proper maintenance.

The Act provided that “all roads constructed under the provisions of this act shall be free from tolls of all kinds.”

The Secretary delegated authority for most work under the 1916 Act to OPRRE. To handle the

increased work, OPRRE established ten districts with an engineer in charge to oversee projects in several States. The agency also reorganized its headquarters officials into two branches. "The management branch deals with all administrative fiscal, legal, statistical and economic questions, while the engineering branch has charge of all matters relating to construction and maintenance." All projects required approvals by the district engineer and the headquarters engineering branch. [*Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture* for the Year Ended June 30, 1917, pages 37-38]

OPRRE invited the States to send representatives to Washington to assist in preparing regulations for implementing the provisions of the 1916 Act. After OPRRE incorporated their ideas into the draft regulations prepared by the Department solicitor, Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston approved the regulation on September 1, 1916.

Judge Lowe Reacts

Judge Lowe issued an undated statement on "National State and County Highways." It began:

We have neither changed nor modified our often expressed opinion that the only practical solution of the "good roads" proposition is that the National Government should construct and maintain a system of national highways, embracing all roads constituting through routes and interstate in character. This system of National Highways should be supplemented by a system of State highways to be constructed and maintained by the State and embracing the main inter-county routes, and connecting every County seat town with the State and National system.

Each County should construct a system of County roads, supplement such system of State roads and embracing the main inter-town routes, and thus binding together all parts of the Country.

This would give a system of permanently built roads, all connected in one vast scheme and embracing the entire country.

Such a system, Judge Lowe wrote, was inevitable. In the meantime, the public had been "misled by mistaken legislation looking to the building of short stretches of local roads, beginning nowhere and ending nowhere." This "mistaken notion" could be traced "to political demagogues, who, actuated by the opinion that there were a greater number of dirt roads than permanent ones, and possibly believing there was a larger population living in the back 'districts' than on the great highways. Their appeals have been made to a narrow prejudice which utterly misled public sentiment."

All attempts to develop a system of roads, "by first building local roads have been miserable failures." As illustrated by common wagon roads and railroads, "not until trunk lines were built was there any material advance in road building." The trunk lines created a desire for building local roads to them. "Otherwise, there was no desire or reason for the existence of such local feeders." Federal construction of national highways would free the States to build improved

roads on heavy traffic lines; that would free the counties to build roads from remote districts to the State roads:

A system like this will add an impetus as yet unthought of to road building throughout the nation. Authority and responsibility will be logically and economically divided and fixed without any possible conflict. Uniformity and efficiency will result, and the standards of construction and maintenance will be raised, and they will be built in the shortest possible time and with the utmost efficiency.

Despite all these advantages, Congress was not ready:

It is agreed, however, that Congress will, as heretofore, be slow to take any action, at least of a practical and sensible nature, until public sentiment has become so aroused that it will be forced to take action. In the meantime, and until Congress does take some action, we will abate no effort along this line, but will be on hand, "in season and out of season," until the general government has arisen to a full appreciation of the situation.

At a time when military preparedness was "being agitated on every hand, we shall insist that as a vital and essential part of such preparedness, nothing is so important as a system of military roads, over which the armies, artillery and supplies, can easily be mobilized":

The country will never be safe from attack from the east or west, north or south, until such system is constructed. It is worth while to mention the fact this was a part of the conception in the early history of this country, for the building of the eastern section of the National Old Trails Road as a military road, and it served its purpose well, both in the early history and during the Civil War

Therefore, we are urging the people not to wait on the slow and possibly uncertain action of Congress, but to build the road and to build it now. When Congress does take action, there is not a doubt that this Old Road will be included in any system, or in any assistance given by the general government. No conceivable enterprize [sic] – not even an additional trans-continental railroad or trolley, will be of so much real benefit and value to the country generally and especially to the counties and states through which the road runs as will be of so much real benefit and the value to the country generally and especially to the counties and states through which the road runs as will be the permanent building of the National Old Trails Road. It is not only a patriotic duty, but it appeals to every motive and instinct which actuate the progressive, wide-awake citizen.

He illustrated his point by discussing what Clay County in Missouri could do under existing statutes to build permanent roads, including the National Old Trails Road, that would increase the value of the land, concluding:

Can you imagine a better insurance or a better investment possible to be made? Instead of enhancing the value of land in such County by \$10,00 an acre, it will more nearly enhance it to \$50,000 an acre. These figures will seem extravagant to those who have

never experienced the benefit of permanent roads. Why wait for National and State Aid, when the opportunity lies so easily within our grasp to ensure such aid by taking immediate action to help ourselves? [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

The 1916 Convention

The August 1916 issue of *Touring Topics* reported on usage of the National Old Trail Road in California:

Travel has been extremely heavy over this transcontinental highway the past few months and there is no sign of any let up. There is an average of between twenty and thirty cars a day arriving in and leaving Los Angeles over this highway. Although some rather rough road is encountered between Barstow and Needles, road conditions as a whole between Los Angeles and New York City are excellent. [“National Old Trails Route,” *Touring Topics*, August 1916, page 20]

On August 7, Judge Lowe attended a dedication ceremony:

On August 7, several hundred good roads enthusiasts showed their appreciation of good roads by gathering at Eagle’s Nest, located fourteen miles west of Zanesville, on the Old National Pike, to witness the dedication of a memorial to former governor of Ohio, James M. Cox. The principle speaker was Judge J. M. Lowe, President of the National Old Trails Road Association, of Kansas City, Missouri. [*Better Roads and Streets*, November 1916, page 30]

The 1916 convention of the National Old Trails Road Association was held on September 14 and 15 in Herington, Kansas. According to a summary in the October 1916 issue of *Better Roads and Streets*, Judge Lowe characterized it as “the greatest convention ever held, enthusiastic but well organized, and before its conclusion the enthusiasm was directed into real road-building channels.”

The convention began with a parade of 400 automobiles, organized by delegations. Most were from the area but some “cars were present from as far as one hundred and sixty miles.” Over 700 cars were in town. Bands accompanied some groups, and the “float of the Childs Furnishing Goods Company, representing the Cradle of the Old Trail, was attractive, unique, and appropriate, and easily captured the prize as best float in the parade”:

Judge Lowe presided at all sessions of the convention, and the Official Music Box, the Old Trails Quartet, enlivened all sessions with selections, the most popular of which was their rendition of the imitation of a stream calliope, which they were compelled to repeat again and again.

Judge Lowe remarked on the great number of banners in the parade advocating Rock Roads, Cement Culverts, and Permanent Roads, and was elated that dirt roads were not mentioned during the convention.

There were, in short, no dirt road men attending the convention.

Presiding at the opening of the first session, Judge Lowe reminded Kansas that they had promised the association that if the convention were held in Herington, they would ensure that the National Old Trails Road would be made a high-class thoroughfare across their State within a year. He commented on funding available under the new Federal Aid Road Act and the State's Hodges Act, which he believed would enable roads to be built at less cost to the farmer than was the case in his home State of Missouri.

(The Hodges Rock Road Law, approved in 1909, required county commissioners to comply with road improvement petitions costing more than \$500 per mile if 60 percent of the owners of half the property along the route approved. The law had been expected to spur development of hard surfacing in the State. [Schirmer, Sherry Lamb, and Dr. Wilson, Theodore A., *Milestones: A History of the Kansas Highway Commission & the Department of Transportation*, Kansas Department of Transportation, December 1986, page 14])

The convention included numerous addresses. E. E. Peake of the Kansas City Auto Dealers Association, asked if anyone would put a paper roof on his house. He "compared the present work on the dirt roads to a paper roof which would be washed away by the first rain." He emphasized the necessity of good roads for agricultural, commercial, and social development throughout the West in general and, in particular, the sections of Kansas tributary to Kansas City.

Kansas State Highway Engineer W. S. Gearhart discussed legislation needed in the State and "pointed out how hard it is to make the country highways of one county match up with the county highways of its adjoining counties without some centralized authority." He described the work of his agency and its plans for improving the State's roads.

Robert Bruce of Clinton, New York, special representative of the National Highways Association, discussed his drive to the convention, noting a lack of interest in the project in Illinois. (See the next section for more on Bruce.)

Mrs. John Van Brunt of Kansas, spoke on behalf of the Good Roads Committee of the National Society of the D.A.R. She "assured the convention of the continued interest of that society in this movement." The road was a "memorial to the pioneers."

C. E. McStay, speaking on behalf of the Automobile Club of Southern California, covered highway improvement along the route in New Mexico, Arizona, and California. He described counties in California "that had been able to build and maintain hard-surfaced roads for less money per year than the dirt roads had previously cost them."

Several issues were discussed during the business session on the second morning:

Kansas arose to its opportunity and came before the national convention with a plan to hard-surface the five hundred miles of the road in that State at once. The enthusiasm of the previous day's meeting, which is believed to have reached a record in numbers and

noise, was repeated when the report came in. The plan calls for five commissioners, Kansas men, to have charge of the campaign. They are to get the approval of the State Highway Engineer and the United States Secretary of Agriculture for the improvement of the entire Old Trails Road in Kansas, so that Federal aid will be assured, and then go to the towns and land owners along the line. Local organizations are to be formed. In the rural districts the Hodges Road Law will be used and in the towns, the paving laws. County commissioners will be asked to pay at least twenty-five per cent. of the cost of the road. In this way it is believed that the cost to the adjacent land owner will be reduced to a very low figure.

The plan was to threaten “backward localities” with the motto: “Build it or lose it.”

The problem heretofore has been to arouse public sentiment to the point where the ones who must pay for the improvements were desirous that the work proceed and the outpouring of delegates to this convention and their unmistakable enthusiasm shows that the time has arrived.

Thirty-three towns of Kansas had over five hundred delegates registered at this convention, and the attendance was probably three thousand.

(As required by the Federal Aid Road Act, the legislature created a highway commission in 1917, and it began operations on April 4, 1917.)

The convention resolved the routing problem in New Mexico and Arizona by amending the association's constitution to allow signs to be posted on both the Gallup and Springerville alternative routes.

The convention also considered the long running dispute between the Old and New Santa Fe trail routes:

After due deliberation and realizing fully our responsibility to this convention to devise a workable plan for accomplishing the permanent hard surfacing of the National Old Trails Road across Kansas, thereby perpetuating for all time to come the Old Santa Fe Trail, so rich in its historic associations and so dear to the Kansas of to-day, we do recommend that this convention adopt substantially the following provisions that we deem essential to the prompt accomplishment of this purpose.

President Lowe was to appoint a commission of five members of the association, actual residents on the road, “to take up this work systematically with the various counties and cities through which the National Highway, as now adopted and marked, exists as a temporary monument.” The commission would confer with the State Highway Engineer on a plan for permanent surfacing, with the Federal Government to pay its 50-percent share. In addition, the commission was to assess the urban population along the road “as will be necessary to carry on the work of securing the necessary signatures of the individuals necessary under the Hodges Law and the adoption of paving in cities and villages for the cost of the other fifty per cent. of the road.”

Further, the commission was authorized, with the counsel and advice of the president and secretary of the association, "to make such deviation from the present adopted and marked road as may be absolutely necessary to secure the endorsement and building of one half its cost by the local individuals and communities benefited." Any such deviation would be permanent only if approved by a two-thirds vote of the subsequent annual convention.

The convention passed a number of resolutions in thanks, including to the host city of Herington; the counties of McPherson, Dickinson, and Morris that had "exercised splendid judgment and economy in the construction of permanent cement crossings on the Old Trails Road"; the Automobile Club of Southern California "for being one of the few automobile clubs that has any appreciation of what such clubs should stand for"; and the Citizens Bridge Committee of Richmond, Indiana, which had "labored courageously to build a splendid memorial bridge in Richmond."

The convention also adopted a resolution commending the National Highways Association and its founder, Charles Henry Davis, "who has given so lavishly and unselfishly of both time and money to the cause." No other association had "approximated its vast appropriation of money or the great educational work it has accomplished." Some other associations had "grown lukewarm and discouraged" as a result of the Federal-aid legislation, but the National Highways Association and its National Old Trails Road department "have remained in this great field of useful endeavor, contending all the more earnestly for the great ideals for which we mutually stand."

Judge Lowe was reelected unanimously as president, while Frank Davis was again elected secretary. ["National Old Trails Fifth Annual Convention," *Better Roads and Streets*, October 1916, pages 12-14]

Robert Bruce

Robert Bruce was a prolific good roads writer for AAA and the *Automobile Blue Book* travel guides who took a particular interest in the history of the roads he wrote about. In a two-part article on the history of roads in Indiana, he discussed the coming of named trails to the State, including the National Old Trails Road:

Straight east and west through Indianapolis passes the National Old Trails Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, of which the old National Road is its basic part across Ohio and Indiana. This is now the chief competitor of the Lincoln Highway for transcontinental travel through the Hoosier State. Between Indianapolis and Columbus, Wheeling, Cumberland, Baltimore or Washington, the Old Trails route has nothing to fear from its great rival to the north; but it suffers considerably for lack of a high-class modern road from Terre Haute to the Mississippi River.

Great improvements have been made recently across Missouri, and also much of the way from Kansas City over the Santa Fe trail and the Grand Canyon optional route through to Southern California, but the stretch of less than 175 miles from Terre Haute to East St.

Louis across Southern Illinois still lowers the standard of that route as a whole from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It is hoped that within a reasonably short time Illinois will realize its obligation to through travel, and co-operate with the other states by putting that portion of the historic old route in condition for motor travel. Pending such action by the State, the counties and towns along the line should make such improvements upon it as may be within their means, not only for the public good but for their own protection, as the travel and commerce of the future will largely follow good roads, and deliberately stay away from districts known for their poor highways. [Bruce, Robert, "The Historic Development and Progress of Indiana's Highways," Part II, *American Motorist*, May 1916, pages 19-23]

Bruce had addressed the National Old Trails Road's 1916 convention on its first day, then adapted his presentation to the convention for an article in the November 1916 issue of AAA's magazine, *American Motorist*. The article began:

During the past several years a movement has been in progress to develop, mark, and bring generally to the attention of motor tourists the old and historic line of road travel from Baltimore and Washington over the Blue Ridge and Alleghany mountains to the Ohio river at Wheeling, thence across the central-western and southwestern states to Los Angeles. Of late it has advanced more rapidly than ever before, due to the great improvements finished or in process in the majority of states traversed, the excellent signposting over the entire main route west of St. Louis, and the almost complete transformation of the Pacific Coast division. Some of the intermediate portions still need a great deal of new construction and repair work to bring them up to the standard of other sections, and make them attractive from a strict touring standpoint. But the route as a whole has become a complete and recognized transcontinental line, which can be traveled throughout at least as safely and conveniently as any other, and during more months of the year than the more northerly routes.

From a historic standpoint, the National Old Trails Road "may have close rivals but at least no superiors." For much of its length, the road traveled "the very trails by which the Central West and the old Southwest were largely settled." During the railroad era, the roads were virtually forgotten, "but now they have connected up, brought into an importance never dreamed of by the generations that laid them out, and most appropriately made a memorial road to the pioneers."

He told the convention that he had traveled the National Old Trails Road from Baltimore and Washington through Hagerstown and Cumberland, Maryland; Wheeling, West Virginia; Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; to St. Louis, Missouri, by way of the National Road; across Missouri by Boone's Lick Road; and across 150 miles of Kansas on the Old Santa Fe Trails. He informed the convention of the conditions he encountered, beginning with:

Credit was given to Maryland for the uniformly highest-grade roads over its part of the route. Pennsylvania has a considerable mileage as good as Maryland, but some other stretches are not up to its standard. The 16½ miles across the Panhandle of West Virginia are in excellent shape.

In Ohio, the route was “undergoing a transformation which, at least in another year or so, should make it one of the finest sections between the National Capital and Los Angeles.” Beginning at the west side of the Ohio River opposite Wheeling, the road was “an uninterrupted brick boulevard” for 29 miles between St. Clairsville to Fairview. Between Fairview and Columbus, a motorist would encounter several construction zones where a detour would be needed. Most of the detours took motorists on excellent roads “slightly north through Newark and Granville,” but “one of the detours (old Washington into Cambridge), has been in bad shape most of the present year. This stretch will probably be completed before the end of 1916.”

Bruce characterized the route west of Columbus in Ohio and Indiana as “in fair-to-excellent shape”:

A few sections have suffered from inadequate supervision and maintenance, or for lack of oil [a dust preventative], and have become worn or dusty, or both. But they are fully equal to those on the corresponding parts of any other transcontinental route.

The Illinois division of the route from west of Terre Haute, Indiana, to East St. Louis was “by far the unsatisfactory stretch of any considerable length from Baltimore or Washington to as far west as the writer’s observations extended.” The “worst feature” was “that only feeble efforts seem to be made for its improvement.” It was “almost impassable” in wet weather. He recommended that motorists west of Terre Haute take a route “down the west side of the Wabash river in Indiana to old Vincennes, and then across a narrower part of Illinois to East St. Louis.” He considered the alternative “most interesting and should be taken at least one way on a round trip.”

Motorists could cross the Mississippi River on the toll Eads Bridge designed by the self-taught engineer John B. Eads and opened for railroad traffic on July 4, 1874. (It remains in service today.) From St. Louis, motorists used the “St. Charles Rock Road, an excellent stretch of twenty miles.” The road from there to Kansas City, “exemplified some of the best and also some of the worst to be seen in a great western state whose greatest single road is undergoing a revolution.” The 15 miles between Warrenton and Fulton, across the Mineola Hills, “are by far the worst seen on the inspection trip from Maryland to Kansas.” He was optimistic, though, because “a new right of way has been condemned to cut out the worst part of it, and a change for the better will soon take place.”

Still, some long stretches of the route east and west of Columbia “would do credit to New York State or Massachusetts.” A ferry must be used to cross the Missouri River either from New Franklin to Boonville or at Glasgow. He explained that “while there is often some slight delay on this account there is no real trouble, except perhaps getting on or off the boats in time of low water, such as the middle of September, 1916.”

In western Missouri, the Old Trails route was “better than through the eastern part of the state.” A “high-class road” was available from Lexington to Kansas City “with the exception of a few miles along the Missouri river west of Lexington (and that now under improvement).” The last

15 miles or so to Kansas City “are the equal of the best approaches to New York, Philadelphia or Boston.”

Kansas City, “the giant of the near Southwest,” was impressive, “and the run through the new automobile district is likely to be a revelation of its important to the territory it serves.” At Olathe, the Old and New Santa Fe Trails diverged:

The writer’s observations extended only over the old Santa Fe trail as far as Herington; while this was found rough in some places considerable improvements are underway, especially the building of strong concrete culverts to take the place of the old-time frail wood or weak iron bridges.

Bruce summarized his observations of the National Old Trails Road he had traveled on in 1916:

While a motor tour over the Old Trails route from Baltimore or Washington to the mid-Continent in Kansas is by no means all that might be desired, and a few stretches are likely to be quite bothersome in wet weather, no one need hesitate to make the trip now; and road conditions on several portions of the route and being constantly improved. [Bruce, Robert, “Rallying for the Old Trails,” *American Motorist*, November 1916, pages 24-25]

One of the resolutions adopted during the convention honored Bruce:

Resolved, That we express our appreciation of the excellent historical sketch of that part of the Old Trails Road from Washington to Wheeling, written by Robert Bruce of Clinton, New York, and published in co-operation with the National Highways Association.

We most heartily commend this book. It should be in the hands of everybody and we sincerely hope that its author may receive such encouragement that he will continue this splendid work throughout the length of the Old Trails Road.

The nearly 100-page book, published in cooperation with the National Highways Association, was titled *The National Road: The Most Historic Road in the United States and Strategic Eastern Link in the National Old Trails Ocean-to-Ocean Highway*. In a Foreword dated March 14, 1916, Bruce explained that the book covered the road from Washington and Baltimore to Wheeling. This was the historic first section of the Cumberland Road authorized by legislation signed by President Thomas Jefferson in 1806 and built by contractors working for the Department of Treasury.

In the first chapter, Bruce explained the importance of the road:

Easily first among the several through highways running west from the Atlantic seaboard, and ranking with the Santa Fe and Oregon trails of the far west, is the old National Road, which, though completed as a government project only from Cumberland, Maryland, to

Wheeling (then Virginia, now West Virginia), was connected up with the older pikes from Baltimore, Frederick and Hagerstown, and subsequently with the new lines west of the Ohio River, making for all time the shortest and more natural way for road travel from tidewater at Chesapeake Bay to the junction of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers at St. Louis, Missouri. It follows as direct a course across the Alleghany Mountains as the nature of the country in western Maryland and southwestern Pennsylvania would permit; it is a wonderfully scenic route, and has a historic background beyond comparison with any of its rivals.

This Old National Road has been from the first a unique American institution, and was for many years a vital factor in the life, politics and industry of the country. To no other thoroughfare in the United States can the name "National Road" be correctly applied up to the present time. Between Cumberland and Wheeling, the names "National Pike" and "Cumberland Road" are interchangeable, both having been used indiscriminately by the Secretary of War, Chief Engineer and the field forces in their extensive correspondence during the progress of the work

It is unquestionably the most direct route of its length in the United States today, the only deviations from a straight line being occasional short offsets in going through some of the towns; and such windings as were found necessary to make safe ascents and descents of the numerous ridges in the Appalachian Chain.

So carefully was the route originally laid out that the loss of distance in the mountains between Clear Spring, Maryland, and Uniontown, Pa., is remarkably small, the road seeming always to find the shortest and easiest way across from one summit to another – usually by running down along the side of one ridge to the foot; and then, perhaps at once, but more often after a restful stretch of level road, making the corresponding ascent on the other side. Generally, too, there is a broad sweep to the curves, and a fair margin of safety to the traveler, in pleasing contrast to the narrow roads and sharp curves often found in equally hilly sections.

After summarizing the history of the original section of the Cumberland or National Road, Bruce informed readers that the road was gradually transferred to State control as a toll turnpike, resulting in "a long period of neglect, during which time the old Pike fell from its once-proud estate, largely because when government interest and supervision ceased, the original commanding purpose was lost, and the project was never carried through to its logical conclusions by the states concerned – Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Perhaps this was only natural, as they never had any uniform or united plan for its repair and maintenance; and, at least until comparatively recent years, lacked the machinery to do this in the most effective way."

Maryland and Pennsylvania "have made so great and permanent improvements over the mountain divisions that it has not only been fully restored to through travel, but is generally conceded to be the most natural eastern connection for the National Old Trails Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, one of the large, vital factors in our coming transcontinental development."

Without the automobile, Bruce explained, “the Old National Pike would probably not be undergoing its present almost complete transformation, and it is certain the motorists will soon, if they do not now, greatly outnumber all other travelers over the entire Baltimore-Hagerstown-Cumberland-Wheeling line.”

Bruce was concerned that a motorist on the old highway “had nothing to help him identify the interesting old houses, or to connect those and various other points of interest graphically with the past.” He intended his book to fill in that information. Each chapter included detailed maps and photographs.

The chapters covered:

- Chapter 2: Baltimore Through Frederick to Hagerstown, Maryland
- Chapter 3: Hagerstown through Hancock to Cumberland, Maryland
- Chapter 4: Cumberland and the Historic Roads Toward Frostburg
- Chapter 5: Clarysville, Maryland, through Frostburg and Grantsville, to the Pennsylvania Line
- Chapter 6: From the Maryland-Pennsylvania Line, Past Fort Necessity to Uniontown
- Chapter 7: Uniontown through Brownsville to Washington, PA.
- Chapter 8: Washington, PA., Across to West Virginia “Panhandle” to Wheeling
- Chapter 9: Baltimore-Washington-Frederick “Triangle”

At the end of chapter 8, Bruce summarized:

As a matter of mere driving, the Baltimore-Wheeling trip can be made in about fifteen hours, averaging probably eight from Baltimore to Cumberland and about seven from Cumberland to Wheeling. Spread over two fairly long days, and with such advance knowledge of the route and its chief points of interest as this series of articles is intended to supply, it should – in favorable weather – turn out to be a tour of unusual variety, and one full of memories well worth retaining

But one making the tour, even so far as already covered by the detailed maps, will inevitably gain a new conception of the Old National Road – particularly its strategic location and deep historic interest; and is quite likely convinced that it is the most logical eastern part of the National Old Trails Ocean-to-Ocean Highway.

Better Roads and Streets reviewed the book:

It is the work of a close student of the subject, who has spared neither time nor pains to go beneath the physical features which, however, are brought out with special clearness and good effect, to the stirring history and legend that center about the old turnpike from Baltimore and Washington across the Allegheny Mountains to the Ohio River more than any other single road in America.

The book was published at a convenient time:

The fact that the National Road is now in first-class shape practically all the way from Chesapeake Bay or the Potomac River to the Ohio, and that many tourists are looking for new trips to take the place of their customary European tours, makes the publication of this book most timely. A careful reading of it is likely to convince one that American highways, especially those built along the lines of the old trails between the Atlantic seaboard and the central West or far West, deserve more careful and thorough treatment than they have received in the past.

The review noted that Bruce “will be glad to correspond with any motorist intending to make all or part of that trip.” [“Old National Road,” *Better Roads and Streets*, August 1916, pages 46, 48]

Best Paved Road in Indiana

On October 5, 1916, ten thousand people gathered in St. Clairsville, Ohio, to celebrate the completion of 28 miles of brick in Belmont County of “the best paved road in the state,” as the St. Clairsville Commercial Club put it. The section from Bridgeport on the Ohio River to the Guernsey County line was part of the National Old Trails Road. “The celebration was preceded by an auto parade eight miles long over the entire road.” Thousands of people witnessed the parade.

The project dated to 1913 when Highway Commissioner James R. Marker asked the county auditor, Emerson Campbell, what they could do to improve the road if the State would assist in a substantial way. “Ten days later Auditor Campbell called Commissioner Marker by phone informing him that his county was ready for the proposition from the state, as he had taken the matter up with the County Commissioners, and good roads people, in addition to the resident owners along the road, and township authorities through which the road passed.” Governor Cox and Campbell met with Marker, county officials, and a good roads committee. The conference resulted in Governor Cox agreeing to recommend \$150,000 of the main marker road fund for the reconstruction of the National road in Belmont county”:

Commissioner Marker appointed W. C. Fawcett, an expert engineer of Martins Ferry, Ohio, as resident engineer, to prepare the plans for reconstructing the National road in the county

This improvement of the National Road is the most important of all improvements made anywhere on that historic highway. It sets an example that should be followed particularly by the counties through which the roads pass within the state. The task is not so great but that it could be completed at least within the next two years, giving to Ohio the credit of the largest and best improvement of the National Road beyond that of any other state in the Union. If Ohio sets the example it surely will be followed by Indiana and Illinois.

Governor Cox and former Governor Frank B. Willis were the speakers. Marker was unable to

attend, but the ceremony included the unveiling of a monument to Marker “who, as state highway commissioner, inaugurated the Main Market highway in Ohio. [“Belmont County Honors Marker,” *Dependable Highways*, January 1917, page 17]

(On July 23, 1825, a ceremony was held in St. Clairsville to mark the start of construction on the Cumberland Road/National Road west of the Ohio River.)

Historical Highway Day

The centennial of Indiana statehood, dating to December 11, 1816, brought President Wilson and many good roads advocates to Indianapolis on October 12. Each day that week was dedicated to a special purpose, with October 12 designated “Historical Highway Day.” President Wilson would deliver two speeches, one to 5,000 good roads advocates at the auditorium of the Indiana Fair Grounds. He then would speak to farmers gathered at Tomlinson Hall.

His train arrived at Union Station in Indianapolis around 11:30 a.m. After a luncheon, the Presidential party, Governor and Mrs. Samuel M. Ralston, and other officials traveled by automobile to the reviewing stand for the centennial highway parade, organized by the Hoosier Motor Club, the Marion County Good Roads Association, and the Marion County Centennial Highway Committee. Carl G. Fisher, founder of the Lincoln Highway Association, was grand marshal.

The boom of a cannon signaled the start of the parade shortly after 1 p.m. Good roads advocates from eastern Indiana came from one direction, while the western Indiana advocates came from another. With the Presidential party and State and local dignitaries on the reviewing stand, chief marshal Fisher waited at Meridian and Washington Streets (Washington Street was the old National Old Trails Road, the Lincoln Highway crossed the northern part of the State in the general alignment of U.S. 30 today). Fisher directed the two lines of automobiles into a two-abreast formation and led them into North Meridian Street toward the Indiana State Soldiers and Sailors Monument installed in the circle in 1902. A contemporary account described events:

There the parties of the President and the Governor waited to review the parade. As the two lines approached the reviewing stand they parted, one line moving east of the Monument, the other to the west, joining again at Meridian street, north of the Monument. The way then led northward in Meridian street to Sixteenth street, west to Capitol avenue, north to Maple road, east to the east entrance to the fair ground.

There never was so many automobiles in Indianapolis before. When Carl G. Fisher, leading the parade, drew his car up at Meridian and Washington streets, he did not know what a parade he was handling. Behind him in Meridian street a crowd of suffragists waited with banners flying. To the west a long line of automobiles could be seen and some confusion was caused when visiting motorists got tangled with the President’s party, but this soon was adjusted.

Then from the east came another long line of good roads boosters. From practically

every county east of Michigan road there were automobiles flying their county and town banners. Drum corps and bands were intermingled with the cars. The two lines of cars drew up behind Fisher, the suffragists got right in behind the chief marshal and the parade began. The police succeeded in separating the two lines and sent them toward the reviewing stand two abreast. The National good roads boosters, interested in the resurfacing of the National road between Richmond and Terre Haute came several hundred strong. The ocean-to-ocean highway boosters were out in equally strong numbers, and the Dixie highway and the Hoosier-Dixie highway had strong representation. Practically every main highway in Indiana had delegations here to let President Wilson know that they support good roads

The reviewing parties remained in the stand until, on signal from Mr. Fisher, they entered automobiles and were driven north on Meridian street, the cars of the President's party passing between the long lines of automobiles in the parade.

The party left the reviewing stand around 2:15 p.m. Throughout the parade, the President "bowed and smiled at frequent intervals." [All quotes not otherwise cited are from coverage of the visit in *The Indianapolis News*, October 12, 1916]

American Motorist summarized:

Far in excess of a hundred thousand people saw the parade, did honor to the Chief Executive of the Nation, and helped in one way and another to swell the good roads shout. In double columns it required over an hour and a half for the self-propelled parade to pass the reviewing stand, where President Wilson had as his reviewing companions, Governor Ralston, Mayor [Joseph E.] Bell, and former Mayor [Charles A.] Bookwalker, flanked by other Indiana notables.

The First Lady of the Land was an interested observer of the exhilarating proceedings, accompanied by the wife of the Governor and other Hoosier social leaders. A message came to Mrs. Wilson, from Mrs. Thomas R. Marshall, who was accompanying the Vice President [a former Governor of Indiana, 1909-1913, before taking the oath of office as Vice President] on a speaking tour, regretting her enforced absence from the city on the occasion of Mrs. Wilson's visit.

The magazine also reported that at one point, Judge Lowe of the National Old Trails Highway Association, had approached the reviewing stand:

At the reviewing stand the President had received from Judge Lowe the "Van Buren gavel," made from a plank dug up from the old plank road that formerly was a part of the National Road, which is now the main thoroughfare through Indianapolis. According to the Judge, Van Buren was not favorable to extending Federal aid to roads, so it was contrived to dump him out in a famous mudhole on the Old Trails Road in Indiana. His harrowing experience in that well planned accident changed his mind. He signed a bill which permitted paving the particular mudhole with heavy oak planks. Recently, in

grading this road to rebuild it, one of the planks was dug up and the gavel presented to President Wilson was made from it. [“Network of Roads Will Release Locked-Up Riches of the Nation, Says the President,” *American Motorist*, November 1916, pages 12-13, 54; the plank incident is on page 13]

(Judge Lowe included a photograph of him reaching up to hand the gavel to the President in the association’s publications, including the 1925 revised edition of *The National Old Trails Road: The Great Historic Highway of America*, on page 225.

(Judge Lowe, or the writer of the account in *American Motorist*, had several details wrong. President Martin Van Buren (March 4, 1837 – March 4, 1841) had been defeated for reelection in 1840, but decided to try one more time to win the presidency. Hoping to gather support in the west, he took the stagecoach along the Cumberland Road to Indianapolis to deliver a speech in June 1842. Van Buren, as a Senator, Vice President, and President, generally opposed internal improvements by the general government. As President, however, he had signed a funding bill for the Cumberland Road on May 25, 1837, authorizing \$459,000 for construction west of Ohio, including \$150,000 for the road in Indiana. Nobody knew it at the time, but that would be the last major funding Congress would appropriate for the road. Details of the mudhole incident vary, but the stagecoach in which the former President was riding went out of control, with the connivance of the driver, at a mudhole along the road approaching Plainfield and ended up against an elm tree. Climbing out of the overturned vehicle, Van Buren walked through mud to Fisher’s Tavern in Plainfield. The site of the “Van Buren Elm” is noted by a roadside marker on a boulder in front of the Friends Meetinghouse in Plainfield.

(As for the plank road Judge Lowe mentioned, the Van Buren incident occurred before the craze for wooden plank turnpikes began in the mid-1840s. The craze, imported from Russia, lasted only about a decade, at which point railroads had taken travelers away from the roads while the wood planks had rotted through at a time when toll revenue was not enough to pay for their replacement. As Thomas J. Schlereth reported in his book about U.S. 40 in Indiana, the State granted “control of the National Road through Hancock, Marion, Hendricks, and Putnam counties . . . in 1849 to the Central Plank Road Company, which proceeded to cover the road with oak planks and put up a series of tollgates and tollhouses.” [Schlereth, Thomas J., *U.S. 40: A Roadscape of the American Experience*, Indiana Historical Society, 1985, page 76])

The newspaper described the stage for President Wilson’s speech at the Coliseum on the fairgrounds before an estimated 5,000 people:

President Wilson faced a nonpartisan crowd at the Coliseum when he arrived to make his address. The building was handsomely decorated with flags, and on the front of the railing around the balcony was a line of ninety-two banners, each bearing the name of an Indiana county.

The doors of the coliseum were opened an hour before the arrival of the President and his party in order that there be no jam at the doors when he arrived. There was nothing about the coliseum or the crowd to indicate any politics. The subject of better roads and

highways is a non-political proposition in Indiana.

In his days before becoming Governor of New Jersey, President Wilson had been an avid bicyclist, but as President, he enjoyed automobile trips as described in the September 1916 issue of *Northwestern Motorist*:

No more ardent motorist ever occupied the White House than President Wilson Mr. Wilson probably has spent an average of two hours a day in an automobile since he became president. He prefers to ride with the top down His choice of a seat depends upon the purpose of the ride. If he intends to do some thinking, he is almost certain to sit beside the chauffeur. If he is out solely to relax, he joins his companions in the [back seat] and mingles in their conversation. An automobile load of Secret Service men always accompanies the president's car, whether the journey be some 150 miles through the Green Mountains or merely from the White House to one of the Washington theatres. Motoring is the president's chief form of recreation during his vacations. [Brown, L. Ames, "President Wilson the Motorist," *Northwestern Motorist*, September 1916]

Governor Ralston introduced President Wilson, who delivered a lengthy address:

I am here because I am interested in the cause of good roads, and because I am interested in the State of Indiana. I was very much interested that this day, devoted to the cause of good roads, should fall in your Centennial Year. It made me think of many of the processes of our national history. Roads have so knit communities together, and communities into counties, and counties into States, and States into the nation, that we must learn how to think, and act, and do things together.

He said:

The arguments for good roads from the material point of view, are very obvious. It is true, I dare say, that we had to wait for the rapidly moving automobile to create a large enough number of persons interested in good roads, which would run beyond mere neighborhoods; and I am very grateful to the owners of automobiles, and to the members of automobile associations that they should have insisted with such success, upon the creation of highways. I note, incidentally, that they use them up almost as fast as we make them, but I will forgive them for that, if they stimulate us to the effort to make them, and to keep them in usable condition.

He commented on the purpose of good roads:

But, after all, the highway is not intended, first of all, and chief of all, for the pleasure vehicle. It is not intended for the mere traveler. It is not intended for the mere tourist. It is not made in order that some company of leisurely people may travel from coast to coast of this great continent. It is made because we need it in all the material uses of our lives. We need it first of all, and chief of all, in order that our resources may be made use of, for they can not be made use of until they are got to market and you can not get them

to market unless you can get them from the mine and the farm, to the nearest railway station.

You can not know what the resources of the country are unless the country is covered over with a network of roads which will release all the locked up riches of all our country sides. Why, there are little pockets in the mountains in some places in America, where there are the richest sort of crops, where nature has made [the] largest of her gifts of fertile soil and genial climate and abundant rainfall, but where they can never get their crops to market, where they burn their corn, so much of it as they can not feed to their cattle, where they raise what they do raise for the consumption of their families, merely, and contribute nothing to the markets of the nation.

Roads, he said, had a greater purpose as well:

It is perfectly obvious that you have got to have an intricate and perfect network of roads throughout the length and breadth of this great continent before you will have released the energies of America.

Good roads are necessary for every practical aspect of our lives – to draw neighbors together, to create a community of feeling, to create those arteries which may be compared to the arteries of the human body. The blood of the nation will not flow in harmonious concord unless it can flow in intimate sympathy. And so the argument, the material argument, the argument about markets and crops and the products of the mines, sinks into comparative unimportance when you consider the spiritual things that you are doing in making roads. You know there is an old saying that the lines between sections are obliterated only by the feet that cross them.

As an enthusiastic bicyclist in his younger days and now a President who enjoyed regular automobile rides, he explained:

And so one of my interests in roads is that I want to see that thing carried on which I have seen worked to the benefit of this nation in so many parts of it Wherever you have not got a good road you have created a provincial and sectional population. Wherever you have a good road, you have tied a thong between that community and the nation to which it belongs. And that is my interest in good roads, for, my fellow citizens, my present interest is chiefly in the nationalization of America.

Automobiles and good roads contributed “to justice, to freedom and liberty”:

So that the words I want you to carry in your mind in connection with this good roads cause are these:

First, Nationalization – Getting all the fibers of this great vital people united in a single organism.

Second, Mobilization – Getting them so related to each other, so co-ordinated, so

organized, so led, so united, that when they move they move as a single great, irresistible conquering force; and the third word that I want you to consider is the word that I suppose affords the key to doing these things; that word is the word "co-operation."

He concluded:

So, my fellow countrymen, build up these new roads in the construction of which the federal government is now to play so large a part, in the spirit of nationality, the spirit of cooperation, the spirit of liberty, the power which only a free people know how to exercise.

As President Wilson left the podium, the "crowd swarmed up to try to shake hands with the President, and it was only with difficulty he was able to get to the car waiting to carry him to Tomlinson Hall, where he made an address before a gathering of farmers." ["Wilson Urges Unity of Nation," *The New York Times*, October 13, 1916]

The meeting in Tomlinson Hall had begun before President Wilson's arrival. *American Motorist* pointed out that the meeting "could not escape from the good roads atmosphere, for the meeting had been opened with a talk by Luke W. Duffy, a well known Indiana highways advocate, and Judge J. M. Lowe." Judge Lowe was speaking about the history of the National Road when President Wilson arrived. President Wilson's speech discussed the role of the Federal Government in aiding farming, activities of the Department of Agriculture, including institution of parcel post "whereby the more perishable kind of farm products can be rapidly shipped and distributed in moderately small quantities." He also discussed the Federal Reserve and the Farmers' Loan and Credit Bank.

After his speech, the President and his party returned to Union Station to take the train, which left at 5:45 p.m. for the return to his family's rented summer home in Shadow Lawn on the Monmouth University campus in New Jersey.

[In addition to *The Indianapolis News* and *American Motorist*, the account of the visit to Indianapolis includes material from: "Wilson Urges Unity of Nation," *The New York Times*, October 13, 1916; "Wilson Urges Need of Unity," *The Baltimore Sun*, October 13, 1916; "Condemns Revival of Sectional Talk," *The Evening Star*, October 12, 1916; "Scores Sectionalism," *The Washington Post*, October 13, 1916. Many of these newspaper articles included excerpts from both speeches. The complete good roads speech can be found on pages 302-310 of *The Indiana Centennial 1916*, as well as in the November 1916 issue of *American Motorist*, pages 12-13, 54.]

President Wilson's Republican challenger was Charles Evans Hughes, a former New York Governor (January 1, 1907 – October 6, 1910) and associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1910-1916). On election day, November 7, the race for the White House was too close to call, with some newspapers declaring Hughes the winner. But on November 10, resolution of the California vote totals tipped the election to President Wilson, who won the State by 3,806 votes.

With 266 electoral votes needed for victory, President Wilson won 277 while Hughes picked up 254. The popular vote was: Wilson: 9,126,868 (49.2 percent) Hughes: 8,548,728 (46.1 percent).

Re-Signing the Old Trails Road

The March 1917 issue of *Touring Topics* reported that one of the Club's first activities "will be revision and elaboration of the Club's sign system along the National Old Trails Highway between Los Angeles and Kansas City." The club had dispatched one of its road crews for the trip, which would involve 4,000 miles of travel from March to May.

Many of the 5,000 or so club signs supplied along the road in 1914 and 1915 "have deteriorated under usage and all require attention in greater or less degree." Further, changes in the routing of the route required signing:

Chief among these changes is the new route of this highway between Holbrook, Arizona and Las Lunas, New Mexico. The roadway which the Club first signed passes through Springerville in Arizona and Socorro in New Mexico. This newly opened roadway will itself require the erection of approximately one hundred and fifty signposts to which direction and mileage signs must be attached. It is further estimated that replacement of signs over the entire route entail the location of approximately seventeen hundred signs and this work is in addition to straightening posts, repairing damaged signs and otherwise revising the sign system to meet the requirements of summer travel.

The crew also would update the club's map of the route:

Beyond this it is anticipated that the Club's car will find it necessary to proceed beyond Kansas City and chart the route of the National Old Trails Road across Missouri to St. Louis, thence along the main motor roads through Springfield, Bloomington, Pontiac and Joliet into Chicago. Returning westward from Chicago the crew expects to chart the main line of the Lincoln Highway to Omaha and to take map notes upon the southern road from Omaha by way of Nebraska city, Atchison and Leavenworth to its intersection with the National Old Trails Route at Kansas City.

The data gathered from the trip would be used for preparation of the next generation of National Old Trails Road maps that "will be particularly attractive to the large body of motorists in the central states and in the great lakes region." ["Club Begins Re-Signing National Old Trail Highway," *Touring Topics*, March 1917, page 23]

The eastbound signing crew had seen and heard enough to report general improvement of the road from Los Angeles to Kansas City. After passing Albuquerque, New Mexico they said, "a notable spirit of road improvement is manifest over every unit that has been covered thus far":

Between Barstow and Needles in California, and particularly in the vicinity of Bagdad and Amboy, the road has been plowed and graded with the result that the roadbed is still in soft condition and is difficult for motor traffic. This condition is only temporary,

however, and as soon as these soft stretches have been oiled and rolled this link of the N.O.T. will be in first-class shape for automobile travel.

With the exception of the mileage between Flagstaff and Winslow, which was impassable on account of snow, the Club car has had no difficulty in traversing the highway and the reports that have been received at Club headquarters indicates [sic] that the roadway is in really excellent condition for so early in the season.

A “movement” was emerging for signing the entire road to Washington, D.C.

In addition to reports from the sign crew, Judge Lowe provided assurance to the Automobile Club “that each state unit from California to the District of Columbia is exerting itself toward the improvement of this transcontinental highway and that during 1917 it will be by far the best of the nationwide automobile routes terminating in Los Angeles. His reports indicated:

Recently Kansas enacted laws which will result in hard surfacing the National Old Trails road across that state, and the various counties and communities of Kansas are already actively participating in the permanent improvement of this great highway. The same is true in Missouri and Illinois and it is in these three states that the necessity for improvement of the National Old Trails road is most imperative.

He added that the eastern and western States have been “most progressive in enacting wise highway legislation in actual road construction”:

Maryland has completed the road across the State (172 miles), and it is conceded to be one of the finest stretches of hard-surfaced road in the United States. It was built under the direct supervision of the State Highway Commission.

Pennsylvania has built her section (72 miles) also under State supervision.

West Virginia has completed her section (16 miles) with a very fine road.

Ohio has her section (232 miles) almost completed, there being left only about 12 miles not under contract. The work in this State is being done under the supervision of both the National Government and the State Highway Commission. Much of it is being built at an expense approximating \$20,000 per mile. The entire National Old Trails Road in this State will undoubtedly be completed in the coming year.

Indiana has her section (160 miles) built mostly of gravel and macadam. The work in this State is done under County and Township supervision, and therefore is not uniformly of the best construction and contrasts with the work done under State and National supervision.

Illinois has built and hard surfaced about 70 miles of her 170 miles of the National Old Trails Road. The sentiment is fast ripening there to complete the road during the year

1917, and there is little doubt that this will be done.

In Missouri about one-third of her 300 miles of the National Old Trails Road has been hard-surfaced. Here, too, like Indiana and Illinois, the work is being superintended by county and local authorities and will not rank with the high class work done on the eastern sections of the road.

Very little hard surfacing has been done on the road across Kansas (500 miles).

In Colorado (195 miles) very little of the road has been permanently built, but there is a live movement there to hard surface the road across that State.

New Mexico (450 miles), one of the youngest States in the Union, has already accomplished wonders, most of the road across that State being in fairly good travelable condition. Governor [William C.] McDonald, whose term has just expired, says that the road will be completed across that State out of State funds provided by a recent bond issue. The State has a real State Highway Commission, with authority lodged in the State Engineer to initiate and carry out road building. But for that fact alone it would probably be impossible to negotiate that State.

In Arizona (420 miles) the same thing is true as in New Mexico, and the money chiefly raised by County Bonds is spent under the supervision of a Highway Commission. State Engineer Lamar Cobb reports bond issues as follows:

Mohave County	\$100,000
Coconino County	\$250,000
Navajo County	\$150,000
Apache County	\$125,000

California (310 miles), perhaps, is entitled to the record as one of the most progressive States in the Union on the road question. Some years ago the people of the State voted an \$18,000,000 bond issue to be spent in hard-surfacing a System of State Highways. Out of this fund, 71 miles of the National Old Trails Road was built, from Los Angeles east, and at the recent election the people carried an additional \$15,000,000 State bond issue by an overwhelming majority. This Act provides a sufficient amount of this sum shall be appropriated to finish the National Old Trails Road east across the Mohave desert to Needles. ["Road Improvement General on Old Trails Route," *Touring Topics*, April 1917, pages 15-17]

By May, *Touring Topics* could report that the signing crew had completed its work from Los Angeles to Kansas City, had traveled to Chicago via St. Louis and Pontiac, Illinois, and was now returning home via Omaha:

Even this early in the season the Club's road crew reports conditions of the National Old Trails Highway as excellent considering the sparsely populated territory which it

traverses through the western states and further taking into consideration the damage to the roads that are the result of winter storms. One of the worst stretches of the National Old Trails Highway is in eastern California and this untoward condition will be speedily remedied by road work on the part of San Bernardino county. The Arizona and New Mexico links of the transcontinental route are in very fair condition and except for those mountainous stretches that are impassible with deep snow, this portion of the road can be placed in first-class shape with comparatively small effort. The Colorado section of the highway is also reported very fair, as is likewise the roadway through Kansas. The road through this latter state, however, is of ordinary dirt construction for practically the entire distance and is liable to local damage from unusually heavy spring and early summer rains.

Based on reports received, the article stated that the work in the early spring and summer “will see very marked improvement in this entire highway:

The enormous gain in westward-bound travel over the National Old Trails Highway that resulted last year from the advertising that has been given this transcontinental route, has impressed upon the citizens of the western states the economic desirability of supplying travelers with a first-class roadbed.

Every community along the road was “doing its share to attract additional thousands of motor tourists”:

Not only have the garages, the hotels and the storekeepers of the towns on this roadway benefited by the expenditures of the several thousand parties that used the roadway last year, but a direct benefit has also resulted to the property owners in each of these states from the visits of potential investors who have later become actual investors in many cases.

Regarding the sign posting, the article concluded:

When this work is completed the National Old Trails Road between Los Angeles and Kansas City will be, beyond all others, the most completely sign-posted long distance highway in the United States. [“All Links of Old Trails Active in Road Improvement,” *Touring Topics*, May 1917, page 10]

National Old Trails Road in Missouri

The January and February 1917 issues of *American Motorist* carried Robert Bruce’s two-part article on “Crossing Missouri by the Old Trails.” As in his book on the National Road, Bruce provided readers a topographical, pictorial, and historic view of the road, but also detailed commentary on the road itself.

Part 1 on St. Louis to Columbia began with a question:

“How shall I find the route across Missouri?

For years this has been a familiar – and very troublesome – question to all persons handling touring inquiries on a national scale. It is ever-present whenever the subject of a trip via the Old Trails route across the central-western States comes under discussion.

Answering such an inquiry was “difficult at best unless one has personally been over the ground.” Bruce, to answer the question, had traveled the route in both directions in September 1916, on his way to and from the National Old Trails Road Association convention in Herrington, Kansas. Coming and going, he took “notes and odometer mileages westbound from St. Louis to Kansas City, and checking them back on the return trip”:

As a whole the route across the State averages good, that average being somewhat lowered, however, by two unusually bad sections, one or both of which may possibly be improved, at least in part, by the summer of 1917. Evidences of progress are met every few miles, which assures the tourist that efforts are being made to gradually bring the route up to a modern standard.

He added:

On this way across the State there will be found many reminders of the Boone’s Lick road, principally tablets erected at historic points by the D.A.R. One of them is in front of the court house, St. Louis; and unless known of in advance, and specially looked for, it will probably be missed.

The “recognized route” began at Locust and 12th Street in St. Louis:

[The] route makes a short right and left turn to pass the Public Library. Then it continues straight out Locust street, past the Museum of Fine Arts to the entrance of Lindell Boulevard. Bearing left, it follows that magnificent parkway past rows of splendid residences, in front of the large Catholic Cathedral and across Kings Highway. Over to the left, just beyond, is the Lindell Boulevard entrance to Forest Park, in which the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1903 was held. Two and a quarter miles from the start the route turns right into the Union Boulevard, crossing Washington avenue, Delmar and Page Boulevards to Easton avenue.

Turning left on Easton avenue at mileage 5.8, the tourist starts northwest, crossing the Missouri river at St. Charles, and soon passes the court house in front of which is the boulder referring to the Boone’s Lick road as the old-time connecting link between St. Charles and the start of the Santa Fe Trail at Old Franklin.

Now begins the pleasant rolling country, quite typical of the whole route in Missouri. The road, so far good all the way from St. Louis, is still hard surfaced but has become

somewhat worn. Soon there is apt to be an unpleasant surprise if it happens to be wet; for at about the mileage 27.0 an unimproved stretch is met and followed into Cottleville. Beyond the town there are more than two miles of narrow, very stony and poor road; and there is a longer worse piece ahead – but we will get to that soon enough.

Gaining a slightly higher average altitude, the going gradually improves. Soon the tourist enters a region of “checkerboard roads,” which extend more or less across the rest of the State. It would seem impossible that so many short turns could be incorporated into any road system. The early land surveys were along section lines; there must have been a different group of surveyors [sic] working every few miles – and no attempt made to harmonize their lines. From the mileage 42.3, entering Wentzville from the east, to the mileage 59.2, where the road straightens out to go into Warrenton, there are twenty-eight square right and left turns.

One making this trip is not apt to lose sight of the fact that it is over an historic route, for two or three D.A.R. tablets are seen along the road between St. Charles and Warrenton. Entering the latter, one passes between the buildings of the Central Wesleyan College and Orphan Asylum Four miles east of the town, a deserted log cabin stands as a mute reminder of pioneer days. A yellow wildflower with narrow pointed leaves grows in abundance through this section; it is rather attractive to the traveler, but a great pest to the farmer, like mustard in the eastern states.

Since the bad 2-mile stretch west of Cottleville, road conditions had been average, but in talking with people encountered along the road, he began to hear warnings about Mineola Hills and further inquiries could “hardly be reassuring”:

From an elevated spot at the mileage 89.4, a range of beautiful hills looms up ahead; but there is first a descent over a series of waterbars that would put the worst of those remaining in Pennsylvania or Ohio entirely out of reckoning. They are really mounds, large and irregular; no matter how you take them, the car will roll and pitch in going down that grade.

Just beyond Mineola, the motorist crossed Loutre Creek on an iron bridge, but a tenth of a mile later “brings one to an unmistakable right turn into by far the worst stretch of road on the entire trip across the State”:

The grades are not steep, but the roadway up from the west side of the stream is narrow and almost impassable in wet weather though in dry weather it presents no serious difficulties.

Having gained the western slope, the motorist comes to about two miles of approximately level road; but it is across an almost continuous ledge of bare, uneven rocks, evidently the backbone of the range of which the Mineoli Hills are a part. Getting over it is a strain on tires more than on axles, for as only slow speed can be made, the car takes the wrenches and hitches in a deliberate way. It is possible to favor the tires only to a limited degree;

and one is out of it in a few moments.

It passes the comprehension of the average tourist from the east that such a condition should still exist on any main route across a great and enterprising State; it is due largely to the fact that in Missouri and other western states, road improvement has heretofore been almost entirely by counties. That portion of the route across the Mineola Hills is in a corner of Montgomery county, whose population and wealth would probably never enable it to build without assistance a road suited for through travel, even if it were crossed by a level stretch instead of by this rock formation, which goes to unknown depth. Furthermore, the principal towns and largest population are in the northern part of the county, off the direct route, which has always made it difficult to secure any real appropriation even to draw gravel to put on top of the exposed stone, which would help very much.

Fortunately, this stretch and the one west of Cottleville were the worst parts of the route across Missouri:

The question as to whether or not these pieces make the trip advisable from a touring standpoint is a subject of much debate. Personally, after covering the whole, once in somewhat wet weather and again in dry, I should say that one intending to make a fairly long run, of which this trans-Missouri trip is a logical part, might reasonably go ahead with it With good roads, the trip over these scenic highlands of a semi-prairie state could be made one worth going fairly long distances to make.

There is some discussion of a project to build an improved highway from the point where the road to New Florence turns off seven and one-half miles east of Mineola village, running through New Florence and Montgomery City, cutting out the worst part of the present route and returning to the direct line just before coming to the next town, Williamsburg. While this would eliminate a picturesque section, and take the tourist north of the Van Bibber Tavern, in some ways the most historic one now standing along the route, it would be a vast improvement over present conditions.

Bruce described Van Bibber Tavern as “famous in stagecoach days, and for a long time the center for the politics and social life of that part of Missouri.”

He reported on some of the historic sites along this stretch of the road, noting:

The taverns and wagon stands along the Old Trail route in Missouri were not built as substantially as those on the National Road in Maryland, Pennsylvania or Ohio; and most of them passed away with the generation they serviced. Not so, however, with the log houses, many of which still remain; some are so small that one imagines it must have been difficult for the early settlers to have arranged their few belongings inside, while others seem spacious even today.

The road crossed an iron bridge over Big Muddy creek at mileage 106.3. From there “the route

leads through Calwood, a small place, and thence over a good road into Fulton, county seat of Callaway county, and the commercial and railway center of its section.” In Fulton:

One comes into Court or Main street, Fulton, between rows of fine residences, passes a tablet relating to the early history of the place and sees the signboard indicating the right turn between two attractive churches into Seventh street, continuation of the route west.

He found some road improvement, particularly grading, across Callaway County. He was told “by competent authority” that “very soon the road across that entire county will be graded”:

At times this requires considerable cuts and fills, more common in the eastern states than the rolling prairie states. Starting from Court or Main street, Fulton, the route starts out west Seventh street, running into an excellent stretch of rock road.

Now follows about seven miles without a turn (a rare thing in Missouri); along this stretch of mostly level road, the weeds have grown amazingly, and no one seems to have tried to check them; as a result, they in some cases sway above the heads of the people in the car when the wind is blowing. Scientific care of the roadside has been given small attention in the central-western States.

In this section they have also made a start toward eliminating some of the useless short turns left by the old surveyors. It is a hopeful sign, for there is scarcely anything more monotonous than taking one after another, always at reduced speed.

Bruce reached Millersburg at mileage 125.9, and soon crossed a bridge over Cedar Creek, “and the tourist passes from Callaway into Boone county, running into a stretch of fine road which extends most of the way to Columbia”:

We speed through Harg, a little crossroads settlement, come along a picturesque stream, and follow the excellent winding road, considerable of it down a long easy grade, to a sharp right turn across an iron bridge. After an equally sharp turn on the opposite side, the road straightens out again and ascends a long, easy grade into Broadway, the fine side street of Columbia, home of the University of Missouri, and 138 miles from St. Louis.

Bruce noted that, “Walter Williams, Dean of the School of Journalism in the University, is one of the pioneer good roads workers in the State, and was the first president of the National Old Trails Road Association.” (As explained in part 1 of this history of the National Old Trails Road, Dr. Williams presided over the association’s first convention and was considered to become its first president, but declined “for reasons that I have confided to some of my more closely affiliated friends” and that made it impossible for him to consider the post. He recommended Judge Lowe who, of course, was elected.) [Bruce, Robert, “Crossing Missouri by the Old Trails, Part 1 from St. Louis to Columbia,” *American Motorist*, January 1917, pages 35-37, 70]

Part 2 of the *American Motorist* series covered Columbia to Kansas City. Bruce reported that in

Columbia, "Broadway is followed through the city without a turn, becoming the main line of travel toward the next important point, Rocheport." Near Rocheport, "there are a few rough spots, and some holes in the road, but nothing serious":

At mileage 13.9, the road turns sharp left to run alongside a stream. Making the next right turn into the main street of the town, a tablet, "Rocheport 1825," is passed on the left. A right turn at the western edge of the town crosses an iron bridge, beyond which the road passes from Boone into Howard county, and starts over the hills for New Franklin and Boonville.

The road between Rocheport and the crossing of the Missouri River "is distinctly inferior to that from Columbia to Rocheport. Caution is needed on some of the curves and there are a number of short choppy hills, which must be harder traveling in wet weather than the really steep grades of the Alleghanies."

At 22.0 miles, the motorist would find the first evidence that Boonville and Glasgow were keen rivals for travelers between that point and Marshall:

A very large sign on the road straight ahead indicates the Cross-State Highway through Fayette to Glasgow, where a ferry may be taken across the Missouri, thence through Slater to Marshall. On the left is a small sign indicating the continuation of the Old Trails route to New Franklin and Boonville. Intent upon following the latter all the way through, the writer made the left turn, coming, a few miles further on, to a right turn under the arch erected at the approach to the old Salt Creek cemetery A series of short turns brings one within sight of New Franklin. "Considerable hills," I instinctively wrote in my notebook on the westbound trip alongside of the diagram before entering the village.

On Bruce's westbound return trip, he found what "proved to be perhaps as steep a grade as any encountered on the way across the State; and no doubt a lot of drivers are caught unawares on it."

Bruce pointed out a landmark:

The most conspicuous landmark on the way into New Franklin is a large boulder set in the center of the main street; on its western face is a metal tablet referring to the place as the "Cradle of the Santa Fe Trail," an honor usually credited to what was once Old Franklin, the original north side settlement, along the Missouri a short distance from where our trip crosses it now. In this locality, the Boone's Lick road, the pioneer route from St. Louis through St. Charles, Warrenton, Fulton and Columbia, comes to an end, and is succeeded by the greater Santa Fe trail, whose markers will be seen more or less frequently along the balance of the way across the State.

Old Franklin had been wiped out by flooding in 1844, "and was never rebuilt. The population that stayed on the north side of the river in this vicinity moved farther back toward the hills and

centered at what is New Franklin, which now claims for itself, or as the successor of Old Franklin, the honor of being the start of the first trade caravan to Santa Fe.”

The road continues through New Franklin by turning left “at a concrete building beyond the large boulder with tablet.” A mile further, the road approaches a boat landing at the Missouri River. “The last hundred yards or so are a packed sand trail, the length of which depends upon the stage of the water in the river; nor is the boat landing a permanent one, as it is shifted from one point to another as the necessities of navigation require. Care in driving down to the river and on to the boat is recommended from personal experience.” He continued:

The road from Rocheport to the Missouri river opposite Boonville is considerably below the standard of the route from Rocheport eastward to and through Columbia The piece from New Franklin to the river must be ticklish motoring in wet weather. And with all due respect to the courteous management and obliging, hard-working crew on the *Dorothy*, it seems as if a bridge ought to be built to carry the Old Trails across the Big Muddy at this point, where it is not very wide The boat makes an average of 30-minute crossings; so if it happens to be on the opposite side when one comes down to the north side from New Franklin, the wait will not be long.

Although the motorist has several options for leaving Boonville, Bruce advised that “the preferred way is to continue straight ahead across the Missouri Pacific railroad past the depot on the right, turning left with the travel just beyond into East High street, which leads up to Fifth or Main street. Turning right on Fifth street, the tourist at once passes the Cooper county court house on the left; and at the Farmers’ Bank building corner turns right on East Spring street, soon crossing the M.K.&T. railroad.”

The route led motorists to “a good wide road out of Boonville,” which, for a short distance, “affords an interesting view of the Missouri, over to the right”:

It also leads directly into a region of more hills and greater scenic beauty than the section just left behind. A few miles out one crosses a long iron bridge over La Mine river; after going through La Mine village there is another series of monotonous right and left turns.

The road followed a northwesterly course close enough for a “distinct view of the Missouri river and its characteristic bluffs.”

Just east of Arrow Rock village, the road enters Saline County:

The road is graded from here to Marshall, but not improved; in fact, the county once voted down a bond issue, though good roads sentiment has recently increased, and it is thought that a proposition for a new bond issue would pass.

Bruce explained that for through trips, motorists really had only one choice:

After a bit of rough going one comes to the center 4-corners at Arrow Rock village. On

the left-hand corner, at the turn, is one of the real old taverns now standing along the route in Missouri. It was built in 1830. A ferry was established at this point in 1812 and continued to run until 1911. Recently there has been talk of restoring it.

The north side route from New Franklin to Arrow Rock is said to be from six to eight miles shorter than the standard one through Boonville and La Mine, and to pass over more level ground; but it has not an intermediate point nearly as large as Boonville, and of course the lack of a ferry at Arrow Rock makes that old-time option impracticable today.

The Missouri D.A.R. had “taken a great interest in the old tavern at Arrow Rock, and in 1913 furnished one of its room with relics of pioneer days, largely for the interest it would have for increasing motor travel.”

For years, the towns in the area were “almost completely isolated, with no railway service; and often, as in the case of those on the direct line between new Franklin and Arrow, separated by a river without means of crossing for miles.” Bruce added that, “With poor roads added to these handicaps, the outlook on life must be small indeed.”

Three-tenths of a mile past the tavern, “the road turns right to leave Arrow Rock village, passing a Santa Fe trail marker at the turn.” Sixteen miles along, the route crosses the Missouri River and “ascends a winding grade into Marshall,” a prosperous town that, as of September 1916, was “entirely without signs by which the stranger may know one street from another.” The alternate route that left the Boonville line 22 miles from Columbia joins here with the alternative route and “the two coincide the balance of the way to Kansas City”:

The writer had no means of comparing the two; but from sifting reports has no reason to believe that one is materially better than the other, and suggests that each might be used one way on round trips. One choosing the Glasgow route in traveling westbound will notice the large signboard indicating straight ahead when the road to New Franklin and Boonville turns left.

Following a northwesterly direction from this point, the upper route passes through Fayette to Glasgow, where it crosses the Missouri by ferry, and continues generally southwest through Slater to Marshall.

Leaving Marshall, the route leads “past the court house to the next cross street and then left at the post office; there are several right and left turns within the next few miles, “but the travel and sign posts make the way clear.”

Malta Bend, 83 miles west of Columbia, was the start “of a rich and very prosperous belt of country,” in Saline and Lafayette Counties. The 3½ miles from Malta Bend to Lexington “are bad in wet weather; and the people along the line do not seem inclined to improve it on account

of having no rock in the localities through which the Old Trails route passes”:

Commenting upon this condition, a well-informed official of the State said to the writer that the people along that route could better afford to import sufficient rock from foreign countries to improve their main road than to leave it in the present condition.

Bruce employed a rare joke about Grand Pass, saying, “close observation on both the westbound and eastbound trips discovered no ‘pass’ and nothing ‘grand.’”

The line between Saline and Lafayette Counties was marked “by a large signboard,” after which a motorist would notice “evidences of recent grading”:

Running through Waverly and Dover, on some pieces of road none too good, the tourist shortly goes through a covered bridge over Tabo Creek After a long stretch of dirt road, it is restful to run on to a fine stretch of brick leading to the center of Lexington, an enterprising little city and the largest place along the line in this section of the State.

Once called Jack’s Ferry, Lexington had always “been a crossing point on the Missouri river, a steam ferry operating there now to connect the main roads north and south.” Bruce reported that:

Lexington is very active in [the] good roads movement, and was one of the first places to organize as a special roads district under the present Missouri law, voting \$125,000 in bonds, some of the proceeds of which are now being spent to close up the few poor gaps still remaining on the Old Trails route in Lafayette county.

Bruce was optimistic about the future of the next stretch of the route:

One making the trip in the fall of 1916 could see, with some temporary inconveniences, a naturally poor road being transformed into a good modern thoroughfare. There was still enough left of the original road to give the observing traveler some conception of the troubles that must have been experienced by the pioneers in working their way in all weathers over the trail that preceded the fast-disappearing old road. Much of the proceeds of the road bonds voted by Lexington are being spent on this section.

The road continued “bad” for a few miles beyond Wellington, “but it will probably be improved soon after the stretch nearer Lexington”:

Within ten miles after leaving Wellington the Old Trails route passes from Lafayette into Jackson county A short seven miles beyond, the route goes through a covered bridge across the Little Blue river, and a mile and a half farther on, it curves left past a brick church in a grove and then past a reverse fork with a Santa Fe trail marker in the angle (as one travels east). The remaining six miles to Independence are unmistakable, as the main travel shows the way to all points. But there are several very sharp curves, as if the modern road-builders had simply rounded the corners of the old section lines instead of cutting across them, and making an easy winding road, in place of one which needs to

be driven with considerable care, particularly by strangers.

On entering Independence, Bruce found “an unusually attractive aspect to the motor tourist approaching it from either of the principal directions”:

Entering by College street to Main street, the Old Trails route turns left on Main to Maple avenue, and then right on Maple avenue, running alongside the court house and post office, on the left, at the center of the city. A half mile farther along, Maple avenue comes to an end at River boulevard.

The Old Trails route continued with a right turn onto the boulevard and left turn on West Blue Avenue, named for the Blue River the route would cross half way between Independence and Kansas City:

The next three miles carry the route under a railroad viaduct, over a concrete bridge above another railway, meanwhile coming into the limits of Kansas City, past Mount Washington cemetery, and under a stone railroad arch, beyond which is a long, easy downgrade to a concrete bridge over the Blue river. Crossing the Southern and Frisco railroad tracks, at grade, at Centropolis station, the route picks up the trolley and follows it along Fifteenth street, a fine, wide asphalted thoroughfare, to the intersection of Grand Avenue.

Bruce concluded his narrative with a summary:

Probably no other trip of its length in the United States has so many reminders of the Old Trails as the approximate 300 miles between St. Louis and Kansas City. Taken with philosophical allowances for its remaining drawbacks, it is highly educational. Certainly none other has so much history and romance of both river and road, which combined in the early days to afford primitive transportation to the farther west. The chances are that one who has followed the Boone’s Lick road until it merges into the Santa Fe trail, and the latter to Kansas City, will not be satisfied until he has crossed into Kansas, and followed it still farther toward the setting sun. [Bruce, Robert, “Crossing Missouri by the Old Trails, Part 2 from Columbia to Kansas City,” *American Motorist*, February 1917, pages 23-27]

A Transcontinental Trip

The February 1917 issue of *American Motorist* included a brief description by Cecil Billup of Norfolk, Virginia, of his transcontinental trip to Los Angeles. Following a map provided by AAA in October 1916, Billup reported that his 3,600-mile trip took 3 weeks, “running only during the day.” He wrote:

I found the roads in Missouri and Illinois very bad indeed, due somewhat, however, to recent rains. In the other States, until I reached New Mexico, the roads were excellent, particularly in Kansas. The trail across the mountains from Pueblo to Raton and on to

Los Vegas [sic], Albuquerque, Springerville, Winslow, Flagstaff, and Seligman to Needles was not in any sense good, but when one would look on the hundreds and hundreds of miles of barren waste, one could hardly expect to find a good road across it, so I have no complaint to make.

My trip was rather remarkable in one particular at any rate – viz: that I did not receive as much as a puncture from the time I left Washington until I reached Los Angeles; neither did I make an adjustment of any kind of my engine. In other words, it was an absolutely clean performance from coast to coast.

Another remarkable feature, I think is that the car I drove was a 1910 30-60 chain drive Stearns. The remarkable part is not in its being a Stearns, but in the age of it. I count this motor trip across the country the greatest experience of my life, and I have had many.

He did not think anyone could “get any idea of the vastness of this country until one has motored across it”:

From Washington to Pueblo was about as simple as from Washington to Hagerstown – it was simply one lap after another of good sailing.

After we got into the desert land of New Mexico we commenced then to prepare against an eventuality, but none happened. I provided myself with an Egyptian water-bag, and after soaking it for twenty-four hours it was absolutely tight. We never lost an opportunity to pour a little in the radiator, and to keep it full, or to keep the gas tank full, as above stated not wishing to take any chances getting across the desert. We also carried an extra supply of oil and some light provisions.

I thank you very much for the assistance you gave me on the day I left. [“Virginian Writes A.A.A. Of Coast-to-Coast Trip,” *American Motorist*, February 1917, page 58]

The Arizona-New Mexico Connection

Dating to the April 1912 founding convention, the connection between Arizona and New Mexico had been debating. The convention, as described in part 1, adopted the most direct route, from Gallup, New Mexico, to Holbrook, Arizona, for the official location of the National Old Trails Road. However, in view of its poor condition, the association employed the Springerville alternative until an improved Gallup-Holbrook road was available.

Statehood for Arizona (February 14, 1912) and New Mexico (January 6, 1912) altered their highway functions. Through much of Arizona’s history before it became a State, the counties were responsible for its roads. A centennial history of the Arizona Department of Transportation explained:

Fortunately for Arizona, the lack of good roads was not a serious problem during most of the Territorial period. In many parts of the Territory, where the climate was dry and the

soils rocky, the mud that plagued road users in other parts of the country was blessedly absent for most of the year. And when conditions were bad, the horses and mules that Arizonans used for transportation were usually able to negotiate even the worst trails.

In 1909, the Territorial Legislature placed road construction and maintenance under a Territorial Engineer who was required to be a civil engineer. The engineer “was expected to set up a formal Territorial highway system, design and supervise the construction of all new Territorial roads, and provide engineering support to the counties.” County road districts were replaced by county road superintendents who were expected to give their full time to the job, ending the “part-time political road commissioners and overseers.”

The first Territorial highway system, adopted in 1909, included a cross-State road from Springerville to Topock via St. Johns, Concho, Hunt, Holbrook, Winslow, Flagstaff, Williams, Ash Fork, Seligman, Kingman, and Yucca. The system was, however, “a system in name only,” with most work on the roads done by the counties instead of the Territorial Engineer. “The location of these roads was determined primarily by the needs of local traffic moving in and out of towns, and secondarily by regional traffic moving between towns.” In 1912, upon statehood, the Territorial Engineer became the State Engineer. [Pry, Dr. Mark E., and Andersen, Fred, *Arizona Transportation History*, Arizona Department of Transportation Research Center, December 2011, pages 23-25]

In New Mexico, the Territorial Legislature created a Territorial Roads Commission to repair, construct, and maintain highways. The \$10,000 provided by the legislature for this purpose was “wholly inadequate,” as State Engineer James A. French explained in his first report. By a law approved on June 10, 1912, the State Legislature created the State Highway Commission with broadened powers to go into effect on September 29, 1912. It directed the commission to plan and construct a system of State highways; to confer with and advise counties, towns, and villages on road and bridge work; and called for county road boards, appointed by the commission, to handle the work carried out by the counties.

The 4,000-mile State Highway System included a route from Raton to Las Vegas, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Lunas, before a western turn to Gallup and the State line on the way to Holbrook – the preferred route of the National Old Trails Road. At Las Lunas, another route continued south to Socorro, where a route turned west via Magdalena, Datil, and Quemado on the way to Springerville – the alternative routing of the National Old Trails Road. However, these were lines on a map, not improved roads. French added in his report, “I suggest that an effort be made to have the Legislature designate these roads as state highways, and that funds from the Road Fund shall be expended only upon these highways.”

In fact, French had little good to say about the state of roads in New Mexico:

In its relation to traffic the situation throughout the state at the beginning of 1912 was deplorable; it was practically impossible to travel from county to county with any degree of comfort. Up to that time very little had been accomplished in systematic road building, due to the sparsely settled condition of the state, to the general misuse of county

road funds, and to the lack of a central, or state, organization. Practically no inter-county road work had been attempted, construction having been confined to small stretches here and there, of purely local importance, with no thought of eventually connecting them to form a district or state system . . .

Immediately upon the organization of the State Highway Commission a tentative state highway system, embracing county seats and other populous towns and communities, was outlined. [French, James A., *First Report of the State Engineer of New Mexico*, New Mexico State Highway Commission, pages 8-14]

With the two new States in early stages of organization, efforts to improve the National Old Trails Road continued. In Arizona, the new State Legislature provided \$5,500 for construction of a bridge across the rugged, 100-foot deep Chevelon Creek canyon in Navajo County to provide a link between Holbrook and Winslow. With State assistance and an allocation from the State road fund, the Navajo County Board of Supervisors entered into a contract on October 2, 1912, with the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company of Leavenworth, Kansas, to construct the bridge. The company completed the bridge in July 1913 at a cost of \$4,985. It was a single-span, steel Warren truss, with a Camelback configuration, (102 feet between the sandstone walls of the gorge), 12 miles southeast of Winslow. It replaced a “pin connected” Pratt truss. The new bridge was posted to the National Register of Historic Places in December 1983. [Chevelon Creek Bridge, National Register of Historic Places – Nomination Form, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.]

The Canyon Padre bridge in Coconino County near Flagstaff opened in April 1914. In *Great American Bridges and Dams*, Donald C. Jackson wrote:

In 1913 the newly formed Arizona State Highway Department requested competitive designs and bids for a span over the canyon. Shortly afterward, the Topeka Bridge and Iron Company of Kansas, acting as a western representative of Daniel Luten's National Bridge Company, received a \$7,900 contract to build a 140-foot-long, single-span, concrete arch bridge.

It remained in service on the road until replaced by a new bridge in 1937. [Jackson, Donald C., *Great American Bridges and Dams*, The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1988, pages 244-245]

In 1914, Arizona highway officials began surveys for a bridge across Canyon Diablo, about 9 miles east of the Canyon Padre bridge. The State acquired plans for the bridge from the Topeka Bridge & Iron company, again representing Luten. The bridge, which cost about \$9,000, opened on March 17, 1915, and remained in service until 1938 when it, too, was replaced. Coconino County “also improved much of the road from Flagstaff to Bellemont, built thirty-three miles of new road between Flagstaff and Winslow, and twenty miles of new road to the Grand Canyon.” The Canyon Padre and Canyon Diablo bridges were added to the National Register of Historic Places on September 30, 1988. [Mangums, page 66]

Navajo County erected a ridge over the Little Colorado River 2½ miles east of Winslow. It was a 620-foot long, four span truss. The bridge, which had a timber deck, was only 14-feet wide. According to the Historic Bridge Inventory for the State of Arizona, “With its timber deck, and 14-foot-wide roadway, the Winslow Bridge became a major bottleneck on the highway.” The State completed a replacement bridge in 1939. “It carried mainline highway traffic for some 20 years before construction of Interstate 40 to the north of the original highway.”

Despite these improvements, the Mangums noted, “There was still a weak link, however, the segment of the highway between Holbrook and Gallup. There was a primitive road between the two points, but it was not up to the standards expected of the national highway.” A road existed, but “very few drivers attempted it because it was so bad”:

From Albuquerque west, the route had been decided, but there was that pesky black hole between Gallup and Holbrook that rendered the chosen route unusable, forcing motorists to take the Socorro-Springerville route [Mangums, pages 60, 62-63]

Advocates for the southern route near the Mexico border heavily promoted their road by, in part, criticizing the Gallup-Holbrook link of the National Old Trails Road.

In 1915, as discussed in part 2, the National Old Trails Road Association held a convention at the Grand Canyon on July 15. Many delegates, as well as Judge Lowe, had attended a ceremony on July 14 for dedication by the D.A.R. of a plaque in Flagstaff “In Memory of the Pioneer Women of Arizona.” For local officials and advocates, the real purpose was to introduce the Walnut Canyon Bypass that would funnel sightseers to Flagstaff on their way to the Grand Canyon instead of a popular route between Townsend and Grandview that bypassed the city. [Mangums, page 79]

The agenda for the convention was largely noncontroversial, allowing delegates to spend much of their time enjoying the Grand Canyon. However, they did consider one important question: whether to drop Gallup from the National Old Trails Road. The Mangums quoted the *Coconino Sun* (issue of July 23, 1915) on the issue:

All of our present traffic is over the Springerville road and when the Automobile Club of Southern California commenced the signing of the National Old Trails Road with uniform signs from Los Angeles to Kansas City they found that the road from Holbrook to Albuquerque as designated by the National Old Trails Road was not passable and that all traffic was coming and going by the Springerville road.

At that time the Old Trails Association consented to the signing of the Springerville road, which made it in fact a part of the National Old Trails Road, and the maps of the association showed it to be such. A strong delegation from Springerville were present and they desired to absolutely abandon the Gallup road as a part of the Old Trails because there had not been any results in the way of road making.

Delegates from along the Gallup route maintained, however, that they were going to have

a road but were handicapped both in New Mexico and Arizona by the powers that be so the money which had been raised had been held and not expended when it should have been. There was evidently more poetry to this and there was some considerable argument among the delegates but the Springerville road was finally adopted as an alternate road and the same official recognition was given to it as to any other part of the National Old Trails.

The question of abandoning any part of the original line was not only a bad precedent but it might mean that a majority vote in any convention could change the route of the National Old Trails just to suit that majority when the majority voting might not be a representation of the section involved. It was the intention of the convention at Kansas City two years ago that when the route was chosen west from Santa Fe to Los Angeles that it was to be permanent and that there would be no changes of location thereafter.

It is wise that there should be no changes, as the possibility of the change in every convention would mean tearing down of the very foundation upon which the association was building its great work. Arguments were made and at times some of them were quite spirited. But in the end all parties met upon intermediate ground and settled the question by unanimously adopting the report of the committee on resolutions, which provided that the Springerville road be an alternate road and so recognized by the association.

The word “branch” which has heretofore appeared on the signs over the Springerville road will now show that this is part of the main line. [Mangums, page 81]

While Judge Lowe headed to California to attend a joint meeting of the Automobile Club of Southern California and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the delegates from New Mexico went home with the recognition that the Gallup-Holbrook line retained its designation but by only a few votes. The Mangums wrote:

The New Mexico delegation left the Grand Canyon, went home, and immediately began work to fix the gap between Gallup and Holbrook. The Flagstaff newspaper printed an account of their activities:

Gallup citizens have already made preparations to build two bridges over the Puerco and a good road to the Arizona line. It behooves our state and Apache County to spend the necessary money to make the road along the track by Navajo Springs to Holbrook travelable. We cannot have too many good roads through this part of the state. [Mangums, page 83; quote from *Coconino Sun*, August 6, 1915]

Work was underway on the route, as the Mangums wrote, “By September 1915 the road between Holbrook and Gallup was a reality at last.” The *Gallup Independent* (September 9, 1915) wrote of travelers who reached Holbrook and heard of the dangers of the road to Gallup, compared

with the Springerville alternative:

They were confident that they had been misinformed as to the condition of the roads, and are more than pleased that they came this way. The roads are fine. The road between here and Holbrook now has guide posts on it two miles apart and it will be difficult for the tourist to lose his way in going or coming between the two points.

The Mangums quoted the Gallup newspaper from the next day on the condition of the road in late September 1915:

The work on the Old Trails, the road which will eventually be the great transcontinental highway, and which will go through Gallup, is rapidly going forward.

The McKinley County Road Commissioner has just now about completed the bridge work on the road between Gallup and the Arizona state line. The task has been no matter of small concern. In the neighborhood of one hundred thousand feet of lumber has been consumed in putting in the timber part of the bridges. Beside this there was a tremendous amount of stone and cement work that had to be done. A large force of men have been employed during the past couple of months which got the road gang pay roll up to about \$1,000 a week has just returned from that stretch of the road.

This work and all the work during the summer has been under the direction of . . . the engineer. He went to Houck [Arizona] this week to confer with and assist in every way possible the Apache [County] Arizona road commissioners who are at Houck planning and surveying to put a large and substantial bridge over the Puerco at that point which will be the main connecting link of the Old Trails road between the two states. The Arizona people will of course survey their own road and will connect up with the road from New Mexico as completed by the McKinley County Board. This is the reason for the bridge at this point at Houck, which is directly in line with the road which passes Manuelito and on to the state line but a short distance beyond.

The Apache County road board has a sum of \$12,000 which they intend to spend on the repairing of the road from Holbrook to the state line, which is immediately available and will be put onto the road before the winter weather comes on. This will line up the road so that it will be open early in the spring and will be a fine road in a very short time thereafter.

Besides the ready amount of money that the Apache County Road Board has at the present time in a month or so the county will vote another \$75,000 worth of bonds exclusively for bridge construction over the Old Trails way and a few other side routes that are necessary to repair, which will also assist materially in making the Old Trails route between here and Winslow one of the most popular roads in the southwest not only for transcontinental tourists but for interstate traffic.

Work was underway across Arizona. Navajo County was setting up a bond election for road

improvement. *The Winslow Mail* wrote, “One road that will be improved is between Winslow and Holbrook, and the Lord know it is needed, as in its present condition it is little better than a cow path.”

The straight-line route between Winslow and Flagstaff “crossed over the recently constructed Canyon Diablo and Canyon Padre bridges, although some travelers still preferred the old road via Leupp.” Westbound motorists reaching Winona “were directed to turn south, going past Walnut Canyon and entering the Flagstaff area at Cliffs”:

From Flagstaff to Williams much road work had been performed and the road was considered to be in good shape. The *Automobile Blue Book* for 1916, which used road test information gathered in 1915, said: “A very fine graded road, built by the people of Flagstaff, is followed as far as Williams. This is one of the best roads in the Southwest and is very fast.”

The guide described the road from Williams to Ash Fork as “also a good road thru timber, with a drop of 2,000 feet in about 209 miles.” The road from Ash Fork to Seligman was “a fair to poor natural road thru desolate country”:

Leaving Seligman, a graded road is followed to the [Mohave] County line. From here to Hackberry the road is rough and poor, but from there to Kingman, an excellent graded road is followed. The road is well sign-posted by the Automobile Club of Southern California.

The Mangums continued:

From Kingman, a major piece of work was done when the old road, which went through the bottom of Kingman Canyon, was replaced with a new, higher road, made possible by much blasting to make an essential cut through the hard rock of the upper canyon walls. This new cut carried the road to McConnico, from which point drivers could elect to go over the mountains through Oatman or around the mountains by Yucca.

The 1916 *Automobile Blue Book*, based on data collected before completion of the Topock Bridge, commented on the Yucca route:

This route is across the Mojave Desert with no sign of habitation, except at Yucca. Until the Colorado River is reached at Topock, the road is well-graded and of a natural gravel formation to Yucca. From there to the Colorado River, while the road is graded in most places, it is rather sandy and crosses numerous washes, and is very winding, making fast time impossible. At Topock the river is crossed on a plank RR Bridge (toll \$3.50 per car).

As the Mangums pointed out, the high country of northern Arizona experienced record breaking snow during the winter of 1915-1916, “crushing roofs, paralyzing traffic, and straining

|

resources”:

On the road between Flagstaff and Winslow, all of the fill was washed from the surface of the road, leaving exposed stone ledges that made the important road segment a travelers’ nightmare for years to come. Even in the desert there was damage, with storms washing out the road between Yucca and Topock in several places. The damage on the Yucca road was so bad that months later the State Engineer reported that, “Although considerable sums have been spent on this highway for repairs it is not practicable to maintain as at present constructed.” [Mangums, pages 85-86]

Following dedication of the Topock bridge as described earlier, work continued in Arizona according to the Mangums:

In Navajo County state crews were building a new bridge across the Little Colorado River about four miles east of Holbrook.

Flagstaff got about a mile and a half of paving through the downtown district, the first on the National Old Trails Road in Arizona, in the spring [of 1916]

The citizens of Gallup were still struggling to build their road to proper standards so that autoists would turn west at Los Lunas instead of proceeding south to Socorro. In order to demonstrate that the road could be traveled, Gallup businessmen organized an excursion from Gallup to Albuquerque in May 1916 and were pleased to report that all eight of the cars that participated were able to make the trip and return. Blowouts hit the party in both directions, but the Gallup newspaper put a chipper face on the tire problems, saying that these “occasioned only a few hours delay to the party.”

On a road that was about 140 miles long, the Gallup vehicles took over 9 hours to reach their destination. Members of Albuquerque’s Commercial Club were somewhat surprised by the arrival of the Gallup eight. As quoted by the Mangums, *The Gallup Independent* wrote:

The Albuquerque people stated that they had never intentionally turned any tourists from Gallup, but at the same time very little attention had been given the route this way. They did promise to advise all travelers that the Gallup route is open and that traveling thereover is good, in the future.

There are many side roads leading from the main route of the trip which makes it very difficult for a stranger to keep the right road. Even the Gallup people who have been over it many times have difficulty in staying on the main road.

The Mangums also reported that to promote the road, “a race from Gallup to Albuquerque was organized in the summer of 1916, and improvement work was done in order to have the highway at its best. The race was held, with the winning time being six hours and thirty-three minutes.” The editor of the *Gallup Independent*, in the issue of October 5, 1916, “boasted that in another year the road between Gallup and Albuquerque would be a veritable boulevard.” Even so, the

Mangums wrote, “The problem that dwarfed all others was that of the terrible state of the road between Gallup and Holbrook.” [Mangums, pages 89-90]

Thomas F. Nichols, Office Engineer, Arizona State Highway Department, explained in 1917:

The laws under which the construction of highways is being carried on in Arizona have been in existence only about four years and will undoubtedly be modified in many ways within the next few years. They provide about \$400,000 annually for expenditure by the State Engineer. In addition to this amount the various counties, by bond issues and direct taxation, raise a much larger amount, which is expended under their own supervision.

Nichols also discussed traffic on the National Old Trails Road:

Even with the highways partially improved, as at the present time, the tourist travel is steadily increasing. During the entire calendar year of 1915 the number of cars crossing the state via the northern or “Old Trails” route was reported to be 1,400. In the first nine months of 1916, the number of such cars passed the 1,500 mark. In the first nine months of the year 1916 tourist automobiles carrying an average of $3\frac{1}{4}$ passengers each to the number of 1,200 had been accommodated at the garage at the Grand Canyon, and it was estimated that an equal number had passed through without patronizing the garage. [Nichols, Thomas F., “Road Construction in Arizona,” *Good Roads*, March 3, 1917, page 146]

In an Act of March 8, 1917, Arizona approved Senate Bill No. 101, assenting to the terms of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. An article in *Good Roads* summarized the bill:

. . . the State of Arizona placed itself in line for receiving its portion of federal appropriations made to the various states for road construction and for other purposes. The act vests the State Engineer, with the approval of the State Board of Control, with authority to proceed under the requirements of the federal law in the making of contracts and agreements with the Government in relation to highway survey and construction, and to do whatever is necessary to comply with its provisions. [“Road Legislation in Arizona,” *Good Roads*, June 2, 1917, page 324]

The centennial history stated:

Arizona’s initial share of federal aid funds was a modest \$68,500, but that share grew quickly, rising to \$890,000 in 1919 and to \$1.3 million in 1920. Not all of this money was actually received by Arizona and spent by the highway department, however. The states were required to match any federal aid they received, and in some years property tax collections and legislative appropriations in Arizona were insufficient to match the federal contribution. In 1919 and 1920, for example, Arizona actually received only \$573,000 in federal aid – much less than it was eligible to receive, yet still a substantial new source of highway funding. [*Arizona Transportation History*, pages 33-35]

Named and Marked Roads

In April 1917, *American Motorist* carried Robert Bruce's discussion of signing along the main named trails:

The signposting on many of them is remarkably complete and satisfactory, consisting usually of some characteristic letter or figure stenciled well up on the most conspicuous telegraph poles along the road. It is just enough to assure the tourist that he is on that one main road; and he either goes through the intersection, makes a turn or takes the proper fork without a moment's hesitation.

The Lincoln Highway leads all of its rivals in the mileage covered by those markers, which are now practically continuous across the continent. Next is probably that part of the Old Trails route signposted between St. Louis and Los Angeles by the Automobile Club of Southern California., So far as the writer's observations go, the latter would seem to be the most useful and complete type of signposting yet done to any considerable extent in the United States, as it not only identifies the route in general, but gives the distances both to the next town and the most important terminal city ahead.

Signs were vital in Kansas:

Out in the open Kansas prairie, about 43 miles west of Kansas City, the main road from the East comes to a dead end; and the route of the through west-bound tourist across the central portion of that State is decided by a right or left turn at that point. So far the road from Kansas City has been the main stem of the Santa Fe Trail; from now on there is a choice of two routes, the Old Trails through Osage City, Council Grove, Herington and McPherson, and the New Trail through Ottawa, Emporia, Florence, Newton and Hutchinson. The promoters of these rival routes have erected large signs in positions best seen as one comes to the final diverging point.

Slightly to the right, as if to indicate the way it would influence the turn, but still clearly seen before the turn need to be made, is the sign of the Old Santa Fe Trail. Upon it is painted a prairie schooner of the olden days, and an automobile, representing the change in methods of travel within the past 75 years. It is plainly an appeal to the sentiment of the west-bound tourist; and in few words does the utmost to impress upon him the superiority of the route it marks, particularly from the historic standpoint.

Over to the left, about the same distance from the turn, is an equally prominent signboard indicating the way to the new Santa Fe Trail. This one has no picture, but is strong on names of places, which the painter's brush has brought out most effectively. It also emphasizes the fact that the Santa Fe railroad goes that way. The motorist who has no special reason for going one way or the other will probably hesitate somewhat at this junction. Both have become heavily traveled routes through central Kansas to the farther west. They illustrate the competitive feature of many roads leading by different ways to the same principal destinations in that part of the country. Truly there is nothing left of

the old frontier; even its romance and traditions are rapidly fading from the memory of living men.

Even the organizations promoting the great transcontinental routes are now adopting similar methods; and attempting to reach out even hundreds of miles to draw travel into their channels. The rivalry between the central route, or the Lincoln Highway, and the southern or National Old Trails road, has come to be particularly spirited. At Big Springs, Nebraska, the Automobile Club of Southern California has erected the sign shown here upon a wood frame ten feet high and twenty feet wide. Both the reading and the outline map are meant to impress the tourist with the fact that he may leave the central route, go down through Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo to Trinidad, connecting there with the "all year route" to California via the Grand Canyon. Yet Trinidad, the nearest point on the Old Trails route, is over 300 miles from the big signboard along the Lincoln Highway!

The signboard depicted a map of the States from Colorado to California, with the National Old Trails Road shown in black line through Pueblo to Trinidad, Raton, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque, where the line split between the Gallup and Springerville alternatives from New Mexico to Arizona. The two lines connected at Holbrook to Winslow, Flagstaff, and Williams, with the road to the Grand Canyon is depicted between Flagstaff and Williams. The line from Williams continued through Kingman, Needles, Barstow, San Bernardino, and Riverside to Los Angeles.

The wording on the sign:

Thoroughly Sign Posted
ALL YEAR ROUTE
---- TO ----
CALIFORNIA
AND THE
PACIFIC COAST
BY THE
NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD

BEST FOR	LEADING TO
IMPROVED ROADS	GARDEN OF THE GODS
SCENIC ATTRACTIONS	GRAND CANYON
CLIMATIC CONDITIONS	PETRIFIED FOREST
HOTEL AND GARAGE	INDIAN PUEBLOS
ACCOMMODATIONS	CLIFF DWELLINGS

SIGN POSTS ERECTED AND MAINTAINED BY
Automobile Club of Southern California
National Old Trails Association

Bruce continued to comment on signs in relation to one of regular gripes:

A district whose roads are laid out largely or altogether along section lines, quickly tests

the efficiency or any posting or marking system. On some portions of the Old Trails route across Missouri, there is frequently an average of some break in the direct road every mile, mostly short offsets, where the turns are square, very likely with unprotected ditches in close proximity. But when the signposting is effectively done, that and the principal travel, as shown by the wear on the road surface, soon enable one to take these corners with more speed and safety than might at first be considered possible. However, they will always be awkward places to meet a car coming at speed from the opposite direction.

Another problem involved the common practice of asking about road conditions. The tourist in western States may inquire about road conditions up ahead, but in many of those States, the counties were in charge of the road. Local residents, therefore, talk in terms of their own county, but don't know what is happening on the other side of the county line:

To the stranger, say from the eastern states, who knows nothing about where one country (sic) ends and another begins, such directions are absolutely unintelligible, unless the tourist first provides himself with a commercial map of the state, and lays out his route in a tentative way across the counties, which is not always easy to do.

It is interesting to observe that local parties with whom the tourist may talk in those sections consider that of course he is acquainted with the county lines; and really cannot understand why he should not be. When this is all the assistance one traveling without accurate running directions or a good system of signboards can secure, it is a bit of passing help to come across a well-marked county line, as at the boundary of Lafayette and Saline counties, crossed in making a trip between Marshall and Lexington, Mo., which a board on a prominent post has the name of one on either side. Where the county is still the unit of road activity, its limits should be marked much more generally than they are now.

Signing in the eastern States was not as advanced as in the western States, but they were making rapid progress:

The continuous improved roads on the National Pike between Baltimore, Washington, Hagerstown, Cumberland and the Ohio river at Wheeling, and also along the Pennsylvania division of the Lincoln Highway, between Philadelphia, Gettysburg and Pittsburgh, commonly known and referred to by their appropriate and widely accepted names, has given a needed impetus to the extension of that system in other states. [Bruce, Robert, "Named and Marked Roads," *American Motorist*, April 1917, pages 9-13, 58]

Declaration of War

By the end of February 1917, newspapers were reporting that Germany had secretly reached out to Mexico to aid in the war. Upon victory, Mexico's reward would be the return of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas to within its new borders. Germany also invited Japan to join in the

war. That threat, the continued attacks by German U-boats on shipping in the Atlantic, and other factors, changed President Wilson's views.

He had done everything he could to keep America out of the European war, and had won reelection on numerous themes, but especially on keeping the peace. With the hope of maintaining peace, he addressed Congress on February 26 to request additional authority to arm merchant ships to protect them from submarine attacks. The House of Representatives approved the bill overwhelmingly, but 11 Senators launched a filibuster to block approval by the 66 Senators who said they would have voted for it. With the 64th Congress ending at noon on March 4, they had to delay the vote only a few days to kill the bill.

On March 4, 1917, a Sunday, President Wilson was inaugurated for a second term in a private ceremony. But he issued a statement denouncing Congress for not being able "to act either to safeguard the country or to vindicate the elementary rights of its citizens." In a time of crisis, the country was blocked from acting. "A little group of willful men, representing no opinion but their own have rendered the great Government of the United States helpless and contemptible." It was "the only legislative body in the world which cannot act when its majority is ready for action." He called for revising the Senate rules to allow cloture of a filibuster by a two-thirds majority vote of the Senate.

He held limited inaugural festivities on March 5.

On April 2, 1917, President Wilson and the First Lady drove through the rain along Pennsylvania Avenue to Capitol Hill to address Congress. "It is a fearful thing," he said, "to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace."

Asking Congress for a declaration of war, he said:

To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.

The European or Great War, now known as World War I, would affect every aspect of life in the United States, including the Federal-aid highway program that President Wilson had launched by signing the Federal Aid Road Act on July 11, 1916.

On September 1, 1916, construction had begun on California Federal Aid Road Project No. 3, which would be the first project completed under the Federal Aid Road Act. The road extended 2.55-miles from Albany at the Alameda County line to Richmond in Contra Costa County. BPR's unofficial historian Albert C. Rose wrote:

Construction began officially on September 1, 1916, and the certificate of completion

was issued by the District Engineer of the Bureau of Public Roads of the United States Department of Agriculture, on January 30, 1918. The total cost of the project, including the money allotted by the State, was \$53,938.85. [Rose, Albert C., *Historic American Roads: From Frontier Trails to Superhighways*, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1976, page 91]

(Congress, in the Department of Agriculture appropriation act for 1919 elevated OPRRE to bureau status as the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) effective July 1, 1918.)

The program, however, faltered, partly because of defects in its conception but especially because of America's entry into World War I. The Federal Government shifted its many programs from whatever had been their peacetime goals to winning the war. From engineers to construction workers, many of those who were to implement the Federal-aid highway program went instead to the war in Europe or to support it.

At BPR, 79 of 189 men and one woman had entered the military by war's end. Four "gave their lives for their country." The FY 1919 annual report listed the four men and how they died, adding:

The bureau is honored that these men were among those who went out from its service, loyal and unafraid, when the call came to the greater service. ["War Activities – Number and Percentage of Employees in Military Service," Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, October 15, 1919, Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture for the Year Ended June 30, 1919, page 391]

Across the country, personnel shortages were compounded by shortages of road building material. Further, a shortage of railroad cars, already overburdened by wartime demands, made shipment of the available materials to construction projects difficult. With transportation paralysis near, the Federal Government took over the mainline steam railroads on December 26, 1917, for the duration of the war.

Meanwhile, rail shortages gave the fledgling trucking industry an opportunity to expand service to include interstate shipments. The roads that the States did not have the resources to improve deteriorated under the weight of the new loads they were carrying. Even the higher type pavements, cement concrete and brick on concrete, failed. [*America's Highways 1776-1976*, pages 90-97]

Auto racing was another casualty of the war. In December 1917, AAA's contest board, which set the rules for motor competitions, decided to cease issuing sanctions for motor contests while the war was underway. President Wilson appreciated the action, as he stated in a communication to his cousin, John A. Wilson, chairman of AAA's Military Preparedness Committee:

I am very glad indeed to learn that it is the purpose of the American Automobile Association to stop automobile racing until after the close of the war. It is so destructive of materials and involves so great a consumption of gasoline that I think every man who cares for the proper fulfillment of our duties during the war and the necessary

conservation of resources which the performance of those duties involves must applaud the action of the association in this matter.

Faithfully yours,
Woodrow Wilson

[“Ban On Auto Racing,” *The Baltimore Sun*, December 9, 1917]

D.A.R. Congress, 1917

Despite the shift to war time, the annual convention of the D.A.R. took place in Washington on April 17-22. Mrs. McCleary reported on the work of the National Old Trails Road Committee. After reporting on adding vice-chairmen to the committee, she reported:

Requests for information as to the exact route of our highway becoming more and more frequent, convinced us of the need of having maps for distribution among our State Chairman and members. Accordingly we had five hundred maps printed under the supervision of Mrs. John Van Brunt, who has always had charge of the map making of this committee This has been done with the hope that with a clearer knowledge of the historic roads to be perpetuated, we may receive greater support throughout entire society.

In the early years, “the National Old Trails Road was sign posted by stenciling on the telephone poles.” That “was the best means that could be afforded at the time,” but was “not durable.” The committee, therefore, established a subcommittee to design a permanent marker.” The subcommittee included Miss Elizabeth Gentry, former chairman of the committee as well as one of the originators of the National Old Trails Road:

The design we present today is the result of their work. It is of cast iron, one by two feet in dimension, painted red, white and blue, with the insignia of the Daughters at the top. The sign to be bolted to a T. cross section, seven feet long, to be buried two feet deep in a concrete foundation and painted white. The iron is one-fourth inch thick with border and letters raised one-eighth inch, which is sufficiently strong to withstand the attacks of small boys with rocks. The cost is about ten dollars per sign. We hope they will meet the approval of the Daughters. These signs are intended to be placed only on National Old Trails Roads. Where it does not exactly follow the original trail, other markers may be placed on the exact route.

She explained the importance of the old trails:

As a people we have been slow to realize how closely these paths hewed out by the pioneers through the trackless forests of the continent were interwoven with our history, and it remained for the Daughters of the American Revolution to arouse appreciation of these early routes of trade and war and strategic points they connected. They were the keys to the interior of the continent over which the pioneer, the missionary and the trader

journeyed westward, and they are being located and marked with tablets and monuments in every section of our country.

This work brings to light much that is of great interest in the life along the road in the pioneer days, in the later days of the stage coach and tavern life and of the mail and express systems and many interesting facts of early history that seem to have been overlooked.

Although time would not permit individual State chairman to provide their reports, Mrs. McCleary summarized some of them.

For example, Miss Anna Hollenbeck, chairman of the Ohio chapter, reported that her chapter had “completed plans for reclaiming the milestones along the Old National Pike or Cumberland Road from Bridgeport on the east to Belfast on the western boundary of the State, a distance of our three hundred miles. Many of these old milestones are almost covered with earth and some are back in the fields some distance from the main road, due to farms encroaching on the original highway. This road is a part of our ocean-to-ocean highway, and is the most historic road used today in America.”

The D.A.R. bill also came up:

In a meeting of this committee held here a year ago, we decided to present the bill for our National Old Trails Road at the next session of the U.S. Congress. This decision was embodied in our report to you and was accepted. Accordingly when Congress convened last December, we wrote our chairman of legislation, Mrs. C. L. Davis, requesting her to have our bill introduced in Congress. While waiting to hear from her, we procured the addresses of all the State presidents of the S.A.R., presidents of State Historical Societies, pioneer associations and other kindred organizations whose influence we intended to invoke in behalf of our bill. But when the chairman of legislation replied to our request, she wrote that the bill for the purchase of Monticello was already introduced and they were making every effort to secure its favorable consideration; that she considered it unwise to have another D.A.R. bill introduced at this time which might react unfavorably toward the passage of the bill for the purchase of Monticello, and that the President General fully concurred in her opinion.

But a few days later we received a letter from Hon. W. P. Borland, member of Congress from Kansas City, who had always introduced this bill for the committee and who with his knowledge of legislation felt that it should be kept before Congress stating that he had already introduced the bill and had spoken before the House in its behalf. We have placed a copy of this splendid speech of Mr. Borland's in the seat of each delegate today and hope you will take them home with you and read them. This speech describes each trail and pioneer road that goes to make up our ocean-to-ocean highway and gives a brief history of them much better than your chairman could do in the brief time that can be given to a report in our busy Congress. Having had so many requests for just the information contained in Congressman Borland's speech and feeling it could be used to

great advantage in our work we made inquiry as to its cost and found the first thousand copies would cost \$16.50, and each additional thousand \$4.88.

On January 4, 1917, Representative Borland had delivered a lengthy floor speech on the history of the National Old Trails Road. The speech summarized the history of each segment of the National Old Trails Road, as well as the Boston Post Road, the Oregon Trail, and the California cutoff. However, it began and ended with praise for the D.A.R. It began:

Mr. Chairman, there is one patriotic body which is devoting itself to the perpetuation of the great landmarks of American history – the Daughters of the American Revolution. The scope of their work is not confined to the stirring scenes and incidents of the War for American Independence, but embraces the victories, both of war and peace, by which the infant Nation gathered the fruit of its successful revolution in the conquest of the continent.

Among these achievements of the past, which have resulted in extending American civilization and American ideals from Plymouth Rock to the Golden Gate, there has been no more potent force than those historic trails or primitive highways by which the American pioneer advanced to the conquest of the wilderness. [Applause.] The interest of the Daughters of the Revolution has centered in the preservation of these historic highways, linked not by accident but by the hand of fate into a continuous route of travel from the infant settlements on the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi and into the great West.

He added of the historic roads and trails:

Their history is so deeply embedded in our national life that we can take no view of our progress as a Nation which leaves them out of account. [Applause.]

He said that he had introduced a bill in the past several sessions “which authorizes the Federal Government, after the trail has been constructed through a certain State, to reimburse the State for one-half the cost of building it and making a military highway,” noting the current bill was H.R. 4755. He presented a map of the National Old Trails Road showing the roads referenced in the speech. The map was reproduced in the *Congressional Record*.

Representative Borland concluded:

The Revolution, which made us a Nation, gave us also the opportunity for the conquest of a continent and set before us the manifest destiny which should extend the feeble and struggling fringe of settlements upon the bleak Atlantic coast across 3,000 miles of virgin territory to the wondrous South Sea and bring it all under one flag, with one civilization, one language, one literature, and one law. [Applause.]

It is to the credit of the Daughters of the American Revolution that, true to the great historic inspiration of their body, they are devoting themselves to the preservation and

perpetuation of these historic trails and that they have a right to expect to enlist the enthusiastic support of the Nation in this great purpose. [Applause.] [Agriculture Appropriation Bill, *Congressional Record – House*, January 4, 1917, pages 848-853; the map is on page 852]

Representative Borland had introduced the bill in the current session. The “Daughters of the American Revolution Old Trails Act, to provide a National ocean-to-ocean highway over the pioneer trails of the Nation,” now known as H.R. 3234. Mrs. McCleary said the bill had been referred to the Committee on Agriculture:

In an interview with Mr. Borland since coming to this city, he said the most effective aid we could give this bill would be by writing to our representatives in Congress. I urge each Daughter in this congress to do this in behalf of our National Old Trails Road. The building of this road is one of the greatest efforts ever undertaken by this Society. Each of us in gratitude to our forbears, and as a duty to our country, owes our best efforts to see that the Federal and State governments build an ocean-to-ocean highway of these trails of the pioneers whose struggles gave us the greatest heritage in the world’s history.

These roads have not come by accident, but they are the unwritten history of the growth and development of our great nation.

The present is a peculiarly fitting time for a patriotic society to actively engage in an effort for a highway across the continent. As we stand, we fear, on the very threshold of war, and our lack of preparedness sobers every thoughtful American citizen, are we not doing less than our duty if we fail to urge the building of this road as a military as well as a memorial highway. Good highways are one of a nation’s best assets in war as well as in peace. If the time should come when war must be, our trained soldiers could be transported in defense of the country secured to us by the pioneers, on a road builded [sic] on the trails they blazed with such difficulty and builded through the efforts of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Such a road will be an object lesson in patriotism, not alone to us but to the generations who will follow and will help to inspire that love of country our ancestors possessed, and which is necessary for the perpetuity of our nation.

From a practical standpoint it is a valuable commercial asset. It is the natural highway across the continent. Traversable a greater portion of the year than any other road. This is an age of road building. The demand for an ocean-to-ocean highway is insistent and persistent. Build this road and it opens up a great territory and will give increased value to vast areas of land. Rural delivery of mail will reach thousands of homes, children will attend school over it. Farmers will market their produce, motorists will traverse it and will be amazed at the magnitude, the wealth and the beauty of our country. Any means that affords increased advantage for our citizens, that will make the boys and girls of today more intelligent, patriotic citizens of tomorrow is a wise investment for a Republic. And so we urge the Daughters of the American Revolution to interest themselves in the

National Old Trails Road as they never have before. It is too great a work to be accomplished by the committee without the support of the entire Society.

Grant this committee a sufficient appropriation to carry on the work. Make it the paramount feature of an administration and, with the support of the National Board and nearly one hundred thousand patriotic women, we can surely prevail upon our U.S. Congress to build this highway from the historic roads and trails over which the pioneers journeyed from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast, planting American homes beside these trails and carrying the light of American civilization across the continent which they saved to our country. Build this road and generations yet unborn will rise up and call you blessed and honor the Society to which you belonged. [*Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 17-22, 1917, pages 1057-1061*]

Judge Lowe's Retirement

On June 1, 1917, Judge Lowe began a statement to the association's executive committee by recalling its origin:

This Association was organized April 17, 1912. The present officials were elected and have continually served since. The ambitious project was declared to be the permanent construction of a Trans-Continental Highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific – from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles, California. At the time of its organization not one mile of the road was built and maintained in such manner as to be recognized as a good road, and there was not a dollar in the treasury for promotion purposes.

Since then, the association had received from all sources an average \$5,516.41 a year, "and have to show as results more than \$10,000,000 expended in the permanent construction of the road." Every State through which the road passed had included it in its State highway system, a development that "assures its building even if no other incentive existed." He summarized the progress:

It is practically completed from Baltimore and Washington thru the States of Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Indiana, and in Illinois its building is assured by a recent Act of the Legislature, providing that the State shall build it. In Missouri the legislature permitted us to suggest the adoption of the Maryland statute requiring the State to pay one-half the cost and the county thru which it runs the other half. In Kansas the Constitution prevents the State from contributing to any internal improvement, but the people with every indication of success are actively urging county and district bond measures; California has built nearly one-half the road, and the balance is provided for in State bonds already issued. Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado will finish their part within the year 1918.

He praised the sign posting work of the Automobile Club of Southern California, which had completed its work from Los Angeles to Kansas City. The association had then "signposted the

road to St. Louis, and has also contracted to finish the sign posting in the same uniform manner across Illinois and Indiana.” The work would be done by August 1, 1917. “In addition, we have expended thousands of dollars in maps, road logs, road literature, etc.”

Judge Lowe’s statement turned personal:

To myself I reckon the past years of my activities with this organization as the happiest, because the most useful, of my life – accentuated by my association with so many patriotic people devoted alike to the great National purpose of serving the common welfare of the country, with no element of self in it. This is compensation enough. It affords profound satisfaction to congratulate you on the assured fruition of all our hopes.

He recalled the 19th century leaders who had overseen the National Road to Vandalia, Illinois:

If the spirits of the mighty dead are permitted to watch over mundane affairs, how the hearts of Gallatin, Jefferson, Giles, Clay, Benton and others must thrill with pleasure over the successful accomplishment of their great undertaking. What an inspiration it is to recall the memorable Christmas Day of 1824, when Benton, the great compeer of Webster, Clay and Calhoun, sat down at Monticello to learn of Mr. Jefferson who had approved the Act establishing the National (Cumberland) Road, whether there was any precedent for extending that road on from the Missouri line to Santa Fe, the capitol [sic] of a Foreign State, and to be assured that such authority existed. On returning to Washington, backed by such high authority, he pushed the bill thru and thus established the Santa Fe Trail, as the western link in the only National and Inter-National Highway on this hemisphere. These with many other hallowed memories, spur us on with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

(Senator Thomas Hart Benton was a sponsor of legislation to advance the Santa Fe Trail. On March 3, 1825, President James Monroe signed “An Act to authorize the President of the United States to cause a road to be marked out from the western frontier of Missouri, to the confines of New Mexico” in the Republic of Mexico. The Act authorized the President to appoint commissioners to mark the road provided that they first “obtain the consent of the intervening tribes of Indians, by treaty, to the marking of the said road, and to the unmolested use thereof to the citizens of the United States, and the Mexican Republic.” The President also was authorized to cause the marking of the road, subject to “such regulations as may be agreed upon for that purpose between the executive of the United States, and the Mexican government.” For these purposes, the Act appropriated \$10,000 for surveying and marking the road and \$20,000 “to defray the expenses of treating with the Indians, for their consent to the establishment and use thereof.” The commissioners completed the survey from Missouri to Taos, New Mexico, between July 1825 and the summer of 1827. By then, however, traders had already found their own path, ending in Santa Fe instead of Taos.)

The “most righteous war” the United States was in “will but add impetus to the great internal development of the country”:

The permanent enhancement of values by reason thereof will go far toward offsetting the ravages and necessary wastes of war. And when it is over, and the Divine right of all the people everywhere to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, in a Government of their own selection is fully realized, established and guaranteed, then the people can sit down in absolute security under their own vine and fig tree, and rest content in "a house built by the side of the road."

He praised the D.A.R., personally and in the name of the association, "for their untiring zeal and inspirational influence by monumenting and thus preserving the many historic features of the National Old Trails Road."

The 72-year old Judge Lowe concluded with an unexpected announcement:

And now I regretfully must say that the impairment of my health admonishes me that I must retire from the position your partiality has so long bestowed, just as the "promised land" is so obviously and clearly in sight. I do so more cheerfully, however, because I know that nothing done or not done can prevent nor long delay the completion of this great memorial highway. To every member of this association I tender my thanks coupled with words of highest appreciation. The interests of the association could not be left in better hands than in those to whom it is now committed, and I urge for them your united and loyal support.

J. M. Lowe, President
NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD ASSOCIATION
322 Railway Exchange
Kansas City, MO. June 1, 1917

Judge Lowe included a brief financial statement covering the years since the association's inception:

YEAR	RECEIPTS	DISBURSEMENTS	BALANCE AT CONVENTION
1912-1913	\$8,204.80	\$6,604.80	\$1,600.00
1913-1914	\$7,240.55	\$7,336.26	\$1,504.29
1914-1915	\$3,140.14	\$4,602.16	\$ 42.27
1915-1916	\$8,076.60	\$4,801.70	\$3,317.17
<u>1916-1917*</u>	<u>\$ 920.00</u>	<u>\$2,897.34</u>	
	\$27,582.09	\$26,242.26	\$1,339.83

*Covers the period from September 30, 1916 to June 1, 1917.

[National Archives at College Park, Maryland; "Judge J. M. Lowe Retires," *Better Roads and Streets*, July 1917, pages 309, 328]

With the annual convention ready to assemble in Pueblo, Colorado, the Automobile Club of

Southern California issued a press release dated August 3 from Los Angeles:

Transcontinental touring was never so popular as it is to-day. There is a rapidly-growing tendency to get away from the old-time fad of crossing from ocean to ocean by Pullman, this being the day of the "motor way." A short time ago the Automobile Club of Southern California, to prove this fact, stationed a counter at the bridge at Topock, Ariz., over which all motorists making the trip in either direction over the National Old Trails highway are compelled to pass. According to this counter there are at this time twenty-five transcontinental motor parties starting from western for eastern point every day, while during the same period of time more than forty parties of eastern motorists are starting for California.

This being true, it would seem natural to believe that there are hundreds of residents of the east who have decided upon or are contemplating a trip to western points over this particular trail during the coming weeks and months. To these motorists the club has a message, this being in the form of a list of the prices that are being charged for gasoline at the various points along the route, as follows

City	Cost per gallon, cents
Kansas City	20
McPherson	22
Lamar	27
La Junta	27
Trinidad	26
Albuquerque	30
Magdalene	35
Datil	45
Quaemadeo	50
St. Johns	40
Springerville	45
Holbrook	30
Flagstaff	35
Williams	35
Ashfork	30
Kingman	30
Topock	30
Needles	30
Barstow	25
San Bernardino	22

["Price of Gas on National Old Trails," *Motor Age*, August 9, 1917, page 27]

Convention, 1917

On June 14, 1917, *The Herrington Times* reported the news about Judge Lowe's

retirement:

Dr. W. H. Mott was in Kansas City Saturday evening [June 9] attending a meeting of the executive committee of the National Old Trail Association [sic] of which he is a member. Other members of the committee present were: F. N. Hopkins of Lexington, Missouri, Frank A. Davis and Judge J. M. Lowe of Kansas City.

Judge Lowe who has been president of the Association since its inception five years ago, resigned at this meeting because of impaired health. The office devolves on R. A. Long who has been acting general vice-president.

The annual meeting of the Old Trail Association will be held about the middle of August, probably at Pueblo

Of Judge Lowe's resignation, the Kansas City Star of Sunday says:

Judge Lowe has fathered the National Old Trails Road since its inception, five years ago. In both the East and the West he is a national figure and is given credit for building one-third of the road that is already hard surfaced, giving his time free to the big movement for an ocean-to-ocean highway.

At the time of the organization of the road not one mile of road was built and maintained in such manner as to be recognized as a good road. There was not a dollar in the treasury for promotion purposes. In the five years Mr. Lowe has headed the work the Atlantic to Pacific Highway has been completed practically from Baltimore and Washington through Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Indiana. In Illinois its construction is assured. Every state through which the road runs has adopted it as part of its state highway system, which assures its construction, in absence of any other incentive.

Sign posts of enameled steel have been placed along the road from Los Angeles to St. Louis. The association has contracted for completion of the work in the same uniform manner across Illinois and Indiana by August 1. In addition, thousands of dollars have been expended in maps, road logs and road literature. ["Judge J. M. Lowe Resigns," *The Herrington Times*, June 14, 1917, page 7]

With Judge Lowe's retirement, one of the first orders of business for the association's convention on August 16-17 in Pueblo would be to elect a successor to what *Motor Age* called "the godfather, nurse and sponsor of the National Old Trails Association." Although the association had received only an average of \$5,516.41 a year for its operations, the organization's work had resulted in "more than \$10,000,000 expended in the permanent construction of the road." ["N.O.T. Boosters to Meet," *Motor Age*, June 28, 1917, page 10]

Touring Topics described him:

Since the organization of the National Old Trails Road Association in 1912, Judge J. M.

Lowe of Kansas City has served as president of the organization. He is known as president of the organization. He is known from the Atlantic to the Pacific for his unceasing work and his untiring efforts to bring about the building of the Old Trails Road from Coast to Coast. Much has been done under his guidance and the successful completion of this historic road is now in sight. [“Auto Club Officials Attend Old Trails Convention,” *Touring Topics*, August 1917, page 8]

In addressing the convention, he began:

When this association was organized it had scarcely a fairly good, permanent, one-mile stretch of road anywhere between the two oceans. It is to-day one of the most thoroughly well-built roads extending from Baltimore, in Maryland, entirely across the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio (except about fifteen miles, which is tied up in court), and part of the way across Indiana. Indeed, the road all the way across Indiana is built of gravel, principally, and is better than the average road, but it is far from being ideal, and the highway board of that state has agreed to appropriate state money and pay for one-half the cost of construction if the counties through which it runs will provide the other half, and they have accepted this proposition, and the road will be speedily finished across that state.

The state highway board of Illinois has offered to pay two-thirds of the cost of completing the road across that state, and the counties through which it runs have agreed to pay the other third. So this will make it a completely hard-surfaced road from the Atlantic to the Mississippi.

The state highway board of Missouri pledges state and federal aid to pay one-half the cost of construction across this state, one-third of which has already been constructed. The counties through which the road runs will meet in coöperative convention at Columbia on the 6th of October to say whether or not they will accept this proposition, and there is no question as to what the result will be. This will bring the project up to the front door of Kansas.

Judge Lowe’s prediction proved correct. The November 1917 issue of *The Road-Maker* reported:

A meeting held in Columbia, Mo., on October 6 attended by over 300 delegates from counties traversed by the National Old Trails road from St. Louis to Kansas City, has resulted in a general movement all along the lines to hard-surface this important cross-state highway. Six of the counties through this road passes are located north of the Missouri river.

The state highway department is gratified to note this activity north of the river, since this section of the state has been somewhat slow to take advantage of the state and federal aid to which all counties are entitled as soon as they qualify by providing one-half the cost of constructing the state roads. [“Activity North of Missouri River,” *The Road-Maker*,

November 1917, page 51]

As for Kansas, Judge Lowe recalled the history of the Santa Fe Trail across the State, citing the role of Senator Thomas Hart Benton and his meeting with former President Jefferson. Judge Lowe said he had visited the National Archives in Washington and found the survey that Senator Benton had displayed in support of his bill to extend the Cumberland Road to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Judge Lowe had a photostatic copy of the survey in the association's headquarters:

Thus it came about that the National Old Trails Road, approved by Mr. Jefferson in 1806, was extended after being approved by Mr. Jefferson again, became an established national and international highway, extending from ocean to ocean.

He concluded:

There is no other road, either in or out of America, around which so much political, educational, commercial and military interest lingers as around this old road. Its full completion is now well assured. Already it is burdened with a greater amount of traffic than any road in the United States; already it is better advertised and better known than any other road in America. It is only here, in the great central West, where the people, it seems, have failed to appreciate the great good fortune which has come to them in the establishment of this road, where its construction seems to be slow of development. Both east of the great valley of the Mississippi, and west of it, the road is much more nearly completed, and is in better condition to-day than it is through this district. This is a shame, almost approaching a disgrace. But the lethargy hitherto existing in this regard is shaken off, and there is no question but what in the very near future it will be the great military and commercial highway about which Jefferson and Benton and their compeers dreamed; about which Clay devoted so large a part of his life, and over which the sturdy pioneers of a splendid people came to the mighty West and laid down their lives in its development and consecration. ["The National Old Trails Road," *Kansas Highways*, October 1917, page 9]

Although Judge Lowe had announced his retirement, the National Old Trails Road Association elected him president during the annual convention in Pueblo, and he would continue to serve energetically. Frank A. Davis, who had been with the association from the start, was elected Secretary-Treasurer.)

During the convention, Colorado delegates established a building committee consisting of one member from Bent, Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, and Pueblo Counties. They were "instructed to bring about with all possible speed the hard-surfacing of Colorado's 250 miles of the Santa Fe trail across those six counties and to co-operate with like committees from other states toward making this year-round road a paved highway from coast to coast."

The section of the road in Kansas had been concern for the association, but the importance of

improving the State's segment of the National Old Trails Road was illustrated:

Paving in Kansas received extra urging because several delegates got marooned in that state in heavy rains and missed the convention. Altogether, sixty delegates were reported unable to reach Pueblo in time on account of muddy roads at different points along the route, and this situation was employed overtime as an argument for paved roads for military emergencies and all other highway purposes.

Several committees reported on their work, including:

Favorable committee reports were made upon requests from the San Luis valley and Colorado Springs that the Spanish trail westward from Walsenburg through La Veta Pass, Alamosa, etc., be added to the National Old Trails system and that the Colorado Springs-Pueblo road be declared a branch of the Santa Fe trail. Final action by the convention was postponed, to depend upon interest shown by the local people interested in the further improvement of these roads. ["Hard Roads Are Urged," *Motor Age*, August 23, 1917, page 15]

Memorial for Jesse Taylor

During the Pueblo convention, the National Old Trails Association recognized the death of Jesse Taylor of Ohio, "one of its truest and staunchest charter members" of the organization. Taylor, who had attended the association's founding convention, was the founder and editor of *Better Roads/Better Roads and Streets*, which the first convention adopted as its official organ. Taylor, born in Green County, Ohio, devoted much of his later life to the good roads cause. He died on December 7, 1916, age 53, in Jamestown, Ohio, where the magazine was published.

During the 1912 convention, he had been introduced as secretary of the Ohio Good Roads Federation and as "the livest wire in Ohio on the subject of good roads." During the discussion of the Old versus New Santa Fe Trail, Taylor had explained his familiarity with the route:

I am happy to say that the Santa Fe Trail is not new to me, for twenty-six years ago this month when running from tuberculosis, upon the advice of a physician, I chased myself from where I now live to the southwestern corner of the state of Kansas, and there I was the companion day and night of the cowboy, the coyote, the prairie dog and the owl for two years and a half, until I returned to Ohio and there found a wife who is with me today After my experience in Southwestern Kansas for two years and a half, living fifty-two miles from a railroad, I spent four years in Garden City, Kansas, and at the beginning of the second administration of President Cleveland, by the invitation of Grover, I returned to the place whence I came, and there I have been ever since. [*Proceedings of First National Old Trails Road Convention*, April 17, 1912, page 23]

The association's resolution stated that, "Ohio has lost one of her most valuable citizens, and the cause of good roads everywhere, a pioneer advocate of good roads everywhere, a pioneer advocate of ability and genuine worth, known and loved throughout the length and breadth of

United States.”

Judge Lowe recalled his friend:

I met him first the day this association was organized. From that time to the day of his death he was my friend – and I was his. In all the crises of this association I leaned upon him most heavily, and found him ever staunch and steadfast, true as the needle to the pole; wise, cheerful and helpful in every time of need. Few – indeed I recall none – whose clarion voice and trenchant pen did more for this great cause than he. He was an unselfish friend, both personally and of the National Old Trails Road. He did not live beside it, nor did it run through his town or country, but when he saw the notice of a convention called to organize this association, five hundred miles beyond the limits of his own state, he attended at his own expense, and there became a charter member. True, noble, steadfast friend and patriotic citizen, hail and farewell!

If immortal spirits are permitted to take cognizance of mundane affairs then Jesse Taylor, in his home in the skies, looks down today upon this convention and bids us God-speed.

We shall miss, as all those who strive for the common good shall miss, the inspiring and masterful influence he so constantly exercised. When the angry clouds of opposition seemed ready to burst and destroy all our hopes for governmental aid – when the real friends and time-tried champions of good roads were maligned and blackguarded on the floor of the House of Representatives at Washington by the spokesman for that pestilential brood of pork barrel, pot-house politicians, who always hover around the national treasury, then Jesse Taylor stood, as he always stood, for clean, honest and efficient application of the national and state finances as now written in the national statutes, and especially as interpreted by the great Secretary of Agriculture in President Wilson’s cabinet. The pork barrel instinct is probably the most deep-seated in the congressional psychology; even America’s greatest international crisis, at a time when the very life of the nation is at stake, has not succeeded in stifling it.

If Jesse Taylor could speak to us today he would urge us to go forward in this great work, and never to trail the banner of the National Old Trails Road Association in the dirt and mire of disreputable politics, nor yet to smirch its clean folds in the slime of polluted commercialism. He would urge us, as I do now, never to pull down that banner, nor abandon our high purpose, until the National Old Trails Road is completely rebuilt, rehabilitated and rededicated from ocean to ocean to our pioneer ancestry who conceived and dedicated it to the holy purpose of “cementing the states and thus preserving the union.”

And let us, too, dedicate it to remotest posterity, as the strongest cable which can bind the Atlantic to the Pacific, and thus preserve the solidarity of the republic. In the last visit I made him, when he knew his sun was fast sinking to its final setting, he joyously recalled our many campaigns together, and spoke most hopefully of the future which awaited him “just over the hill.”

On the death of such a man even the great agnostic was forced to exclaim "Hope sees a star and listening love hears the rustle of a wing." Peace to his ashes, and peace to the great soul which throbbed and thrilled with the fine purposes of live to the very end." [National Archives at College Park, Maryland; "Resolution Commemorative of Mr. Jesse Taylor, Vice-President, National Old Trails Road Association, *Better Roads and Streets*, October 1917, page 453]

Judge Lowe contributed a memorial to *Better Roads and Streets*, where some of his convention memorial originated. In the magazine, he said:

Ohio will never know, nor the people of the Nation understand, what a mighty force he was for material and substantial betterments. The women and children alone, and especially those who lived, as he expressed it "on the back end of a mud road," could well afford to build him a monument of everlasting granite, and dedicate it with the prayers and tears of a grateful people.

The writer of this leaned most heavily upon him, and now realizes not only his own great personal loss, but that the country has sustained a national calamity as well. At such an hour human strength fails utterly, and we appeal instinctively to a Higher Power. Immortality needs no extraneous evidence to convince those who knew Jesse Taylor. Such a spirit as his proves its own right to live forever. The world is impoverished and heaven enriched by the translation of this noble soul, splendid citizen, and steadfast friend of humanity. [Lowe, Judge J. M., "Jesse Taylor," *Better Roads and Streets*, January 1917, page 27]

On the same page, Joseph Hyde Pratt, secretary of the North Carolina State Highway Commission, recalled:

Jesse Taylor was not a road engineer, or a road contractor, but the annals of the road movement in the United States have no mention of any one whose influence in the cause of good roads was greater or whose sympathy for this cause was more profound than his. As President, Secretary, and Director of the Ohio Good Roads Federation, he worked for a system of good roads in his State, Ohio, and the splendid results that are now being obtained in that State are due largely to the persistent and untiring endeavor of this man. The people of other States realized his remarkable ability, and he was constantly being called on to assist the road work in other States. In a short time he became a National figure in the road movement, and was connected with many of the National road associations.

He was Director of the American Association for Highway Improvement and Director General of the National Highways Association. As Director General of the latter association, Mr. Taylor visited a large proportion of the States of this country, making good roads addresses, and assisting in the organization of associations, which should carry on the good roads cause in their respective States. I believe it is due largely to his

influence that the cause of good roads has received such a tremendous impetus in many of the Middle West and Western States.

In order to have a still wider field for this good roads work, he organized and built up the road magazine known as “Better Roads and Street,” and he not only made it a success, but has made it equal to the best good roads magazine that is published to-day.

It was through the cause of good roads that I became personally acquainted with Mr. Taylor and had the pleasure of knowing him intimately for several years. His enthusiasm and confidence in the ultimate success of the good roads cause was an incentive to me to take hold as never before the road work in the South, and I always found Mr. Taylor reading and willing to assist us in every way he possibly could. Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia, Florida, Texas, and other Southern States owe a debt of gratitude to this man for the interest that he took in their road work and the endeavors he made to assist them. [Pratt, Joseph Hyde, “Hon. Jesse Taylor – An Appreciation,” *Better Roads and Streets*, January 1917, page 27]

On that same page, the magazine explained that since its founding, *Better Roads and Streets* had maintained a neutral policy. “Not controlled by any material or machinery interests, it has always been the policy of the publishers to be fair in their dealing with the several types of road and street construction”:

Since the death of the founder, Mr. Jesse Taylor, through which BETTER ROADS AND STREETS has suffered a great loss, many inquiries are being received as to the future policy of the publication. To all those who are interested in BETTER ROADS AND STREETS, and its future stand in the road and street movement, we wish to say that the publication is being continued under the same management and no change whatever is being made in its proven neutral policy. [“Our Policy,” *Better Roads and Streets*, January 1917, page 27]

A memorial in *Rock Products and Building Materials* recalled Jesse Taylor:

Personally Mr. Taylor was a charming companion. Sociable and kindly and generous, he was also an enthusiast and optimist. A man of means at one time, he cared nothing for money further than knowing that good roads could be built with money. If he possessed all the wealth of the world, he would have used it in paving highways.

The funeral was held at his home Dec. 9. [“Gave His Life to Good Roads,” *Rock Products and Building Materials*, January 7, 1917, page 27]

The Marginal Military Highway

The proliferation of named trails continued in 1917, with the King of Trails Association forming with headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, following 2 years of debate. The King of Trails ran from Winnipeg, Canada, to Galveston, Texas. The association’s general manager was Frank A.

Davis, secretary of the National Old Trails Road Association. The purpose of the general office was “to perfect the large national organization and instill in the several communities the belief that this highway serves a unity of purpose,” as explained in *The Road-Maker*. [“Echoes from the Associations,” *The Road-Maker*, June 1917, pages 34, 36]

The Road-Maker summarized the association’s “largest and most enthusiastic convention” in Kansas City on July 12. Six hundred delegates attended from the communities along the 2,000-mile long road. The convention settled several routing disputes. Delegates were to return home and “enter upon a campaign in their respective counties to secure extensive improvements along the route”:

The returning delegates are very enthusiastic over the work of the convention, and will enter upon a campaign in their respective counties to secure extensive improvements along the route. An effort will be made to have part of the federal and state aid funds expended along this trail. [“King of Trails Convention,” *The Road-Maker*, August 1917, page 49]

Reporting on the convention, *American Motorist* explained that the new road “promises to be a strong contender for international highway honors”:

The route adopted by the constitution of the organization extends from Winnipeg, Canada, to the City of Mexico via Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas Oklahoma and Texas.

The general alignment of the road has been handled to locate it along natural lines of travel with the sole purpose of linking together centers of population along the shortest and best route. It connects 89 cities of more than 1,000 population each and has on its route nine military posts. [“New International Road,” *American Motorist*, August 1917, page 40]

Around the same time, advocates organized the New Santa Fe Trail Improvement Association at Emporia, Kansas. The object was “to promote the building of 365-day roads from Edgerton to Kinsley, passing through Emporia, Newton and Hutchinson.” The association would raise funds to hire a business manager who would devote his “entire time to the interests of this 200 miles of highway”:

While the old Santa Fe trail has a pretty good start, the officers and directors of the New Santa Fe Trail association expect to push the proposition as hard as possible and to win in the big race for the completion of the road.

The association designated O. M. Wilhite of Emporia as president. [“Echoes from the Associations,” *The Road-Maker*, June 1917, pages 36, 38]

An organization to promote the Pike’s Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway had been completed at a meeting on March 18, 1914, at a meeting in St. Joseph, Missouri. The goal was a highway from

New York City to San Francisco, termini already chosen by the Lincoln Highway Association. The new association chose a route to the south of the Lincoln Highway via Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; Cumberland, Maryland to Indianapolis, Indiana; Springfield, Illinois; Hannibal, Missouri; St. Joseph and Belleville, Kansas; Colorado Springs and Glenwood Springs, Colorado; Salt Lake City, Utah; Reno, Nevada; and Sacramento and Oakland, to San Francisco.

As was the case with many of the named trails, this new proposed transcontinental road followed the existing main roads in many locations. East of Illinois, a co-operative arrangement has been made with the National Old Trails Association to Washington and New York. West of Salt Lake City the route is not finally determined but temporarily the line of the national Lincoln Highway is to be used. [*Better Roads and Streets*, May 1914, page 66, 68]

Nearly 3 years later, *Motor Age* stated:

It is unfortunate that any transcontinental highway should, even in places, overlap other transcontinental trails, for the one which was first to get a name, usually gets the support. That is the case with the Pike's Peak east of Indianapolis, where it is the same as the National Old Trails for several hundred miles. Naturally the Pike's Peak organization cannot hope to get much support from the people along that part of the road; people look upon it too much as double taxation, which never meets with favor. This puts a bigger burden on the section to the west in Indiana in supporting the organization. [Gibbs, William K., "Pike's Peak Highway Workers Promise Greater Activity," *Motor Age*, February 22, 1917, pages 22-24]

The highway would eventually be shifted along an alignment to the north from Philadelphia.

Each of the named trails had advocates for its development, but one of the focuses of the Good Roads Movement during this period was legislation calling for a Military Marginal Highway. The bill grew out of a committee of representatives of national organizations, including:

- John A. Wilson, a vice president of AAA, chairman of its Military Preparedness Committee, a cousin of President Wilson, and a frequent visitor to the White House;
- George P. Coleman, commissioner of the Virginia State Highway Commission and president of AASHO;
- Samuel Hill, president of the Pacific Highway Association;
- John Craft, commissioner of the Alabama Highway Department.

The committee asked the following to draft a preliminary bill:

- George C. Diehl, chairman of AAA's Good Roads Committee;
- Henry G. Shirley, chief engineer of the Maryland State Road Commission and executive chairman of AASHO;
- Osborne I. Yellott, a Baltimore attorney who chaired AAA's legislative board.

With a preliminary version in hand, the committee consulted with Senator George E. Chamberlain of Oregon, chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs. He made some slight changes before agreeing to introduce the measure. He talked with Senator Bankhead, chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, who also supported the idea.

On June 18, 1917, Senator Chamberlain introduced the Military Marginal Highway bill, S. 2470. The bill directed the Chief of Engineers of the Department of War to prepare a “comprehensive plan of improved highways throughout the United States, designed primarily with a view to facilitating the movement of military troops, equipment, munitions, and supplies, in time of peace and in time of war, but at the same time, so far as reasonably compatible with said primary purposes, with a further view to accommodating the Postal Service, facilitating interstate and foreign commerce, aiding agriculture and manufacturing pursuits, and promoting the general welfare of the people of the United States”:

To these ends the Secretary of War shall confer with the authorities having in charge the construction of roads in the several States, and in such conferences shall disclose, so far as reasonably practicable, the outlines of his plans for roads designed for military purposes, to the end that unnecessary duplication of roads may be avoided, and that roads constructed for other than military purposes may be in strategic locations wherever reasonably possible.

The Secretary of War would determine the schedule for building segments of the proposed highway, “but the order of such completion shall be substantially as follows”:

First, A plan or plans for a continuous main national highway, to be constructed and maintained at the national expense along or near the Atlantic seaboard; thence along or near the southernmost boundaries of the United States and thence along or near the Pacific coast to a point at or near the Canadian line, with a further view to such marginal highway being extended ultimately along the Canadian boundary of the United States.

Second, A supplement plan or plans for important main radial roads in the several States intersecting said marginal highways at points and of locations and routes best calculated to serve military requirements; said main highways being such as have heretofore been constructed by the States, or as may hereafter be constructed by them either independently or with Federal aid if the Congress of the United States shall so determine upon the recommendation of the Secretary of War.

Third, A plan or plans for any other classes of highways which, in the judgment of the Secretary of War, are reasonably necessary.

After completing the plan or any portion of it, the Secretary of War shall report to Congress, explaining “recommended methods and means suitable for the construction and maintenance of said highways, and present estimates of the cost of such construction and maintenance.”

The bill authorized \$250,000 “for the purposes of defraying expenses pertaining to the

preparation of the plans and reports,” with the funds coming from the general Treasury “not otherwise appropriated.”

[“Military Highway Measure Introduced in U.S. Senate,” *Touring Topics*, July 1917, page 11; “Military Highway Bill Now Before the Senate,” *San Jose Mercury News*, June 24, 1917, page 19]

The Automobile Journal discussed the proposal shortly after Senator Chamberlain introduced the bill. At the top of the first page of the article was a map showing the general line of the proposed road, with sketches of military vehicles and marching soldiers along the entire line. The article began:

Within the protecting loop of a Marginal Military Highway, such as is now proposed to Congress, with the sanction of the American Automobile Association and other large and influential bodies, is located one of the largest, without a doubt the busiest and richest nation on earth. Of all the road proposals, which are legion, the marginal road appeals to the sober sense of the American people. It has interests to defend which stagger the mind to enfold.

For within the loop of the proposed marginal highway that may some day be built around Uncle Sam’s door yard, there are 100,000,000 people, owners of, custodians of and users of billions of dollars in money and property. A million dollars is a staggering amount of money; a billion dollars is a thousand million dollars, but the era is at hand when one must get accustomed to thinking in billions.

After discussing the unique strengths of each region of country the 12,000-mile highway would pass through, the article continued:

Put a military highway around all this. That is the proposition of the bill introduced by Senator Chamberlain. Nature gives us abundance to surround and protect. Most wonderful of all countries on earth is the United States. Back of man’s manufactures, back of human activity, the thing that makes the United States the marvel of the world, the banker of the universe, the hope of the Allies, the victor in the great war, the one country of all countries worth living in, is the abundance that nature has poured into our laps

A survey of the present situation is immediately convincing that the automobile is a necessary part of the present plan to increase production to the highest possible degree. Through many years the automobile has been advancing to take its place as a necessary mode of transportation and an effective means of arriving at quick results in the food production program The public is pertinacious in its opinion that the automobile is an essential element in the transportation system of modern life. Events of the past two years and every passing day confirms this idea. The railroads have failed more than once in the movement of necessities, and now, with war on the government’s hands, the burden on them is even greater. There is little use stopping to consider the things that

have brought about this condition. It is a staring fact which confronts the nation, and letting the railroads work their way as best they may, they place their dependence on the motor cars – light and heavy – to move what must be moved anywhere and any place. Motor touring is increasing as the season advances through the simple fact that the means of locomotion within the control of the traveler is capable of reliance. The automobile takes the owner where he wants to go, when he wants to go and with all that variety of detour which whim or fancy may dictate at any time or place. Good roads is all the motorist asks.

The Military Marginal Highway would give “greater impetus” to road building around the country than would be likely “under normal requirements and conditions.” After describing the contents of the bill, including the radials that would intersect it, the article continued:

On the marginal highway, however, the officials will keep in mind the fact that for military usages the roads will have to be of specially heavy and solid construction to stand the strain and abuse occasioned by the passage of long trains of heavily laden motor trucks and tractors pulling enormous field pieces, weighing up to 100 tons or more.

With the motor car and tractor rapidly succeeding the horse and mule as a means of transportation and locomotion in the army, the question of good roads assumes a position of premier importance and it is believed that it will take but little persuasion to make Congress take this view of the matter when it comes to a vote.

When our great army is trained and mobilized in France it will be a wonderfully effective unit, as the roads throughout that country are of the most perfect type, particularly in the various theatres of war. So an excellent road system will be needed to hold up its efficiency when the national army is mobilized here.

The United States with this marginal highway constructed, and a comprehensive system of intersecting roads leading into it at many points, when taken in conjunction with the several million automobiles at the government’s disposal and the fleet of 100,000 aeroplanes that is proposed, would be the most powerful nation in all the world from a defensive viewpoint. It would place the country for all time – if maintained – in an invulnerable position in so far as any other nation is at present prepared. The construction of this road by army engineers while the national army is in course of formation would be a good outlet for the constructive activities of thousands of men drilling for war. [“The Big Path for Freedom’s Defenders,” *The Automobile Journal*, June 25, 1917, pages 12-16]

As Dr. H. M. Rowe, president of AAA, discussed the importance of national highways in the October 1917 issue of *The Road Maker*:

The importance of highways that will permit of the free and expeditious movement of people and commodities through every part of the country is now fully admitted. There should be some half-dozen great trunk lines across the states east and west and a similar

number north and south.

For some time I have felt that the Federal Government should build a great national highway encircling the entire country, and the recent war requirements has brought that idea prominently before the people. Such a highway should begin on our northern boundary, extending the entire length of the Atlantic Coast; then along the southern border to the Pacific Ocean; then along the Pacific Coast to the Canadian Border, and – if need be – continued along that border until it connects with the starting point.

This should be a great military highway, flanked for its entire length by a series of fortifications which with an adequate naval equipment would make this country practically impregnable to invasion.

The economic value of such a national highway in times of peace would justify and pay for its cost many times over. The peculiar location of the United States makes it possible to have a unique national highway. To nationalize it, the road at its principal points might be named after our great men.

Rowe also envisioned interior roads “running off this this great boundary highway”:

Such a road should be built, controlled, and maintained by the Federal Government. This has been a dream of mine which I hope will come true. [“The Need for National Highways,” *The Road-Maker*, October 1917, page 56]

The advocates for national roads would promote the border highway and other proposed military roads throughout the war, but without success in Congress.

Under the Victory Arch to Everywhere

In mid-1917, *The Automobile Journal* featured a travel issue containing descriptions of several named trails. First up was the National Old Trails. The article began:

National Old Trails Under the Victory Arch to Everywhere

From all angles of interest the National Old Trails Road, an ocean to ocean highway, enjoys great popularity among tourists. The main route of this transcontinental highway has termini at Washington, Baltimore and Los Angeles. The section westward, as far as the Ohio river, is the oldest and most historic thoroughfare in the United States and should be of great delight to every American, as it passes through places identified by historic events in our country’s history which should serve to stimulate a strong patriotic sentiment. A tour along this highway takes the motorist through the heart of the country, from ocean to ocean, if he makes the complete itinerary, and leading by diversions, almost anywhere.

The article discussed the history of each segment, beginning with:

From Baltimore to Washington, a distance of about 39 miles, the route is over the road once known as the “Washington Road,” which was traveled by the stage coaches in the colonial days.

Leaving Washington via Wisconsin Avenue to the District line on the way to Frederick, travelers will come upon “one place of particular interest to every motorist.” The motorist will find a “section of road . . . to Rockville, which is maintained by the government as an experimental highway for determining the qualities of different kinds of surfacing. The different kinds of materials used in the various sections are designated by signs placed along the roadway.”

(BPR had initiated the Connecticut Avenue Experimental Road in 1911 between Chevy Chase Circle and Chevy Chase lake in Montgomery County. During 1911, 1912, and 1913, BPR had built numerous segments of pavement, including bituminous penetration macadam, surface-treated macadam, Portland cement concrete, and brick wearing surfaces on Portland cement pavements and asphaltic concrete and brick wearing surfaces on Portland cement concrete bases. As explained in a 1928 report, BPR maintained the road, which had been subjected to heavy traffic. Over the years, BPR kept careful records on maintenance costs and the behavior of each section. BPR published the results of this unique experiment in its research journal. [Division of Tests, “Report on Connecticut Avenue Experimental Road,” *Public Roads*, May 1928, pages 49-69])

After discussing the historic sites in Frederick, the article continued:

On the road from Frederick to Braddock Heights the mountains come into view for the first time and very soon the ascent of Catoctin mountain begins. In less than two miles the road rises about 460 feet between Braddock Village and Braddock Heights. From the latter elevation a beautiful view of all the surrounding country may be obtained, particularly South Mountain battlefields and the War Correspondents memorial arch.

(The 50-foot tall arch-shaped memorial was built by a Civil War correspondent, George “Gath” Townsend, and dedicated on October 16, 1896, to honor journalists killed during the war. The National Park Service now controls the memorial.)

From Middletown, “the road rises precipitately again.” Going toward Cumberland, the road “ascends a grade coming in view of Conococheague creek, which winds around in the valley with short turns. A view may also be obtained from here of the mountains in the distance, which appear so formidable that the tourist doubts whether it is possible to ascend them.”

The road runs along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal for about 10 miles to Hancock, “where it turns northward across the mountains.” From Hancock to Cumberland, about 40 miles, “is the most picturesque part of the entire trip”:

While the road winds around like a path in a maze and goes up and down the most

precipitous grades of any well traveled thoroughfare in the country, it is easily followed. Out of Hancock the route leads up and over Tonoloway ridge, and further on over Sideling hill, where there is an ascent of 760 feet in a mile and a half. Down the other side of this range there is a descent of 495 feet in one mile.

The roads through this section are curved and contain many short turns, consequently, the motorist should drive very carefully, as while no danger exists to the machine that is under control, fast or reckless driving would be very foolish.

The west slope of Green Ridge was “the next high elevation on the road.”

After driving through Gilpin and Flintstone, a few miles would bring the motorist to “the ascent of Martin mountain . . . during which a rise of 535 feet in little over a mile is made to the summit, 1720 feet above sea level. Down the west slope the road leads through the valley into Cumberland on the Potomac river, the centre of transportation of that section”:

From Cumberland to Wheeling the distance is about the same as that traveled on the previous day and the route leads through the section which became prominent historically during the French and Indian war. This section was entirely constructed at the expense of the government. As far as Uniontown, which is half way to Wheeling, the road continues through the mountainous country, attaining much higher altitudes, however, the elevation at the summit of Big Savage mountain being 2880 feet and at Meadow mountain 2792 feet The remainder of the road into Uniontown is through a heavily wooded section.

The next city beyond Uniontown is Brownsville then Washington, “which is the nearest point on the National road to Pittsburg [sic].”

Between Washington and Wheeling, the road “is mostly down hill and crosses the panhandle of West Virginia into the valley of the Ohio river”:

Here the Ohio river is crossed into Ohio. There is now an unbroken stretch of brick paving 16 feet wide through Zanesville to Columbus.

From Columbus to the Indiana state line, on the old National road, there is much brick paving, and from there on to St. Louis rough dirt roads, about the worst of the trip, are encountered.

The author encountered “excellent roads through the wonderful Kansas wheat fields” before crossing the State line between Coolidge, Kansas, and Holly, Colorado. “The route crosses the Arkansas river at La Junta and shortly crosses the New Mexico line to Raton, to which it goes down through the Raton pass.”

Entering New Mexico, the motorist “breaks into the real land of enchantment”:

The nondescript is present on every hand and the further into this maze of marvels the

traveler goes the more the unexpected becomes the expected.

In Arizona, the motorist passed through the Petrified Forest, “one of the chief marvels of the world.” Several forests follow before the motorist reaches Flagstaff, where the motorist can take the road, 79 miles long, to Grand View Point at the Grand Canyon:

The greatest minds of the world, upon first viewing this wonderful country, were at loss for words [sic] in which to describe their impressions. The mountains and huge embattlements, seem to speak from a long gone past.

The road from the Grand Canyon returned the motorist to the National Old Trails Road at Williams. The article quickly concluded the trip:

Across the Mojave desert, once a great graveyard for travelers and their animals, a fine modern road, costing \$10,000 to \$15,000 a mile has been built. It is kept oiled most of the way and alkali dust is scarce on the run of 165 miles, which can be made at better than 20 miles an hour by almost any car. There are stations, too, where car supplies and food may be purchased. From Barstow, on the western side of the desert, it is a run of 78 miles to San Bernardino. El Camino Real, from San Diego to the north, connected the old Spanish missions, rare specimens of a distinctive architecture, with each other. Los Angeles is 68 miles from San Bernardino. [“National Old Trails,” *The Automobile Journal*, June 10, 1917, pages 1-6]

The same issue included several similar articles, including descriptions of the Dixie Highway, the Lincoln Highway, the Mohawk Trail, the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway, and the Yellowstone Trail.

A Concrete Section

To comply with the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, Indiana’s General Assembly passed the Dobyons-Duffy Road Act in 1917 creating the Indiana State Highway Commission. With the signature of Governor James P. Goodrich on March 7, 1917, the bill became a law. The legislation directed the Governor to appoint a four-member commission with the members serving staggered terms of 1 to 4 years initially, but eventually all commissioners would serve a 4-year term). The commission was to appoint a State highway engineer (“a competent civil engineer, experienced and skilled in highway and bridge construction and maintenance”), who was to supervise construction and maintenance of all highways, bridges, and culverts built with State-aid funds, as well as advise counties on request.

In addition, the law assented to the provisions of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 and offered the good faith of the State to make matching funds available to meet Indiana’s apportionment of Federal-aid highway funds. The law created a State highway fund that included the proceeds of the inheritance tax paid into the State treasury – approximately \$400,000. Appropriations totaled \$100,000 for 1917 and \$500,000 for 1918.

Further, the commission was directed to designate a system of State roads not to exceed 2,000 miles by 1920. The first mileage of a State main-market highway system included the National Old Trails Road and the Lincoln Highway as east-west components. ["State Highway Department for Indiana," *Good Roads*, April 7, 1917, page 220; "Hurrah! Indiana at Last to Have State Highways," *American Motorist*, October 1917, page 42]

In May 1917, however, a Hamilton County taxpayer brought a suit challenging the constitutionality of the law and seeking to enjoin its enforcement and issuance of bonds to finance its work. As *Good Roads* explained:

The plaintiff resided some distance from one of the roads it was proposed to build under the law, and one of the grounds upon which the suit was based was that the law was confiscatory in that it took money from him without giving him a return equal to that given to taxpayers living on the road or nearer to it than he lived. Another reason set forth was that the law was unconstitutional because it appropriated money from the state treasury for purposes other than those specified in the constitution.

The Hamilton County Circuit Court granted the injunction. Chairman L. H. Wright of the commission immediately appealed but the agency was forced to cease operations.

The State Supreme Court issued its opinion upholding the commission on January 10, 1919:

This action, it is stated, not only legalized the State Highway Commission and its acts, but also means that the road work which the commission was created to carry on will be resumed in the near future

The Supreme Court decision affirms the authority of the state to create a commission to build roads and to provide the funds by whatever method of taxation the Legislature may adopt. The decision says, in part:

There can be no doubt that improvements of a public nature, such as the construction and improvement of highways, waterways, bridges and other works of a like nature may be of such general benefit as to warrant the construction at Government expense in the exercise of Governmental power. Where the Legislature authorizes an improvement of the character mentioned to be made by the state or by any of its Governmental subdivisions, it has power to determine the manner in which the fund shall be raised for the payment of the costs and expenses.

By then, the General Assembly had repealed the 1917 law and adopted a new act that became effective on March 10, 1919, and established a new Indiana State Highway Commission.]"Indiana Supreme Court Upholds the State Highway Commission Law," *Good Roads*, January 25, 1919, page 32]

In September 1917, road building had been left to the counties, with restoration of State action

2 years off.

On Saturday, September 15, 1917, citizens of Marion County, Indiana, gathered for ceremonies opening a section of the National Old Trails Road from the city limits of Irvington to 3 miles east:

Three miles of concrete have been completed on this road in Marion County and three more miles are under construction. In Wayne County, Indiana, there are being built approximately thirteen miles of highway west from Richmond on the same road and much agitation has been started in the western part of the State for this improvement. It has been designated by the Indiana State Highway Commission as the main east and west road to be given State aid. ["Improving National Old Trails Road with Concrete," *Concrete Highway Magazine*, November 1917, page 14]

A couple of days before the ceremony, M. E. Noblet, Secretary of the Hoosier Motor Club, explained the importance of the project:

There are two things in particular that the Marion county public should take into consideration in connection with the road dedication, next Saturday. One is that it is cheaper and more satisfactory to build the main roads in Marion county with hard-surfaced material than continually to repair these roads as they now exist, or to rebuild them as they have been built in the past; second, it is cheaper in the long run to use the patrol system of maintenance on our county roads, than it is to maintain them under the present methods, and the patrol system would keep the roads in good condition for travel the year around instead of being in bad condition a greater part of the year, as is inevitable now.

By the patrol system is meant that men are employed to devote their entire time to keeping a certain mileage of roadway in good repair, and they have at their command materials and equipment for repair work. This would probably require more maintenance funds, but the roads would be kept in good condition and in some instances with less material, and would last many times longer than now, which would offset the increased cost in upkeep and give the public a good road to travel on the year around. Such a road would increase real estate values and save thousands of dollars to the traveling

Noblet pointed out that, "On some stretches of road, such as the National Old Trails road, the maintenance cost has been \$1,500 a mile for several years, which clearly shows that it is more economical and more desirable from any standpoint to build our main arteries of travel with hard-surfaced construction":

The county commissioners have used some of their maintenance money with which to build three miles of the new concrete road extending east from the city limits to the county line, and from the figures given it is plainly evident that they have used good judgment in spending their maintenance money for something worth while.

The Marion County Commissioners had planned the ceremony, which would begin with an automobile parade at 2 p.m. It would leave from the west side of the State House in Senate Avenue and move along a series of streets (Washington, Meridian, to the right in the Circle, Market, Delaware, and Washington) east from the city limits to the county line at Irvington. The parade was led by Police Chief Quigley, a mounted police squad, and the National Motor Car and Vehicle Corporation Band. ["Plans Completed for Dedication of Road," *The Indianapolis News*, September 13, 1917, page 7]

The day after the event, *The Indianapolis Sunday Star* began its front-page coverage:

The eyes of Indiana and the nation were upon Marion County yesterday afternoon, when three miles of the National Old Trails road, east from the city limits to the county line, were formally given to the people

The dedication was preceded by a parade from the west side of the Capitol at 2 o'clock. Streamers and banners announced one of the proudest achievements of the people of Marion County. The cars were draped in American flags and a band led the parade with martial airs. The road meant a closer relation between the county and the government, which is at present advocating good roads as one of the means of winning the war.

At the city limits the ceremonies took on a more traditional turn. Lieutenant Governor Edgar D. Bush scooped a little pile of dirt from the middle of the road with the silver shovel which has been wielded by two previous Governors in dedicating new roads.

Amid the cheers of the crowd the Lieutenant Governor took off his coat and rolled up his sleeves. While he was removing the small pile of dirt motion picture machines clicked away

(Governor James P. Goodrich, who had taken office on January 8, 1917, probably would have participated in the ceremony, but he was ill, prompting a brief front page article with the headline: "Governor, Hovering Between Life and Death, Shows Improvement." He would recover and complete his term on January 10, 1921.)

A large banner had been stretched across the road marked "Bad Roads." This was quickly clipped away by Mrs. Caleb S. Denny [representing D.A.R.], who has been an enthusiastic worker for the new hard-surface construction since its suggestion. This marked the end of bad roads in Marion County and Miss Dorothy Pettis christened the new road by breaking a bottle of champagne upon its hardened surface.

A telegram from Charles Henry Davis of the National Highways Association was read:

At the dedication of the first permanent concrete section of the National Old Trails road in Marion County, I wish I could have been present personally to say that I hope soon to see the day when the National Old Trails road will be a hard-surface road 365 days in the year from ocean to ocean and thus become a part of the great system of national

highways, only through which our people can get good roads everywhere for all nations.

Mayor Joseph E. Bell “lauded the county commissioners for finishing the road without outside co-operation. “The women, he said, were also greatly responsible for the completion of the road”:

“It took just such women as Mrs. Denny to awaken the sentiment which practical men later took up and worked out in concrete form,” the mayor declared.

Lieutenant Governor Bush, the next speaker, continued the thread of Mayor Bell’s speech by saying:

“No great achievement ever got very far without the aid of the women. That is just the more forcibly brought out here on this occasion.”

Mr. Bush said he was in hearty accord with the road project and that if the people wanted Marion County made into good roads they “should call upon the presiding officer of the legislature.”

“For next to defending the institutions of the United States nothing is more noble or patriotic than to provide satisfactory channels of commerce,” he said.

Judge Lowe was the featured speaker. A photograph in the *Star* showed him addressing the audience on a stage bedecked with patriotic banners. In addition to reviewing the history of the road, starting with the Cumberland/National Road section from Cumberland, Maryland, to Illinois, he said:

Indiana has struck fire here and the sparks have fallen into other states and fired the hearts of the population to good roads. We in Missouri have caught the spark and nursed it. It will burst into flame. The National Old Trails road will be run from coast to coast, one of the finest monuments that can be erected to the efforts of mankind. I have devoted the best part of my life to this road, and this day is a pleasant one for me.

The news report continued:

At the finish of his speech he was presented with the gavel made from the plank construction of the road. Turning it over in his hand, he said: “I can remember well the old plank construction of the road. Many is the time I have driven over it sixty-five years ago, and I always got off of it as soon as possible.”

The wood of the gavel was well preserved, although dug from the road bed during the recent construction. It was of Indiana oak.

At the end of the dedication Charles E. Cheney, county surveyor, directed a tour of the three miles of newly-finished road.

In the morning, Judge Lowe attended a good roads conference of officials of the counties the National Old Trails Road passed through. The conference took place in the office of the State Highway Commissioner in the State House, room 111. During the session, “the importance of the finishing of the road from coast to coast was pointed out.” [“Road Dedicated by Large Crowd,” *The Indianapolis Sunday Star*, September 16, 1917]

In the evening, the Marion County Commissioners held a banquet in the Claypool Hotel for those involved in the work:

Among those present were Judge J. M. Lowe, of Kansas City, president of the National Old Trails road and the recognized parent advocate of Interest in national highways.

Judge Lowe delighted the banqueters as much as he did the dedicators with his remarkable eloquence and pointed expressions concerning both historical and constructive work. The Judge declared that immediate action would result in the construction of the old trails road throughout its entire length within a period of two years.

In brief remarks, Superintendent of Highways S. E. Bradt of Illinois said the National Old Trails Road and the Lincoln Highway had been designated as the highways on which Federal-aid highway funds in the State would be spent. “Bradt declared that the people of Illinois recognized the fact that the National Old Trails road would be regarded of first national military Importance and for that reason was chosen to receive a large part of the Illinois federal aid money.” [“Banquet After Dedication,” *The Indianapolis News*, September 17, 1917, page 13]

Roads for the War

The United States was not well prepared for war. The country had been shipping food and other goods to Europe, but a massive increase in production would be needed to fight a war.

A week after the declaration of war, President Wilson created a Council of National Defense, consisting of the Departments of War, Agriculture, Commerce, the Interior, and Labor, and the Navy; the Advisory Council of Industrialists, and other citizens to supervise every aspect of the war effort. Judge Robert S. Lovett, chairman of the executive committee of the Union Pacific Railroad system, was appointed chairman of the council’s priorities committee.

America’s Highways 1776-1976 summarized the initial activity:

On May 17, 1917, Congress imposed Selective Service, and the United States set out to build an army of a million men. This national Army was to be trained in 16 huge cantonments, each as large as a good-sized city, complete with railroad tracks and terminals, sewers, waterworks, streets, roads, and housing for 22,000 men. First, however, it was necessary to train the officers who would train the men; and for this job the Army built 12 officer training camps at existing military posts. All of this construction went on at such a pace that the 12 officer training camps and 9 of the

16 cantonments were completed by June 14, 1917 – just 30 days after the program was started.

A drastic industrial expansion paralleled the military mobilization. Steel mills were expanded. The capacity of Portland cement mills was increased to meet the spiraling demand triggered by an immense construction program. Brand new shipyards were built in eastern ports to build steel and concrete ships to replace the dozens sunk each month by German U-boats; and at Sparrows Point, Maryland, Bethlehem Steel built a city to house its shipyards workers, complete with sewage, water, and streets.

As the country shifted to a war-time economy, those interested in national roads promoted roads as critical to winning the war in Europe. However, the expansion of war needs frustrated the highway community:

The large highway bond issues of 1915 and 1916, plus the sizable road expenditures under the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act, led many experienced and inexperienced contractors into the road business. With the outbreak of war, they immediately began to encounter difficulties in getting materials, especially steel, and in retaining labor on the job. Within a few months material costs advanced 20 to 30 percent and wages for common labor went up to \$2.50 and even \$3.00 per day. Railroad car shortages made deliveries of stone and asphalt uncertain. Large numbers of contractors were forced out of business, and others, having completed their contracts, refused to bid for new work.

The virtual collapse of the highway construction industry created a desperate situation for States and counties struggling to keep roads open in the face of ever-increasing numbers of heavy trucks and devastating losses of personnel to war industry and the Army. What made the job particularly heartbreaking was the sentiment openly expressed in some segments of the war effort hierarchy that roadbuilding was nonessential work that should be discontinued for the duration of the emergency.

The Council of National Defense's Priority Order No. 2, effective November 1, 1917, prohibited the use of rail open top cars, other than flat cars, for shipping supplies, other than coal, for construction, maintenance, and repair of public and private highways, streets, and sidewalks, or for places of amusement, such as theaters. This order hit the road construction business hard. "This peremptory order, issued without public hearings or other advance warning, struck the States 'like a bolt from the blue,' at a particularly bad time":

It caught them with many miles of new road graded but not surfaced with winter approaching. Despite the fact that trucking had already released thousands of [rail] cars for war purposes and the roads in the vicinity of cantonments and ports of embarkation were being pounded to pieces by truck traffic, the Priority Board refused to recede from its position, and road work and road materials production that was dependent on rail transportation ground to a stop.

As a direct result of the widespread protests over Priority Order No. 2, the National

Council set up a Highways Transport Committee in Washington to represent the highway and highway transport interests, and appointed Roy D. Chapin, President of the Hudson Motor Company, as chairman.

The purpose of the new committee was to help the railroads and other forms of transportation in moving supplies during the war and to help highway authorities maintain the country's roads for that purpose.

Chapin, a wealthy Michigan native who had long been active in the good roads movement, would be one of Washington's dollar-a-year men. In 1901, at age 21, he had succeeded in a publicity stunt by driving a curved dash Oldsmobile, loaded with tools and spare parts, from Detroit to New York in time for the second annual New York Auto Show – the first motor car to make the trip under its own power:

Eight days and 820 miles later he arrived in New York, exhausted and mud-spattered but triumphant. The roads were so atrocious, he reported, that in crossing New York State he had taken to the towpath of the Erie Canal. [Sears, Stephen W., *American Heritage History of the Automobile in America*, American Heritage Publishing Company, Distributed by Simon and Schuster, 1977, page 36]

Chapin succeeded despite experiencing a broken main spring while trying to get around a slow-moving horse-drawn wagon – with success measured in over 1,000 orders for the Oldsmobile. Chapin was an original backer of the Lincoln Highway, helping to gain financial support from the auto industry for the road. Although he favored national roads, he helped gain support within the industry for the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. (He would serve as Secretary of Commerce – August 1932-March 1933 – during the final months of President Herbert Hoover's single term in office. In 1972, Chapin was inducted posthumously into the Automobile Hall of Fame.)

Other members of the committee were Logan W. Page, director of the OPRRE; Henry G. Shirley, chief engineer of the Maryland State Road Commission; and George H. Pride, president of the Heavy Haulage Company of New York. Chapin biographer J. C. Long pointed out:

Neither Page nor Shirley could give extensive time to the work as each was dependent on his regular salaried job, while committee membership was in the dollar-a-year category.

Chapin and Pride were "the only full-time committee workers. As time went on, skilled staff men were engaged." [Long, J. C., *Roy D. Chapin: The Man Behind the Hudson Motor Car Company*, Wayne State University Press, 2004 (originally published 1945), pages 151-152. The story of Chapin's ride to the New York State Auto Show is on pages 30-33]

On December 26, 1917, the Federal Government seized the mainline steam railroads and established a Federal Railroad Administration to operate them.

Judge Lowe Tries to Advance the Road

The National Old Trails Road Association was one of many organizations protesting the cutback on road work. On November 10, 1917, he wrote to Page to congratulate him and the Wilson Administration on the reorganization of the Council of Defense. "I am one of those who believes very strongly in the concentration of executive authority, especially during war times." He looked for great results from the change.

Judge Lowe wanted to refresh Director Page's memory. "You will recall that from the very beginning of the road agitation, I have clung tenaciously to the idea that the Government should build, supervise and control the National Old Trails road as a Military and National Highway." He mentioned his testimony in support of his bill for that purpose:

I was met at once with the objection that it provided for a single line of road, and no one not directly concerned would favor it. Then, I have agitated for a general system of National Highways, and during the last session a bill was introduced in the Senate for an outer belt highway reaching entirely around the United States. This was referred to the War Committee, and the Department sent Colonel McIndoe to this office to consult our maps and data, and compare it with all the National roads that have been suggested. After looking the question over, he said to me that no other road contemplated was in a class with this one, and that he should so report. I have not seen a copy of his report, although he promised to send me one.

(In 1917, Colonel James F. McIndoe was stationed in Kansas City, Missouri in charge of the Engineer District. In June, he was transferred to El Paso, Texas. He served in Europe and would be promoted to Brigadier General. General McIndoe died of pneumonia on February 6, 1919, a few months after the armistice brought the war to an end.)

Judge Lowe reminded Page of the history of the National Old Trails Road, including President Jefferson's role in initiating the Cumberland Road, and Senator Benton's role in the Santa Fe Trail:

Now, we have the road built and in splendid condition from Washington and Baltimore to Wheeling; completed across Ohio (except about 15 miles under contract and tied up in the courts); partially built across Indiana, and the last legislature adopted what is known as the Maryland Statute, by which the State agrees to pay one-half the cost of construction if the counties through which the road runs will pay the other half, and every county where the road is not finished has taken steps to comply with this requirement, and there is no question of the early completion of the road across that State. The Illinois legislature adopted an Act agreeing to pay three-fourths the cost of construction if the counties would raise the other fourth, and every county in Illinois has called a bond election for November 20th, except Cumberland, and that county has called it for December 11th. There is no question but what these elections will carry. In Missouri several sections of the road districts through which the road runs have called bond

elections, and there is no doubt of its building here. About one-third of the road across this State is already hardsurfaced [sic]. Several counties in Kansas through which the road runs are already in line and have provided the funds for its building. In Kansas, however, the State is prohibited by its Constitution from furnishing any aid, and the counties and road districts have to furnish all the money. California provided State bonds for building it, and have the road in splendid condition from Los Angeles 325 miles across the Mojave desert. This leaves only Arizona and New Mexico, and you will be greatly astonished to know that the two new States will not be behind some of the older ones in completing the road.

He concluded:

At this psychological moment, if you can write us a word of encouragement it will be most helpful in some of the counties and districts where elections are pending. Personally, my whole heart and soul is enlisted for winning this war, and, one of the great military instruments for such purpose will be the hard-surfacing of a road reaching from Washington or the Atlantic Seaboard to the Pacific. We believe that a very little effort at this particular time will accomplish this great result.

I need not say to you that entertaining these views you are at liberty to command me most freely in any way in which I can be of service.

Page replied on November 15. He greatly appreciated “your congratulations in connection with the formation of a Roads Committee under the Council of National Defense.” He was “much interested” in the facts about improvement of the “Old National Highway”:

Certainly there has been an immense amount of earnest effort put forth in this work and the results obtained are a vindication of those efforts.

I feel that in the present great crisis commendation of road building in general should be tempered by a consideration of the economic soundness of each individual project. In the absence of a detailed knowledge as to the various factors involved in the improvement of the Old Trails west of the Mississippi, it would appear to me best to avoid giving advice as to its immediate construction. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

On November 24, Judge Lowe again wrote to update Page on the recent elections:

We lost one county in Illinois by 185 votes, owing to lack of organization and information. We will immediately call another election, and there is no question as to the result. The proposition carried in all the other counties by a handsome majority.

The situation in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Kansas is very promising. I have no doubt that we shall win, and hard-surface the road, perhaps in its entirety. Anyway, I am now making a final campaign, and unless we win and win in the very near future, I may feel constrained to act upon the suggestion of slowing down in road work until the war is

over. I think this would be a fatal mistake, so far as the road movement is concerned, but it may be impossible to act otherwise.

He enclosed a letter he had received from William C. Markham, secretary of the Kansas Highway Commission, regarding progress in that State. Markham wrote:

We have received notification of this special committee that has been appointed in connection with the work of the National Defense Council and have directed our state highway engineer Mr. W. C. Gearhart, to attend the meeting of the American Association of Highway Officials at Richmond, Virginia, December 4th, 5th, and 6th, at which time it is expected definite suggestions will be made to this committee in reference to highway work.

Markham also addressed Judge Lowe's inquiry about progress of the road in Kansas. The State had offered 15 percent of Federal-aid highway funds "to a series of state roads that have been established by the commission," including the Old Santa Fe Trail across the State:

Up to the present time, Barton County has filed a petition and it has been accepted, for a brick road 20' wide across the entire county. We understand that petitions are now being circulated in Rice and Pawnee counties over the Old Trails, and while the board of county commissioners of Morris have signified their willingness to accept a petition, it will be necessary for the people in that county to go over their work again as they have prepared a petition for 9' road only. It will be necessary that the minimum width of a road to receive Federal Aid shall be 16'. We have also on file a written agreement with the board of county commissioners of Douglas county that the Old Santa Fe Trail in that county shall be hard surfaced during the five year period. A petition for a road across the north half of the county between Lawrence and Topeka has already been accepted by the commission.

There is considerable talk in Johnson County of adopting some method of surfacing their water bound macadam roads that are now in bad condition. There are two roads one mile apart running south from Olathe. The commissioner has eliminated one of them and it will be necessary to use the road that runs directly south to Bonita.

A couple days later, on November 26, Judge Lowe wrote to Page, yet again, this time to update him on the status of the road in Missouri.

From the inclosure [sic] you will observe that we are still in the field and hard at work. If your committee does not call us down, we are going to build this road, war or no war, for we consider that we could not engage in anything by which we could do our patriotic part so well and to such extent in furthering the military interests of the Government than in carrying forward this great project.

Judge Lowe enclosed a newspaper article titled "Votes Bonds for Old Trails:

Fulton, Mo., Nov. 24 – A bond issue of \$25,000 toward a fund of \$75,000 to be used in building sixteen miles permanent road on the Old Trails Highway east of Fulton to the Montgomery County line was carried almost unanimously in this district today. The vote was 125 to 4. It was also announced that \$7,200 had been collected by private subscription to be used in paying for work. The commissioner of the Fulton special road district and Callaway County court subscribed \$7,500 toward the fund November 7, and the state and federal governments will give \$37,500 as their part of the work. Plans have been made to use convicts to do the Callaway county work and also to obtain equipment next summer from the state highway department.

Page replied on December 1 with a perfunctory thanks for the letters of November 24 and 26 "giving information in regard to the progress in the construction of the National Old Trails Road." [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

On December 21, Judge Lowe wrote to update Page on the status of the road in Ohio. At the request of Governor James M. Cox, State Highway Commissioner Clinton Cowen responded on December 12 to Judge Lowe's request for an update:

We are just now making every effort possible to clean up on this road in Ohio during the coming season. Everything from Columbus east is completed or under contract with the exception of 3½ miles in Guernsey county, and funds for this stretch have been provided for.

Yesterday we had a conference with the Commissioners of Madison and Clark Counties for the purpose of arranging to reconstruct the National Road through these two counties. I have no doubt but that we will arrive at a definite and satisfactory arrangement. We are determined to see this road completed through Ohio at the earliest possible date.

Judge Lowe also forwarded a letter he had received from "a citizen of Washington who is well informed on the road question, to another citizen in Boston, and was not intended for myself or any one else connected in any way with the National Old Trails Road Association." With the writer and addressee not identified, the enclosed letter referred to an article in the December 1917 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* that indicated Governor Cox had received a request "from the Federal government asking that the Lincoln Highway be put in condition for the transportation of freight across country by motor trucks in an effort to relieve the congestion of the railroads." The articles said that Governor Cox had assembled highway officials on November 16 to discuss the condition of the Lincoln Highway and "in his customary manner, went into the matter in a systematic way":

Commencing with the East line of the Lincoln Highway in Columbia County, Ohio, he asked a representative of each county to state briefly if there was any dispute over the route of the Lincoln Highway in their particular county. After crossing the State in this manner he then began at Columbia County and inquired how many miles of the Lincoln

Highway were improved, type of construction, etc. This report showed approximately eighty miles [of] unimproved roads. The State Highway Department will have in a few days the number of miles of brick, concrete, and other types for the Lincoln Highway across Ohio

Before the meeting closed each county had promised to do its share in seeing to it that the Lincoln Highway was completed across Ohio, and also promised to have complete information concerning the condition of the road in their respective counties within a few days. [*Better Roads and Streets*, December 1917, pages 563-564]

The letter from the citizen of Washington, not intended for Judge Lowe, asked, "Is it possible this is the Lincoln Highway that has been heralded so freely during the past few years?" He continued:

Eighty miles, or 30 per cent in Ohio, unimproved; and unimproved road in Ohio is pretty rotten from my own observation. And they now require the Governor of the State and the Federal Government to prod them into activity on those terrible eighty miles. Rather presumptuous on the part of the Federal Government, I should say, but stranger things than that will happen, no doubt. Anyhow, let us hope those "eighty miles" get speedy improvement. They surely do need it, as you know and I know.

This is a silent compliment to the National Old Trails Road and its organization, in that Gov. Cox has not had to call a meeting to ascertain its condition across Ohio.

Director Page replied on January 9 with a four-line double spaced letter to thank Judge Lowe "for the information which you enclose in regard to the efforts that are being made to complete the Old National Road across the State of Ohio. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

On November 23, 1917, Judge Lowe wrote to the Board of County Commissioners of each of the western States through which the National Old Trails Road passed, with blanks to fill with data from each county and State:

For fully seven years we have given every hour of our time, every work-day in the year, to the permanent building of the National Old Trails Road thru your county. This would be worth-while if it began and ended at your county lines, but when you consider that it is a part of a road across the State, it becomes of immensely greater value, and when you consider that this is a link in a national road reaching across the Continent, it becomes of inconceivable value. It has now been entirely hardsurfaced [sic], or the means have been provided for building it from the Atlantic seaboard to the Mississippi. Shall we let it stop there? The excuse that the time is not now opportune for carrying forward this great work because of the husbanding of our resources and the curtailing of our expenses does not hold good when applied to the work in hand. The railroads cannot be relied upon to furnish the transportation necessary in carrying forward the immense army supplies, nor can the products of the farmers and manufacturers be made available without building some of the great trunk line highways in contemplation. No other road suggested will

meet these requirements to the same degree as this road. It is central; runs thru the very heart of the greatest agricultural country on this Continent; reaches or readily connects with very many of the military cantonments, and, above all and everything else, it will be an all the year round road, ready at all times to facilitate the military and defensive interests of the country.

We must not weakly shut ourselves up to the conclusion that they will have to be built anyhow, and one of them is sure to come thru our neighborhood. Neither of these propositions is true. Slight divergence at many points along the line will be equally useful and as easily built.

I know of no movement in this time of stress which will do more to recoup the damages necessarily resulting from war than that of building permanent highways. This is true as a general proposition, but is emphasized when applied to a great National Trunk line road. I know of no project or improvement which will enhance values so surely and so rapidly as the building of hard-surface roads. I have said that the building of this road would go far toward recouping the damages resulting from war. Your county has ___ acres of land. If you confine the benefits to land alone, not taking into account any other values in your county, the building of this road will enhance the valuation thereon to an average of at least \$5.00 per acre. The average cost of this improvement per acre in your county will not exceed much, if any, ___ per acre annually for twenty years, or, a total of ___ per acre. If I am mistaken, and it enhances valuations to an average of only \$1.00 per acre, the improvements will pay for itself. Figure it any way you will, there is absolutely no risk, nor any possibility of a loss resulting from the levy of this tax.

This is the greatest opportunity which has ever come to your county, and one which, if you do not avail yourself of now will, in all human probabilities, never come again. "Opportunity may knock more than once at every man's door," but it is a safe prediction that this opportunity will never knock again. [National Archives at College Park]

Director Page on Wartime Priorities

Logan Waller Page, OPRRE Director, had been one of the first graduates of the highway engineering program at Harvard. He joined the Federal roads office in 1900, first as a special agent for the northern division and then as head of the road material laboratory. By 1905, when Page became OPR Director, the laboratory was the primary scientific laboratory on road building materials. Throughout his tenure, he emphasized the scientific approach to road building, in contrast with the we-always-did-it-this-way attitude of many road officials.

On November 28, 1917, Page sent a letter to the State highway agencies regarding the present situation and recommending policies for 1918. He began by acknowledging that road construction "has been seriously hampered by reason of excessive costs, scarcity of labor, and inadequate transportation facilities." The situation "would be serious even in normal times, but in this crisis when the public roads must, in addition to normal traffic, be depended upon to relieve the tremendous strain to which the railways are subjected, it becomes a matter of vital

importance that some means be found at least to deal with next season's work so as to assure better results than are possible under our present system."

Based on his discussion "with men who are identified with road work in various capacities," Page said he was taking the liberty of suggesting policies for 1918 to remedy some of the weaknesses the States were experiencing:

(1) The selective consideration of all of next year's construction jobs in all of the States and the preparation of a program of road work throughout the Nation, in which program each construction job would be listed in the order of its economic importance to the particular territory in which it is located and to the Nation as a whole. This arrangement would permit of the elimination of such work as may be omitted with least injury to our economic welfare. (2) A coordination of this selective process with the railway and water transportation facilities, with a view to insuring an adequate number of cars and vessels of suitable types, with proper distribution to transport materials for the construction of the approved jobs. (3) A coordination with the material industries, with a view to insuring supplies of materials in adequate amount, distribution, and deliveries to permit the construction program to be carried out. (4) The adoption by each State of such measures with reference to construction contracts as would best meet the needs and requirements of the state.

He concluded:

May I not ask that you advise me as to your views on the subject, and that you favor me with any suggestions, either as to policy or working plan, and also as to what extent your department may be able to cooperate in a movement of this character.

In addition to State highway officials, Page sent copies of the letter to contractors and others involved in road making to give them a better understanding of the seriousness of the situation and the need for all the good roads that could be built. ["Adopting Definite Road Policy," *The Road-Maker*, January 1918, page 64; "Reorganizing Nation's Road Work," *American Motorist*, January 1918, page 23]

AASHO's 1917 Convention

As noted earlier, AASHO held its annual convention on December 11-13, 1917, in Richmond. Delegates from 40 States attended the convention. The January 1918 issue of *American Motorist* summarized the main issues:

Down in Richmond during the first week in December the American Association of State Highway Officials held the annual gathering and dealt with big subjects, among them car shortage, the present chaotic condition of road construction, the operation of the Federal Aid Road Act, the construction of military roads, and the maintenance of the many types of high-grade roads which have been constructed by the States in recent years.

In addition to conducting AASHO business, the first day of the annual meeting included discussions of the railcar shortage and military roads. Roy Chapin was the featured speaker on the first day. *The Road-Maker's* January 1918 issue summarized his presentation:

In it he sketched the prospect work of the Transport Committee in its studies of the use of the highways in general and by the government. Mr. Chapin also brought a direct message from Judge Lovett of the Priority Board. The judge informed Mr. Chapin just before he started for Richmond that by April 1 the Judge believed that the Priority Board No. 2 would be done away with. He had looked for an early raising of the embargo, but the coal situation was still so critical that the order could not immediately be abrogated.

Chapin wanted AASHO officials to know that Judge Lovett considered road maintenance and repair of a higher priority than transportation of musical instruments and repair of theaters, for adjustments in priority expected to be made in the spring:

Mr. Chapin urged that the committee appointed to co-operate with the Highways Transport Committee [be] referred to the committee's studies of methods of relieving railroad terminal congestion. He closed his remarks by stating that the importance of highways will be much better understood after the war has ended.

The second day was devoted to the Federal Aid Road Act. Director Page presented a speech on "One Year's Experience in the Federal-Aid Road Law." He began by noting that the Act was "a measure unique in the annals of American legislation." It wasn't simply about granting financial assistance for public roads; "it went much further and placed on trial a far-reaching policy of cooperation between the Federal Government and each of the forty-eight states." The contemplated cooperation could work "only by broad and generous-minded dealing with each other." They both would have to "overlook the small troubles and difficulties which arise, and to consider whether the plan is working out in a fundamental sense." Only in that way "can a true perspective of the practical results be obtained.

The 1916 Act could not be measured in terms of miles of improved roads. That result, he said, was secondary. "The most important" result was "in the form of an immense amount of constructive state legislation, establishing and strengthening state highway departments, providing skilled supervision, systematizing road work in the states, establishing maintenance funds and in many other ways insuring the efficient and economical handling of the nation's road problems."

Many people, he said, expected that as soon as President Wilson signed the Act, "money would begin flowing into the states and the building of federal aid roads begun." Numerous administrative steps were necessary before the work could get underway. The Postmaster General had to determine the mileage of rural delivery and star routes, one of the apportionment factors. The Secretary of Agriculture had to formulate regulations, a task that was accomplished in cooperation with State highway officials on September 1, 1916.

The agency also had to undertake an exhaustive examination of State legislation to determine if

each State had a highway agency “within the meaning of the federal act.” OPRRE found that 11 States were without a highway agency, as required by the Act, and five others had agencies that “might be considered in the doubtful class.” The Act also required assent by each State legislature to the requirements for cooperation:

Few of the states were in position when the federal act was passed to begin immediate co-operation. The legislatures of most of them met last winter, and it was not until their adjournment in the spring of 1917 that the way had been cleared sufficiently to enable individual projects to be taken up.

Meanwhile, OPRRE reorganized “to take care of the new work” and established procedures for review of plans, approval of project agreements, determinations that completed projects met requirements, and for reimbursement of State expenditures up to 50 percent. Forms had to be developed for project development.

As State highway officials well knew, “I may say that almost as soon as the measure became effective widely varying interpretations of the term ‘rural post road’ were current.” Some thought it referred only to roads on which mail was actually carried, while others thought it meant roads over which it was physically possible to carry the mail or roads on which mail might soon be carried. “As you well know, we went to the Attorney General of the United States with our troubles and we asked him to advise us as to the eligibility of certain classes of roads which had been submitted:

These classes were: (1) where the mails were actually carried over the road; (2) where the mails were not carried, but where there existed a reasonable prospect that they would be carried within a reasonable time after the completion of the road; (3) where the proposed road was an entirely new location, but there existed a reasonable prospect that mail would be carried within a reasonable time after the completion of the road; (4) where the part or part of a project on which no mails were carried constituted an unsubstantial portion of the whole and it would be uneconomical to build the parts on which the mails were carried without building the other parts even though no prospect existed that these unsubstantial parts were ever to be used for carrying the mails. The Attorney General decided that all roads in those four classes were eligible as post roads.

Even then, the terms “reasonable prospect” and “unsubstantial part of the whole” had to be defined. Finally, with the help of the Agriculture Department’s solicitor, detailed instructions were provided to the State highway agencies:

In other words, gentlemen, we have tried in every way possible to find ways and means for making the post road provision of the federal act as reasonable as possible within the law. You can hardly blame us if we have had to do this in some measure step by step.

Despite the early troubles, only “a very small percentage of the projects submitted” had been disqualified. As of November 30, 1917, 228 projects had been submitted, 168 had been approved thus far, and only 6 have been disapproved. “You can see, therefore, that the trouble is

not so serious as a casual consideration might make it appear.”

Some officials contended that OPRRE should “take it for granted that the respective state highway departments are complying with the laws of their States” and hold them, therefore “only to a compliance with the provisions of the federal act.” The Act, however, called for certain conditions to be met, such as what constitutes a State highway department and that it must have direct supervision of the work. The Secretary of Agriculture had given “most careful study” of how to simplify oversight, “and I am glad to say that henceforth we shall be able to simplify the steps by which these requirements may be met.”

OPPRE had experienced difficulties in obtaining plans, specifications, and estimates promptly upon approval of a project agreement. “We have had inquiries from time to time from interested parties urging the government to allow the work to proceed without further delay, when as a matter of fact we were as anxious as the inquirer to have the work start, but we could not authorize the commencement of construction until plans, specifications and estimates had been submitted to and approved by the secretary as required by the act.” He considered the requirements “reasonable . . . and if they are reasonable, certainly there should be no difficulty on the part of the states in supplying the information which we seek.” If the requirements are burdensome, “I trust they will be freely and frankly brought to our attention.” He added:

I may say that of 168 projects approved only 88 sets of plans and specifications have been submitted. Of this latter number 72 have been passed by our engineers and recommended for approval, so that only 16 sets of plans and specifications submitted are now pending.

He concluded by expressing his “deep appreciation of the cordial spirit of co-operation which you have individually and collectively shown toward the representatives of the Department of Agriculture who are charged with the administration of the Federal Aid Road act.” State officials had been “patient in the face of delays, which however unavoidable, were exasperating” as they endeavored to meet all requirements. “I assure you that we shall reciprocate in every way possible and I predict that before long our difficulties will all be smoothed out and we shall be reaping the full benefit of this great co-operative measure.”

He did not mention the challenges imposed by wartime conditions, but did note that some subjects he might have addressed would be covered by other speakers.

Other OPRRE officials made presentations on the operation of Federal-aid (P. St. J Wilson, chief engineer, and J. E. Pennybacker, Jr., chief of management). In the afternoon, Thomas H. MacDonald, Iowa’s chief highway engineer, addressed the topic, “Should an Effort Be Made to Amend the Federal Aid Road Law?” As discussed in part 2, MacDonald played a key role in a special AASHO committee to develop a draft of what became, to a large extent, the 1916 Act. According to *American Motorist*, he “ably analyzed” the topic and “called attention to the important principles contained in the federal act and to the remarkably few limitations in the application of those principles.” He “urged that no steps be taken to amend the act.” *The Road-Maker* added that “those who spoke to this question agreed with Mr. MacDonald.”

AASHO adopted numerous resolutions. Resolution No. 3 stated that every industry and occupation must be directed to winning the war, but “the prosecution of highway work is essential, both as a war measure and as an economic measure, and that the adoption by the nation, by the states, or by other municipalities of a policy of a half-hearted prosecution of highway work would be an irreparable blunder.” Experience thus far demonstrated that “it seems inevitable that the present means of transportation will become utterly inadequate and must be supplemented by motor transportation over the main arteries and every step must be taken to put these arteries in condition to take and to withstand this traffic. The resolution urged the States to take care in the selection of improvements “so that there shall be first improved those roads of the greatest economic value in the present crisis.”

Resolution No. 4 recommended that all highway officials employ “an intensive program of maintenance.” Once built, roads “must be saved.” The resolution urged AASHO’s executive committee to “use every effort to insure that the national authorities give especial consideration to the movement of all materials to be used in maintenance.”

Resolution No. 6 recommended that all highway departments engage in education and publicity campaigns, “so that all the people may be fully informed of the necessity, particularly at this time, of continuing a sane program of road construction and intensified maintenance, and of the important place these matters have in the program of prosecuting the war.

Resolution No. 9 cited the importance of State and other municipal bonds to road improvement. The executive committee should “take such action towards enlarging the salability of such bonds as they may find advisable and necessary.”

Resolution No. 10 recommended “most earnestly uniform legislation regulating motor traffic over public highways in the United States to the end that these highways may be constructed and maintained without unnecessary expense to the public.”

[“Fourth Annual Meeting of the American Association of State Highway Officials,” *Better Roads and Streets*, January 1918, pages 12-16, 42; “State Highway Commissioners In Convention,” *The Road-Maker*, January 1918, pages 34-35; “Highway Officials Hold Meeting,” *American Motorist*, January 1918, page 26; Page, Logan Waller, “One Year’s Experience in the Federal-Aid Road Law,” *The Road-Maker*, January 1918, pages 28-31]

The Road – 1918

The January 1918 issue of *American Motorist* also carried an article by AAA’s touring expert, Robert Bruce, titled “Many Travelable Highways in 1918.” He began:

The war, with its almost universal consequences, is naturally having its effect upon the road development situation throughout the United States; but less relative effect than as if it had come a few years ago. Rapid strides in building and maintenance, in nearly all sections, have already given the country something akin to a national highway system, in fact, if not in name. Already the public roads are being put to uses entirely unforeseen

twenty years ago; if they had been allowed to remain up to this time in the state they were in 1900, the situation of the country today would be indescribably critical. The tests to which they are now being put, alongside the railways and principal water routes, are making a more sure and permanent place for them in the economics of life and transportation than their most far-seeing advocates may have ever before realized.

Nor, broadly speaking, are the really important and useful projects being halted. Never before have logical or necessary enterprises been carried through with as much high spirit and great speed, and with so little hesitation on account of expense, as today. But they must prove their strategic value and economic utility while the general tightening up process has side-tracked, probably for a long time to come, the nonessential and incidental.

He examined roads around the country that were suitable for touring. On the National Old Trails Road, Bruce reported that work between Zanesville and Columbus, Ohio, "ought to make a high-class thoroughfare next year from Baltimore or Washington to the Ohio Capital." The rest of the road west of Columbus across Indiana was "already in good shape, and after long delays some progress is being made across Illinois, the most backward link of that length in that great natural route across the continent."

Work had been started on a new alignment across the Mineola Hills in central Missouri, "at present the worst single short piece on the route in the Central West, with the expectation that relief from former conditions there may be had by the late spring or early summer of 1918.

Across Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, the route "presented some difficulties at times," but had "already been robbed of any such dangers as may have existed in the early days of long-distance motoring." This stretch of the road provided access to many side trips of "great scenic and historic interest . . . while accommodations, not always high-class but greatly improved, are to be found almost anywhere a tourist is likely to want to go."

Bruce switched from the National Old Trails Road to follow the new Ridge Road via the new "wonderful road over Tejon Pass," which he called "a notable achievement in modern engineering practice."

Bruce also commented on the Lincoln Highway:

The Lincoln highway, in excellent shape across Pennsylvania, from half to three quarters of the distance from Detroit, Toledo and Cleveland to the seaboard, will probably soon be a United States military road in fact if not in name.

He added that the National Old Trails Road east of the Ohio River "is equally good and travelable, though it is less convenient of access from the manufacturing center of the Great Lakes, and has no direct, completely improved connection down from Pittsburgh into its main line east of Uniontown."

Bruce's article was accompanied by a two-page "General Map of Projected Highways, Compiled by the A.A.A. Touring Bureau, Washington, D.C." The key listed the following routes, in order:

- Lincoln Highway
- National Old Trails Road
- Dixie Highway
- Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway
- Yellowstone Trail
- Atlantic Highway
- Pacific Highway
- Meridian Road
- Midland Trail
- Bankhead Highway
- Arrowhead Trail
- Jefferson Highway
- Jackson Highway
- National Park Hwy
- National Park to Park Highway
- King of Trails Highway
- Old Spanish Trail.

[Bruce, Robert, "Many Travelable Highways in 1918," *American Motorist*, January 1918, pages 9-15, 48]

While the war affected the National Old Trails Road and, more generally, road building around the country, the Automobile Club of Southern California continued to cover highway activities through its magazine, *Touring Topics*.

In January 1918, the magazine included an article on tourist travel along the National Old Trails Road, beginning:

Under normal conditions in the United States it could be safely predicted that this year Southern California would receive an influx of automobile tourists over the National Old Trails road that should lay all previous years' records far in the shade.

But conditions are far from normal. No man knows what effect the war may have upon transcontinental automobiling. It may be very large and, in that event, a steady flow of eastern cars will drift over the long miles of the N.O.T. highway onto the boulevards of Southern California. Why not assume that such will be the case and furnish to these prospective visitors a brief description of the route and the country which they will traverse.

The article began its description in Chicago, which "marks the eastern limits of the road mapping activities of the Automobile Club of Southern California." From Chicago, a motorist bound for southern California would travel via Joliet, Bloomington and Springfield to a junction with the

National Old Trails Road in East St. Louis, where the motorist crossed the Mississippi River into Missouri. "Across Missouri extend fairly well maintained dirt roads, interspersed with paved stretches."

Crossing into Kansas, the motorist would find that the State "is making remarkable progress in hard surfacing the Santa Fe Trails, new and old. Much brick and macadam highway already has been laid and in a comparatively short time the entire mileage of this route through Kansas will be a paved road." The article added, "The route presents fairly good going, even in the severest rainy weather."

The route entered Colorado "in the midst of a great sugar beet country, near Holly." The route moves northward to La Junta, "the juncture point of the New and Old Santa Fe Trails." The mountain roads of Colorado are "among the finest" in the country:

For instance, Pueblo county, which does not possess one foot of paved roads, ranks foremost in highway improvement among all the middle and western states. Native materials have been so brought together that roads of perfect riding quality and great durability have been produced. This is also the case with the great mileage of mountain highways in other Colorado counties, much of which has been built with prison labor.

The National Old Trails Road continued to Trinidad at the eastern approach to Raton Pass at an elevation of 5,200 feet:

By many motorists Raton pass is approached with fear and trembling and is supposed to form an almost insurmountable highway barrier. This is in nowise the case, however. The road at all points is amply wide and with the exception of a few places affords generous space for passing. The grade in few places exceeds fifteen per cent and for the most part the highway lies along a series of well defined and broad ridges.

About eleven miles west of Trinidad there is a pronounced pitch for something less than a mile, then a short distance of fair gradients and a winding roadway of one and one-half miles to the summit with its 8790-feet elevation.

Beyond the summit the descent toward Raton is inspiring and affords a wonderful view of great, sweeping mesas and prairies typical of New Mexico.

The road continues for 116 miles to Santa Fe, New Mexico:

Slightly more than seventy miles of New Mexico State Highway of good, well graded road of native material and varying from six thousand to seventy-five hundred feet in elevation, brings the traveler to Santa Fe, and traverses a rugged, mountainous country dense in the growth of shrub trees, pinon, juniper and majestic pine.

The motorist passed through country that "may well be likened to an immense park produced by the genius of a landscape artist and colored to blend in all true harmony." The "approach to

Glorieta summit is gradual and made with but little effort and the descent through Apache Canyon is not particularly precipitous, but a more pronounced grade.”

Leaving Santa Fe, “the route leads to Albuquerque, distance about sixty-five miles, in which distance the roadway descends by approximately three thousand feet.” Between the two cities, the motorist encounters “the famous La Bajada hill, a sheer cliff of malapi rock that forms the western and northern wall of an immense mesa which extends for miles in a northerly and southerly direction”:

The roadway zigzags to the foot of the grade, but with several acute turns. The surface is excellent for the entire roadway is composed of volcanic rock which provides secure footing for automobile tires.

Leaving Albuquerque, the motorist reaches Las Lunas, “which is a junction point of two alternative routes of the National Old Trails, one known as the Gallup route and the other as the Springerville route”:

Of these two roadways the Springerville, or southern roadway, is the more practicable route for the stranger because of its general good road conditions at all seasons of the year. On the Gallup or northern route much good road exists and much effort has been exerted in improving the highway but there still remain treacherous rivers and arroyos to be forded and for this reason eastern motorists usually follow the Springerville road notwithstanding its sixty-seven miles disadvantage in distance.

Between Las Lunas and Belen, motorists will encounter “a good roadway,” before veering southeast and crossing the mesa diagonally and rising gradually “to the distant mountains that form the eastern rim of the valley of the Rio Grande”:

In this far stretching straight-away the road leads to the abrupt ascent and descent of Johnson grade and thence to Socorro, a typical New Mexican village that slumbers undisturbed with the Rio Grande at its door-yard and the mountains reaching down from towering heights behind it.

The road leaving Socorro “follows a gradual slope to the foot of the mountain thence through Blue Canyon over a well constructed grade and then downward over a broad plain to Magdalena.”

The road reaches Springerville, about 17 miles from the Arizona-New Mexico line, and crosses the White Plains before “engaging the summit of the trans-continental divide at an elevation of 8500 feet.” The ascent is gradual, bringing “the traveler to the summit of the divide without impressing upon him the fact that great altitude is attained.”

The road from Springerville to Holbrook is “an interesting and easy drive.” The motorist continues on through Winslow and Flagstaff, where many “motorists westward bound make the trip to the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, one of the wonders of the world.” Even if the traveler

has visited the Grand Canyon by rail, “the full measure of its grandeur cannot be appreciated except by motoring to it through miles of towering pines and across shallow meadows and over entrancing mountains.”

Returning from the Grand Canyon, the motorist can reach the main road at Williams, “from which point westward, a gradual but continuous descent characterizes the country to the Colorado river, which forms the boundary between Arizona and California.”

Between Williams and Ash Fork, “many are the motoring parties that here forsake hotel life for a camp fire in the pine scented woods.” Continuing west, a “good road spans the waste of the desert,” with the highway closely following the Santa Fe Railroad, with its Harvey Houses, “and this keeps one in the line of civilization through this tedious portion of the journey.”

The article ends:

As the summit of Cajon Pass is reached the traveler comes upon the fine paved roads that characterize Southern California and as the western descent begins the tourist has his first glimpse of orange groves and palms and vineyards and flowering shrubs that are typical of this whole favored region.

Thus has the trans-continental tourist reached Southern California in which great region he has thousands of miles of paved highways at his disposal and thousands of points of interest to visit and a wealth of semi-tropical scenery to view. [“Following the Tourist Trail to California,” *Touring Topics*, January 1918, pages 7-10]

Highway Industries Association

On January 21, 1918, 160 representatives of industry met in the Florentine Room of the Congress Hotel in Chicago for what promised “to be the greatest and most practical move for efficiently co-ordinating the highways of our country, developing the means for transportation and ultimately linking up our main lines of travel.” They formed the Highway Industries Association, to be headed by S. M. Williams, sales manager of the Garford Motor Truck Company. The meeting took place after preliminary meetings with representatives of highway industries, including AAA, OPRRE, AASHO, and the Highways Transport Committee.

Williams, in a speech to the gathering, explained that it was only a year ago, “our National Government gave any real recognition or acknowledgement of their obligation in the development of our system of highways.” That initiative was thanks to AAA, AASHO, and OPRRE:

When we become involved in the present war, inquiry was made of certain officials, prominent in Washington, as to whether they were considering the use of highways from either a military standpoint or in the movement of freight. We were informed that the highways were not being considered and that in their opinion the railroads would be equal to all demands for transportation.

He referred to the advance notice he had published in *The Manufacturer's Record* on January 17, 1918:

More highways and better highways must be built and existing highways improved in order to strengthen the nation in the great world contest which it must face for several years to come.

Every day proves that the country must largely depend upon motor trucks and automobiles for a vast amount of travel and freight traffic. The railroads are wholly unequal to the business. Traffic will grow more rapidly than the railroad facilities, even under government domination, can be expanded. Highways must be improved in all parts of the country and motor trucks and automobiles must come into large use to help overcome the breakdown of the railway system.

Build more highways and build them promptly, even at the expense of tens of millions, or of hundreds of millions, if necessary, must be the order of the day, or else the nation will be tremendously handicapped in this great contest.

Williams outlined the steps necessary for this “considerable work.” First, the group must “convince official Washington that the highways of our country are a real economic necessity and they must be developed to the highest possible degree consistent with surroundings, conditions and demands.” Second, they had to “educate those who do not realize the importance of highway transportation – because they do not come in direct contact with the necessity and, therefore, do not realize what is necessary in road construction to meet the growing traffic demands of our country.”

Official Washington, he said, seemed to be overlooking the need to feed the army abroad and the people of our allies, with enough left over for the home front. Increased planting was essential, but so was moving farm produce to market:

Crops cannot be moved to advantage over mud roads. Our rich agricultural districts should be provided with roads over which their products may be moved promptly and with the least expense. We are organizing to conserve food, but we are wasting more than we save through all our conservation on account of not only the excessive cost of marketing our food products, but also from the inability to market, in many sections of our country, due to the miserable condition of the roads.

He had been gratified during AASHO's annual meeting in Richmond “to see a thorough appreciation upon the part of the highway officials that road construction must continue in a manner to meet the demand for heavy traffic over the highways”:

Their experience during the last year has also convinced them there must be some change in the attitude of official Washington towards the marketing of road bonds.

They also realize that if the highway is to become an important factor in transportation

there must be uniformity in the laws governing traffic over the highways.

He was encouraged by several of the resolutions, cited earlier, adopted during the AASHO meeting. Unfortunately, many State highway officials were discouraged by Washington's effort "to curtail road improvement, and, therefore, did not accomplish what they desired." They could not be blamed for not building roads "ahead or beyond the desire of their constituents," but highway officials properly asked "for a campaign of education that the public may be fully informed of the necessity of continuing a sane program of road construction and intensified maintenance"

Williams concluded:

In view of these requests from highway officials for cooperation, who should respond more quickly than the industries represented here today? You are all directly interested in road improvement because it has a direct influence on the promotion of your individual interests, and, therefore, it is only right for such industries to unite in securing a safe and intelligent road building program, and in doing this we will be directly aiding all industry throughout the country.

During the meeting, letters of support were read from Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, Secretary of Agriculture Houston, OPRRE Director Page, Roy D. Chapin of the National Transport Committee, and Chief Engineer A. R. Hirst of the Wisconsin Highway Commission, vice president of AASAHO, and 1st Vice President of the association. ["For United Highway Co-Operation and Development," *The Road-Maker*, February 1918, pages 50-52; "Highway Industries Association Organized," *Good Roads*, January 26, 1918, pages 41, 46-47]

Judge Lowe would join the association's crusade, which would come close to toppling the Federal-aid highway program after the war.

National Old Trails Road in Kansas

The National Old Trails Road Association's executive committee met on February 23, 1918, at The Coates House in Kansas City. Members from Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri attended.

Judge Lowe opened the meeting by explaining that its purpose was to consider contested routes in the three States to adopt resolutions for consideration during the annual meeting. In Missouri, the issue was consideration of alternative cross-State highways. The summary of the meeting reported that, "The Southern Cross-State Highway in Missouri made a remarkable and a very strong showing." Representatives from the counties discussed bond issues approved or pending to hard-surface the road. The executive committee agreed on a resolution:

A CHALLENGE

WHEREAS, The time is at hand for prompt and decisive action in Government aid, permanent road building in Missouri; and,

WHEREAS, There are now two cross-state roads, namely, the Central Route, known as the "Old Trail Route," and the Southern Highway, known as "Midland Ocean to Ocean Trail," connecting with the metropolis of the East, and the state metropolis on the west: THEREFORE. BE IT RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this meeting that the route guaranteeing first within the next ninety days to build such route complete, from end to end across this state, shall be officially designated as the "Ocean to Ocean Transcontinental Highway," to connect with and be a part of the Old Trail Route or other Ocean to Ocean Trail, subject to be named by this convention "The Official Old Trail Route."

The routing issue in Kansas was contested. Reports from the counties began with Will Townsley of Great Bend in Barton County stating that county and State commissioners had provided for and approved a 20-foot brick road across the county:

Mr. Townsley criticized sharply and very pointedly the action of certain agents of the Government traveling up and down the line urging people not to vote bonds to make any kind of internal improvements during the war. The alarmist to whom he referred is quoted as saying: "That any man who would build a house at a time like this was a traitor." The convention applauded Mr. Townsley to the echo for his criticism of this kind of patriotism.

State Highway Engineer W. S. Gearhart "assured the convention that the movement for hardsurfacing the National Old Trails was timely and patriotic and congratulated them on the progress being made."

During the discussion, United States Senator William H. Thompson of Kansas was quoted as saying, "Now is the time to prosecute the movement of means for transportation; that the national Congress was ready to do anything in its power to assist in the movement."

The summary of county reports concluded that, "Marion County being called, no one was present to report."

C. W. Journey of Boonville offered a resolution that was seconded and carried:

WHEREAS, By priority order of the Federal authorities, the use of open top railway cars for the carrying of material necessary for road building is forbidden; and,
WHEREAS, Such a condition will seriously interfere with the proposed improvement of the National Old Trails Road;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That this convention memorialize the Railroad Division of the Council for National Defense, Judge Lovitt [sic], Chairman, that restrictions against the use of cars for carrying road building material be removed, unless such action will unquestionably interfere with the greater needs of our Government.

Mr. C. A. Freeland of Leota, Kansas, discussed the Central Kansas Boulevard in that State, while Mr. Percy Devereux of Eades, Colorado, "spoke for the Colorado end of the Central Kansas

Boulevard, saying that on the eighty miles across Kiowa County, Colorado, there were only five road crossings and give bridges, and that twenty-three miles of the eighty were shale road”:

At this point Colonel E. W. Stephens again took the floor and made a very earnest and enthusiastic appeal to the Missouri delegates along the Old Trails road to throw off their coats and go to work; that it would be a shame and a disgrace if this road, with one hundred years of history behind it, appealing as it does to every patriotic social, religious and commercial interest in the whole country, should be permitted to lag behind in this great enterprise. He warmed the convention to a high pitch of enthusiasm, and closed by predicting the road would be finished across this state before the snow flies.

At that point, according to the summary of the meeting, Mrs. John Van Brunt of D.A.R.’s National Old Trails Road Committee “was then called upon unanimously and made a very pronounced patriotic appeal to the convention to build the National Old Trails road.”

One named trail lost its chance to be included in the National Old Trails Road:

The Golden Belt in Kansas lost its opportunity in not having as many delegates present as it should have had and in not making the strong showing that they could have made. Perhaps they will profit by this action by being more in evidence at the April meeting of this committee.

(The Golden Belt Road was initiated in 1910 to connect Junction City and Salena via Abilene. The following year it was extended from Kansas City to Colorado Springs, Colorado. [Habegger, Arman J., *Out of the Mud: The Good Roads Movement in Kansas, 1900-1917*, Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, Department of History, Graduate School, University of Kansas, October 1971, page 195]

The committee recessed to prepare a report on the routing issues:

It appearing to the satisfaction of this Committee that there is a very general and a very honest and earnest effort now being made along the line of the National Old Trails Road, as heretofore established in the states of Missouri, Kansas and Colorado, and that steps are being taken to comply with the requirements of the law, and it also appearing that similar activities are at work along the roads to which it has been suggested this road should be diverted;

Therefore, It is ordered by this Committee that we recommend a change in the location of the road as at present established from St. Charles east to the Mississippi at or near Alton, Illinois, and, we also recommend that the location as now established from Kansas City, Missouri, through Johnson County, Kansas, be changed to go through Kansas City, Kansas, and thence over the “Fort to Fort” road to the city of Lawrence, and thence south to a connection with the road as now established at Baldwin, Kansas; thence via Overbrook, Burlingame, Osage City, Council Grove, Herington and Lindsborg, connecting with the line heretofore adopted at McPherson, Kansas.

At present we are not prepared to suggest any other changes, but we notify all parties interested that this Committee will meet again on the 16th day of April, 1918, and upon that day we will take final action as to whether the road as now located shall remain as established, or whether it will abandon the present location in the state of Missouri from Fulton in Callaway County and adopt a line from thence across the Missouri River to a connection with the South Cross-State Highway and thence via Sedalia, Warrensburg, Pleasant Hill, Lees Summit, etc., or through Hustonia, Lexington, etc., to Kansas City, and, also, whether it shall remain across the state of Kansas as now located, except as above suggested, or whether it shall adopt the Golden Belt road from Lawrence through Topeka, Manhattan, Junction City, Salina, Little River, etc., to a connection with the Old Trails Road as now established at La Junta, Colorado.

The committee arranged for members to report to the association as soon as possible on actions in their counties and road districts. Similar arrangements were recommended for the Southern Cross-State Highway in Missouri and the Golden Belt and Fort to Fort roads in Kansas, with backers of each to report in time for the annual meeting in April.

On February 25, Judge Lowe sent a letter to all members regarding the meeting of the executive committee. He began:

I am mailing you copy of the decision reached by the Executive Committee last Saturday, by which the committee has unanimously recommended to the annual convention to change the route of the road as at present established, leaving out Johnson County, Kansas, and re-locating it via the "Fort to Fort" road to Lawrence, and thence south to Baldwin to a connection with the road as now established, and re-locating it from Herington west to Lindsborg, etc., thus leaving out Marion County, and changing the route of the road as now established by adopting a line from St. Charles, Missouri, to the Mississippi at or near Alton, Illinois, and thence to a connection with the Old Trails Road in Madison County, Illinois. These were the only direct changes adopted by the committee.

He referred to the gathering as "perhaps, the most remarkable road meeting, in many respects, ever held in this country":

It was the most determined and enthusiastic body of men ever assembled. Every county through which the road runs in three states, was represented except two, and these two lost the road. They reported wonderful and rapid progress, in almost every instance, and all, including the contested routes, pledged themselves to renewed activities and determination to be in condition to make final report to the committee at its April meeting. This meeting in April, which is the anniversary of the birth of this Association, will have the destiny of the road from beginning to end before it for final action.

Judge Lowe could not overestimate the importance of the meeting. "The whole destiny of this

entire proposition is at stake”:

The committee has given ample time for the completion of your work. Its spirit and determination is manifested by its action at the February meeting. This office will keep in constant touch with the people, not only along the road as now adopted, but of the new lines suggested, as well.

He noted a “point frequently referred to in the convention, and often exploited in the newspaper press, and that is the alarm over the labor situation”:

May it not be that the scarcity of agricultural labor has been brought about by the young men of the country abandoning the dreary, monotonous life on the farm because of the condition of the roads of the country, and not because they have joined the army.

Let us do our part (as much an act of pure patriotism as to enlist in the army) by raising the funds with which to build at least one great Transcontinental Highway, and never doubt for one moment that the labor will be available for its construction.

He pointed out that building the road would not affect farm labor. “Whoever saw a farmer boy working in a rock quarry, or pounding rock on a road, or in a cement mill or brick kiln?”:

The same class who built the railroads will build the wagon roads. They are not eligible for military service, nor farm work. They will willingly work on a road ten hours a day with the mercury at 100 degrees in the shade. They like camp life. Road building has much in common with military life. They are the sappers and miners in the vanguard of civilization. They cut down the mountains, bridge the rivers, and drain the swamps. They do not carry their wages away, but spend it like Princes in the vicinity of the camp. They bring a market to the farmers’ door; and when his work is done he slips into oblivion, and is forgotten. This class of labor is as abundant now as it ever was. Its scarcity will only appear in the contractor’s estimates. He knows just where to find it. Some types of road building call for expert labor, and this is as abundant as ever. The ideal time to give employment to this labor, and thus to enhance values of all kinds, and bring rest and contentment everywhere, is during the seasons of depression. It is foolish and almost criminal to suggest waiting until the war is over. Build roads now, keep the wheels in motion, and thus have things doing when the boys come back to a smiling, prosperous and happy home, with all its old isolation gone forever. Let’s not wait to impose this additional burden upon the soldier who is making a supreme sacrifice for his country.

He closed the message with this encouragement:

The governors of the states through which the road runs cannot do a more patriotic service than to make the prison labor of the country available for work on the roads. I have often said, and now repeat with emphasis, that the transportation question is the great, overwhelming question in winning this war. Roads over which armies and their

supplies can be transported are just as essential as railroads and ships. The common roads are the very foundation of the whole transportation problem. Let us then, unite patriotically and whole-heartedly in making this supreme effort; and if we do, before the snow flies again we shall have a splendidly constructed National Highway from Coast to Coast. He who counsels otherwise, is unpatriotic, and so densely ignorant of affairs as to entitle his opinion to little weight. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Judge Lowe followed up with a letter to OPRRE Director Page on March 1, 1918:

If you have patience to look thru the stuff I sent you under separate cover, I believe you will agree with me that we have the National Old Trails Road practically financed as far West as New Mexico. I therefore apply for and urge that the interned Federal prisoners, or such number as may be practicable, be put to work on this road in the States of New Mexico and Arizona.

I think you appreciate the fact that this is the one road established and located by Acts of Congress throughout its entire length as a National Highway, and that it is in truth and in fact, or will be when completed, an “all the year round” road.

Page reply on March 6 with a brief letter indicating he was “very greatly obliged for the information which you sent me concerning the National Old Trails Road.” [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Government Shifts on Road Building

In early 1918, the Federal Government began to adjust to conditions that had threatened road construction around the country. With the railroads unable to meet demands, trucks began to carry more of the freight needed for the war and the home front. The result was that roads built mainly for automobiles were chewed up by the flow of heavier vehicles.

Roy Chapin’s greatest accomplishment as chairman of the Highways Transport Committee illustrated the shift. As automakers rushed to produce the trucks needed to support military operations in France, the vehicles were transported by rail to the Atlantic Coast ports of embarkation. Chapin’s idea was to drive the trucks to port, freeing the railroad cars for other freight. Even before becoming chairman, he obtained approval for an experimental convoy, described in *America’s Highways 1976-1976*:

On November 22, 1917, a trail-blazing party consisting of representatives of the Ohio Highway Department, the Army, the Lincoln Highway Association, and the OPRRE left Toledo enroute to the East Coast. The route they selected crossed Ohio via Toledo and Akron to East Palestine, where the Pennsylvania Highway Department picked it up, continuing on to Pittsburgh and across the Allegheny Mountains to Harrisburg, Lancaster, and Philadelphia. This became the main military truck route. Later, other truck routes were designated by Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland over the Old National Road, and by Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York via Cleveland, Erie,

Buffalo, and Albany to New York City.

In December, the Army's Quartermaster General adopted the policy that the trucks would be driven to the coast to relieve railroad cars, with the first convoy leaving on December 14, 1917:

The first Army truck convoy left Toledo early in December 1917, at the beginning of one of the most severe winters in recent U.S. history. Three weeks later, on January 3, 1918, 29 of the 30 vehicles that began the trip rolled into Baltimore. This grueling trip was testimony to the durability of the war-model trucks and the endurance of the drivers, but most of all, to the superb maintenance efforts of the Pennsylvania Highway Department, which, as a result of careful preplanning, had kept the road open over the Alleghenies in the face of blizzards that left drifts 3 to 6 feet deep. In some places the crews worked around the clock to keep the road open. Teams and drags broke a track through the drifts, followed by horsedrawn road machines and homemade plows mounted on trucks. Altogether, 7 trucks and plows, 22 road machines, 20 drags, 105 teams, 3 tractors, and 200 men were thrown into this massive maintenance effort.

Through the remaining war, the Army sent 30,000 trucks to ports on the truck routes, "each loaded with 3 tons or more of spare parts and munitions," thereby releasing 17,250 railroad cars to carry other freight:

From a historical viewpoint, the main accomplishment of the truck routes was to demonstrate that it was possible to keep long stretches of highway open to traffic through a severe winter and that dependable long-distance interstate travel on the highways was desirable and even necessary. [*America's Highways 1776-1976*, pages 94-95]

A contemporary account of that trip stated that, "One of the thirty trucks starting the journey failed to finish, having been struck by a train en route," adding:

The snow was bad in Michigan and Ohio, but the highway transports committee believes both these states have learned complete lessons from this trip in regard to snow organization. Pennsylvania and Maryland, however, had their roads in excellent shape, using only men and shovels, because the snow plows did not arrive in time. The Highway Transports Committee wants all highway departments to remember that trucks demand wider clearance on roads than passenger cars. The committee is taking up this matter and also the further clearing and repair of roads enroute

The trip is remarkable in view of the fact that none of the drivers ever drove any truck before but were men taken from an infantry camp and placed at the wheels. Weather conditions were the most adverse possible. The convoy left Detroit at 4 below zero and fought through snow all the way up to Pennsylvania. Schools let out along the route, business men, military men and professional men turned out to give welcome to the trucks and the Red Cross had hot meals ready for the soldiers at every stop.

The trip completely proves the feasibility of motor truck transportation in all kinds of

weather. ["Truck Train Ends Trip," *Motor Age*, January 3, 1918, page 11]

Of course, other goods, including food, could be carried on the roads, as top officials in Washington were beginning to understand. Around the time of the initial convoys, Herbert Hoover, the future President, was the United States Food Administrator during the war. He sent the following telegram to Chairman O. E. Carlson of the Board of county commissioner of Twin Falls County, Idaho:

Sincerely hope you will be able to carry election for bond issue intended for permanent roads, as all improvements of this sort tend for general betterment in any community, and particularly for efficient transportation, which is one of the problems we face in our endeavor to reduce the cost between the producer and the consumer. ["Hoover on Road Improvement," *Good Roads*, January 5, 1918, page 2]

On February 2, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker responded to a January 31 letter from J. A. Bennett, president of the Arkansas-Louisiana Highway Improvement District. Bennett had informed Secretary Baker of the district's plans. Baker replied:

The construction of such roads will undoubtedly be of great value to the community, and incidentally to the state and nation, and in my opinion should receive proper encouragement. Furthermore, I may state that it is my opinion that the roads will be of considerable military value in case of military operations, or preparations for military operations in this vicinity. [Quoted in letter from Judge Lowe, March 18, cited below]

The issue of *Good Roads* for February 2, 1918, reported that Secretary of the Treasury James G. McAdoo, who also served as Director General of Railroads during the war, had requested Agriculture Secretary Houston "to curtail all federal aid work except that which is vitally important to the development of the transportation system of the country or to the opening up of territory for increasing important agriculture products." [Bishop, H. K., "Effect of the War On Road Improvement," *Good Roads*, February 2, 1918, page 60]

In response to the resolutions adopted by AASHO's executive committee met in Richmond, Secretary McAdoo wrote to George P. Coleman, chairman of the executive committee:

Your letter received enclosing the resolutions adopted at the Richmond meeting by members of your association, requesting an outline of a policy defining the character of roads or streets for the construction or maintenance of which cars will be furnished for the shipment of materials.

The United States Railroad Administration will cooperate with the Secretary of Agriculture by transporting materials for the construction of national highways designated by him as a military or economic necessity, for which the equipment is available and not needed to move supplies for the Army, Navy, Shipping Board, or other governmental activities. ["Position of the Railroad Administration on 1918 Road Work," *Good Roads*, March 2, 1918, page 127]

The same issue reprinted a communication from Secretary Houston to AASHO:

So far as it is practicable to do so, this department will urge the maintenance of the highways already constructed; the construction and completion of those highways which are vitally important because of their bearing upon the war situation or for the movement of commodities; the postponement of all highway construction relatively less essential or not based upon important military or economic needs. The department is preparing to suggest to the state highway departments the preparation of a schedule of work for the federal aid projects for 1918 in line with this policy.

OPPRE's Page had informed State highway agencies of this shift in November 1917, as noted earlier. Now, *Good Roads* reported, OPPRE had "sent out schedule forms, on which the states are requested to set forth the proposed federal aid work for the 1918 working season":

Included in the data called for by these schedules are: Descriptions of each road; the character, quantity and rail haul of the material to be used; the probable total cost; the amount of federal funds desired; the specific purpose of the improvement; its bearing upon the war situation, and a statement as to what would be the effect of delaying the work until 1919 or later.

The Agriculture Department released a statement that noted the uncertainties involved in the transportation of road materials, but added, "the expectations are that the transportation situation will be improved, and that the shipment of such materials for essential projects can be made." ["Government Position on 1918 Road Building Defined," *Good Roads*, February 2, 1918, page 61]

On March 18, Judge Lowe replied to a March 13 letter from C. W. Black, chairman of Building Commissioners at Council Grove, Kansas, and vice president of the National Old Trails Road Association. The reply began with a discussion of the general situation regarding construction of the National Old Trails Road which, he said, "could not well be more encouraging":

Since our Executive Committee Meeting of the 23rd of February, Ohio has let a contract for the construction of the last 13-mile section of the road in that state, and the last county in Illinois through which the road runs, has voted bonds for its construction. This completes the financing of the road, and insures its construction from Washington to St. Louis.

It is but simple justice to call attention to the fact that in both Indiana and Illinois, the counties through which the road runs have appropriated the general road funds of the county to its construction. When it is considered that in many of the counties the road runs on the extreme edge of the county, this indicates very strongly their appreciation of its value. Of course, any road would be of some value to every county, but when it is considered that this is indeed and in fact, a national road, then it becomes of inconceivable value to the people along its line, and, to a large degree, to all of the people in every county and state through which its [sic] runs.

Can it be true that the people of Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois are in a class by themselves, and that they appreciate its value, while the people of Missouri, Kansas and Colorado fail to understand its importance. I cannot believe that this is true, but I fully appreciate that at our annual meeting of April 17th and 18th, we shall be able to announce to the world that the building of the road is completely financed all the way to the Rocky Mountains, if not indeed, to the Pacific.

Black had asked Judge Lowe to state the position of the Federal Government on “Road Building”:

I answer this as well as I have been able to ascertain: Mr. Hoover, the greatest living expert in the line of food production and conservation, comes out squarely in favor of the building of such roads as this, viewed from the standpoint of marketing the food supplies of the country. Secretary of War Baker emphatically urged the building of roads which will be of military and commercial value. Secretary McAdoo has the financing of the greatest war in history resting upon his shoulders, which is indeed “some job,” and has not, so far as I know, actually passed upon this question; that is, to say whether he will encourage the sale of road bonds and certificates, in general, but there can be no doubt as to his position regarding the sale of such securities appropriated to the building of this road.

Judge Lowe quoted Secretary McAdoo’s letter to AASHO and Secretary Baker’s letter to Bennett. Having done so, Judge Lowe added:

Of course disquieting rumors will continue to come out of Washington. This is to be expected, but shall we “take to the woods” every time some disgruntled, pessimistic old fossil bursts a cap?

Pessimism never won a fight on any of life’s battle fields. It never gave birth to a great purpose, nor added anything to the general good. Its congenial habitat is in swamps and fens, where lizards and cotton-mouthed snakes abound and luxuriate on its miasmic poison. It never offered cool water to parched lips, nor planted hope in the heart of the dying. It never cuts the brambles and thorns, nor smooths the rough places in life’s pathway. It has neither inventive genius nor imagination. It never inspired a line worth remembering, nor added anything of value to the world’s literature. If this had been the only principle to escape from Pandora’s box, –If optimism, hope, imagination, etc., had not opposed it from the beginning, the world would have indeed and in fact been nothing but a mad-house. All the joys of life, all the hopes of the future would have been destroyed. Man, now “but little lower than the angels,” would then have been but little higher than the brute. Let him go “with his head in the clouds,” if you will; it is infinitely better than burrowing in the earth. Keep your eyes towards the sunrise, and your “wagon hitched to a star” is the only safe and sane rule of life. *Ad Astra per Aspera*.

(“*Ad Astra per Aspera*” is the motto of the State of Kansas, and means “to the stars through hardships.”)

In times of peace it produces gloom and discouragement, and in times of war is the fruitful source of treason and the sure precursor of disaster. Hiding behind pretended loyalty, it throws its slimy tentacles around the soldier, and breaks down the morale of the army.

If I had the power I would drive it out of all hearts and back to its native hell from whence it came, its only congenial abiding place.

One Henry Ford, in times like these, is of greater value to the world than 10,000,000 such men.

No one need have any fear but that the federal government will contribute the share to which this road is entitled, under the Appropriation Act of the last Congress, nor need they fear that any obstruction will be placed in the way of selling securities by counties, districts, etc., for building this road. Those who seek to leave this impression are simply seeking a way to find out how not to do anything. The thing for us to do is to “go forward,” never doubting for one instant that we shall succeed. An opportunity like this rarely comes to any people. No vision is broad enough to comprehend its full meaning.

Victor Hugo’s hero of the French Revolution, in his dungeon cell the night before his execution, exclaimed: “My motto is: Always forward. If God had wished man to go backward, he would have put an eye in the back of his head. Let us always look towards the sunrise, development, birth.” These were prophetic words, and entirely apply to the situation of today. “Go forward” should be the motto of everyone. Let the “dullards,” the “pull-backs,” the “do nothings,” “objectors,” the “pessimists,” whine and complain as they may, but this Association has long since adopted the motto of Hugo’s creation, and say to our people: “Go forward! Look toward the sunrise, development, birth,” and the 17th and 18th of next April will witness our triumphant victory. It is up to Kansas, Missouri and Colorado now, and I know just what their decision will be.

(The Victor Hugo quote is from his final novel, *Ninety-Three*, published in 1874.)

Judge Lowe concluded:

The Capital Issues Committee of Federal Reserve Board, at Washington says, that every application for approval of bond issues must stand on its own merit. We are perfectly satisfied with this ruling of the Committee. It may not be wise for this Committee or any Committee to tie its hands in advance, but when we are ready to make application there can be no reasonable doubt of its approval. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Judge Lowe, in his reference to a contract in Ohio, was referring to one of the worst sections of the road east of Columbus. Despite the obstacles to road construction, *Motor Age* for March 28, 1918, reported that Ohio planned to complete its section of the National Old Trails Road east of

Zanesville:

Instructions have been issued by Ohio officials to finish the gaps of the National highway between Columbus and the Ohio river. Recently a tour of the road was made by Governor Cox and other state officials, and it was found that several stretches are still to be improved to make an ideal highway to the east. Convicts will be used to complete the work, which will be rushed as rapidly as possible. It is said forty Army trucks will be moved from the West to the Atlantic seaboard from the West to the Atlantic seaboard and the National highway will be used. In Muskingum County a stretch of 12 miles will be paved with brick and in Guernsey County crushed stone will be used. ["Ohio to Complete National Highway," *Motor Age*, March 28, 1918, page 48]

As described in *Dependable Highways*, paving over the past 5 years had repaired "much that was practically impassable":

The entire length of the road in Belmont County, westward from Wheeling, is brick paved, 16 feet wide for 28 miles. Some paving remains to be done in Guernsey County, but the worst section for many years has been east of Zanesville.

The work underway involved an approximately 14-mile section from Zanesville to New Concord, which was being graded for a brick pavement, with new culverts:

The work . . . is being carried on in three parts. Grading is nearly completed, curbing is in course of construction, and more than a third of the 5,000,000 paving bricks required have been delivered. Original plans required that the work should be completed by the Fourth of July, and it is not too much to expect that these plans will be realized.

The new pavement will be 16 feet wide, with a 6-inch concrete edging on each side. The foundation is to be rolled stone or slag 6 inches deep. Stone and slag will be supplemented to some extent by crushed brick bats and other material suitable for the purpose from a neighboring brick plant. Changes of grade have made it necessary to alter or replace many of the old stone culverts. New culverts are mainly vitrified clay pipe with concrete head walls.

For the most part no great amount of filling has been necessary. The country through which the road passes is sharply rolling, and where grade changes have been necessary the length of haul has been short, in many instances only a few hundred feet.

Consequently most of the grading is being done with plows and drag scrapers. Sub-grade is being rolled with 8 to 10-ton rollers. ["Dirt Flies on National Road in State of Ohio," *Dependable Highways*, May 1918, pages 5-7]

The same issue described the use of convicts for the project:

Ohio is using convicts in the construction of the National Road in Guernsey and

Muskingum Counties. Governor James M. Cox declared the situation an emergency. The highway must be finished for the movement of thousands of government trucks now under construction in the middle west.

Prisoners live in an essentially war-time camp. Two barrack buildings, one a mess hall and the other a dormitory, are now in use; another dormitory is being built. A bath house and cold storage plant will follow. Provisions are being made for welfare work. Baseball equipment will be sent to the camp and reading matter is provided. There will be no Sunday work, and religious exercises will be held.

The contractor pays the State \$1.50 a day for each man. The men, in turn, receive 5 cents an hour, their regular rate of pay for prison work. The State furnishes subsistence.

Guards are provided from the same penitentiaries from which the men came, but prisoners wear no distinguishing marks. Contractors report that the plan is proving valuable at the very onset. ["Ohio Uses Convicts on National Road," *Dependable Highways*, May 1918, page 10]

On the same day as Judge Lowe's letter to Black, March 18, 1918, the Council of National Defense made public, at Chapin's insistence, a policy statement on the use of motor trucks for relieving the transportation situation:

The Council of National Defense approves the widest possible use of the motor truck as a transportation agency and requests the state councils of defense and other state authorities to take all necessary steps to facilitate such means of transportation, removing any regulations that tend to restrict and discourage such use.

Motor Age added:

Such announcement of policy, bearing as it does the stamp of Federal authority, will have most important effect on widening the use of the motor truck and highways for transportation of freight, as it will tend to restrict ill-advised measures of state or local authorities, such as unwise taxation and load regulations. ["Council O.K.'s Trucking," *Motor Age*, March 21, 1918, page 15]

Work was underway, of course, in other States. For example, OPRRE approved 11 Federal-aid projects in New Mexico, including two on the National Old Trails Road:

Project No. 3 calls for the construction of a road 9 miles in length, extending from Santa Fe southeastward to Glorietta, and forms a portion of an ocean-to-ocean highway. The improvement forms a part of State Highway No. 1 and of the National Old Trails Road. The road will be improved with a gravel surface and about \$14,000 of Federal Aid has been granted.

Project No. 4 involves the improvement of a road between Sandia and Armijo station on

the National Old Trails Road in Valencia county, the total length being 34.7 miles. The character of improvement will be a graded and drained earth road surface with gravel where needed. Federal Aid to the extent of about \$19,000 has been granted. ["New Mexico Roads Get Federal Aid," *American Motorist*, March 1918, page 25]

The 1918 Convention

The Seventh Annual Convention of the National Old Trails Road Association was held in the convention room of the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce on April 17 and 18, 1918. Judge Lowe's call for the convention explained:

The Executive Committee will meet the day previous (the 16th), pursuant to the order made at its meeting on the 23rd day of February, and will then make final decision touching the re-location of the road at points along its line, where the people have been derelict in providing for its construction.

This will perhaps be the most important annual meeting of this Association, as the whole future of this enterprise will be up for final decision. [National Archives at College park, Maryland]

Two hundred representatives from nine of the Old Trails States attended. Reports from the States indicated that, as *Better Roads and Streets* put it, the road "was either completely hard-surfaced, or the funds were provided for completing it from Washington to St. Louis, and from that point to Los Angeles probably one-third was completed in detached sections, and every county through Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado, not now completed, was actively and enthusiastically engaged in holding bond elections and thus securing funds for its building." The convention set the date of June 27 "for final report from the three States last mentioned. There is scarcely any doubt but what the road will be financed by that time through these three States."

Many of the States and counties represented at the convention, according to *Motor Age* "came with fear in their hearts that their earnest work in promoting bond issues would go for naught." They were "given aroused enthusiasm" when a telegram was read from Henry C. Flower, a member of the Advisory Committee to the Capital Issues Committee of the Federal Reserve Board:

This board has not intended by anything heretofore given out to leave the impression that we are opposed to good roads. On the contrary, we are unanimously and enthusiastically in favor of good roads everywhere. Especially do we favor the construction of such roads as will be of imperative military or immediate marked economic value. Entertaining these views, we, however, reserve the right in the present dire emergency to pass upon each individual proposition according to its merits with the view in each case of submitting everything to the acid test of helping to win the war.

The article continued:

The road project that received immediate stimulation was the improvement of the National Old Trails road from East St. Louis across Illinois, bonds for a third the cost of which have been voted by the counties, the state having already promised, with Federal money available, the other two-thirds. The Illinois delegates to the convention were urged to appeal to Governor [Frank O.] Lowden and to Federal authorities and committee, for the release of this project, and the national association will help where possible.

Mr. E. R. Moses of Great Bend, Kansas, represented the Kansas Highway Commission, offered a testimonial to Judge Lowe's efforts:

Now, my friend President Lowe has been for six years giving his time to the National Old Trails road fight; and if it shall be built throughout this country it will be largely due to his courageous persistence. I think he has been long in the position described in the telegram, as the story goes, that was sent in the Russian-Japanese war. Telegrams were being sent from the front to the government at home as to the condition of General Kuropatkin, and it was said that Kuropatkin was in *statu quo*. And they scratched their heads over what that might mean, and finally one sage volunteered the explanation that it meant that he was in a hell of a fix. Now, there have been times when that described the situation of our President here, and it is up to your people and all of us to marshal our forces and put this over the top, and it must be done I want to see it accomplished, so that before President Lowe dies he can ride all along over this road, not as a conquering hero, but one who loves his fellow men and one who had marshaled the forces of progress to bring about that result – a man who believes in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

As for the condition of the road in Kansas, he explained his philosophy:

You need not be afraid about Kansas not doing her part. She will have her roads built just as quickly as any state in the Union; and I want to say to you, more cheaply and at less expense [But] it is not altogether the help that men receive that counts. The man or boy that is constantly looking for help never accomplishes anything; but those that are put upon their own resources and energy in competition with their neighbors, and who go to work with the best they have, are the ones who accomplish things So let me tell you, gentlemen and ladies, if this road is going to be built in your state or in your county, it is going to be built by your push and energy. It means that you, as has been done in every county through which these roads have been built, shall rally the people of your communities and see that the thing is done.

He did not specify when Kansas would complete its section of the National Old Trails Road.

The delegates debated the proposal to change the routing of the road through several the States, but the convention retained the current routing after delegates from those States demonstrated sufficient improvements had been completed and others were under construction. Partisans of

the present route were able to show sufficient road building progress accomplished and under construction to retain the routing as it has been during the past year.

The convention reelected Judge Lowe as president, C. W. Black as vice-president, and Frank A. Davis as secretary.

The convention also unanimously endorsed Judge Lowe to succeed the late Senator Stone. *Better Roads and Streets* reported that “A resolution urging Governor Gardner to appoint him was adopted by the convention to the accompaniment of deafening cheers”:

This is indeed good news and Better Roads and Streets joins in endorsing Judge Lowe and urging his appointment by the governor of Missouri. We know the sterling character of the man and have admired his unceasing efforts as president of the National Old Trails Road Association. Surely he would be an able representative of the “Show Me” State [May 1918]

(Instead, Governor Frederick D. Gardner appointed an attorney and Democratic party official, Xenophon P. Willfley. He took office on April 30, lost election to a full term, and left office after November 5, 1918.)

The magazine added:

In order that the delegates might get back home and at work in helping feed the nation the convention was confined to one day. The work was speeded up and all unnecessary business was omitted.

[“National Old Trails Road Association’s Convention,” *Better Roads and Streets*, May 1918, pages 210, 212; “N.O.T. Meeting,” *Motor Age*, April 25, 1918, page 22; “The National Old Trails Meeting,” *Kansas Highways*, July 1918, pages 18-19]

New Conditions in Transportation

By spring 1918, the Federal Government was acknowledging the role of good roads to the war effort. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce held its sixth annual meeting in Chicago on April 10-12, 1918. Roy Chapin was among several speakers on the topics of motor truck transportation and highway improvements. His subject was “New Conditions in Transportation.” He began:

In the past six months there has come to our view an entirely new picture in transportation in America. We are standing at the threshold of wonderful new developments. We have seen the railroads taken over by the United States government, and, simultaneously, we have seen the highways of the country taken over by the people of this country to haul goods which could not be hauled during this period of railroad congestion by the railroads themselves.

In the whole history of transportation, highway transportation has been the patient

drudge. Suddenly the motor truck has come forward and has supplied for the highways what the steam engines supply for the railroads and the electric car supplied for the interurban systems – rapid transit. This has brought about, as you realize, many, many new conditions.

The conditions which I shall hope to discuss in my paper are not only conditions as pertaining to the roadbed itself but as pertaining to the development of types of traffic which we, I think have not yet seen or pictured in our imagination.

Highways, Chapin said, “must play their part, especially in this war condition,” resulting in the Council of National Defense creating the Highways Transport Committee, which he chaired. It was “the first committee or organization of any authority under the Government which has ever paid any attention to highways traffic.” The committee had been trying to “keep abreast with the times, with these rapid new things that have come to pass within the last six months, due to the utter necessity of war transportation needs.”

Highway traffic was “coming fast now”:

No limitation has been placed, I am glad to say, on the use of gasoline for highway vehicles, but we are leaving the stage in this country when you and I and possibly all the rest of us have in the past rather looked on the roads of this country as for the use of pleasure cars, as some of you like to call them, and passenger cars as the rest of us like to call them. The carrying of passengers, due to the great growth in the motor car industry, has developed to the point where millions and millions of people are riding daily over the roads of this country, but suddenly we come to a new picture where the traffic of the country, the freight that must travel and the express that must travel are now seeking the highways as an additional opening due to the fact, partly, that the railroads are congested; and due also to the fact that the time was just right, the dawn is just breaking on highway transportation. What the years to come will show no one can predict. I am going to outline to you as well as I can what we see in Washington today in the way of possibility, new possibilities in the highway transportation field.

At present, 100 percent of all commodities move on the roads at some stage. In fact, “the highways of our country carry more, carry a great deal more tonnage in a year’s time than do the railroads.” The greater efficiency of motor transportation, compared with horse-drawn movements, prompted the committee to direct its efforts to the “study of the possibility of motor transportation, and that is for this reason that the motor transport fills a niche that is not filled by any other means of haulage.”

As a result, in the last 2 weeks, the Council of National Defense had “recognized the utility and the necessity of motor transportation.” He was referring to the resolution, cited earlier, about approving “the widest possible use as a transportation agency of the motor truck.” This resolution put “the stamp of Governmental approval on the new means of transport.” It was recognition that the motor truck could provide what the railroads, interurban lines, and waterways could not, namely “transportation from door to door.”

The committee was working with railroad officials to “take off of the railroads the short movement, which is congesting their terminals, and place that movement on the highways, where I might say it legitimately belongs from every economical standpoint, which would be helping them just that much in this present serious situation.”

Especially in the heavily congested eastern zone, every large city had “established intercity truck lines, plying back and forth on a regular schedule, carrying goods out at a more rapid rate than either the railroads or express lines, and in many instances taking them right from your door and delivering them to the door of your consignee.” The motor lines would soon “form a perfect net work throughout our whole United States, and they will live not because they are well financed, not because they are run by an enthusiast, they will simply live on a competitive basis where they can prove that they will carry that traffic more quickly, more expeditiously and more safely than any other means of transportation.”

One problem the committee found was that motor trucks were entering the city fully loaded, then returning empty. In the fall of 1917, an experiment was undertaken in Connecticut based on experience in England. Fourteen local return loads bureaus were established, “all listed in the telephone books as return loads bureaus.” That way, the drivers could find loads to carry to their originating city or area. The idea was spreading to nearby States, including New Jersey and Rhode Island. “This coming week a transport return bureau is to be established in New York City.” Philadelphia was next.

One of the committee’s special interests was the shipment of food. “Out about the various cities of this country are thousands and tens of thousands of acres of land which could ship into the city a very large amount of food if any means were obtainable to get that food in easily and on a daily basis.” The previous fall, the committee “found in Maryland a very wonderful system of rural express wagons was in operation”:

These rural express wagons start from the farm and they run into Baltimore. They run into Washington, but most of them run into Baltimore Those lines in the main reach farms that are not on the railroads or not upon any interurban line.

After study of systems around the country, the committee concluded that the rural express system in Maryland was “the best system of any state in the country.” It “supplies transportation to the farmer and gives it to him daily, economical and efficient transportation that he can count on, to do the work and a convenient transportation.”

The committee was working with the Food Administration and the Department of Agriculture to expand rural express systems:

No one can sit here and predict at the moment where the highway transportation is going and how big it is going to get. But, I can say this, I look for it to come just as surely as can be. That highway transportation is going to link up the farms of this United States on a regular service and on their main highway in this country, and that within a space of a very, very few years; in conjunction with the Quartermaster Corps of the Army and the

Engineering Corps our committee was called on to assist in laying out the so-called military motor truck routes.

He discussed transport of trucks, under their own power, to the ports for shipment to France:

The greatest difficulty in bringing those trucks east this winter was not the men or their lack of training, nor was it the trucks. It was the snow upon the roads. I do not know whether you realize it or not. We have rather been in the habit of, in this country, taking it for granted that when snow fell on our country highways we might just as well wait a while to use them, but when you are in war you cannot wait for snow to melt. These trucks had to go through, and they went through. They went through, I might say, from Detroit to Baltimore over roads that were in the main cleared, and cleared quite well, by the various state and county and township officials living along the line, who did that as a patriotic duty. They said if they want to go through we will clear those roads so that they can go through. And they cleared the way.

Based on experience with the trucks-for-France trips, Chapin predicted “we are coming to a point in this country and I hope it won’t be long, when the highway traffic will be of such importance in our nation that the main highways in our state will be cleared 365 days in the year.” It was inefficient to spend \$20,000 a mile to build roads that could not be used in winter. “It is inefficiency, and it is something I think possibly the army trucks by the examples that they have set and the experience that they have had is going to change.”

Another lesson learned from the extraordinary snow removal is that “where snow is removed, the experience of the highway engineers is that it is shown that the break up of that road in the spring is not anywhere near as heavy as the break up would have been if the snow had stayed on that road until spring comes.”

Local conditions, of course, varied around the country among the modes of transportation:

Traffic over the waterways very frequently must come to the boat over the highway. I am full of predictions to-day, but we are going to match up the waterway system – inland waterway system – with the inland highway transportation system, which will take freight from the stations, and take it down to the waterway system and deliver it to the boat and the boat will take it and then again the motor truck will take it from the boat at destination and deliver it to the final destination.

The result “means much for the commerce of your particular communities.” He urged creation of local committees to study the topic:

Such a committee could give the whole matter their intelligent thought; such a committee might develop a very excellent point of contact [sic] with which our committee might work, and many of the questions which are coming up in the city from which you come. It is something I would like to have you take home and consider and if such committees are appointed just advise the Highway Committee [of the] National Council of Defense,

Washington, and we will see that you will be kept in touch with what we are doing.

Unlike in France, the United States did not own any roads or highways except within public land:

Whether that condition will come where we will have routes similar to the main roads of France, maintained and controlled absolutely by the French government, whether the time will come when we will have those roads in the main highways of this Government, whether that time will ever come I cannot say. It rests with you. You are the Government. The government takes over what it should take over. So that really in a matter of that sort it is impossible to predict.

It is simply a question of what the people of this country want.

Either way, a “new type of transportation carrying every year millions of tons of freight is coming into being, and it has possibilities you cannot put down on paper. It has perhaps the greatest potentiality or potential possibility of any form of transportation that we have. We are going to have a net-work of good highways in this country. If we cannot have them during this war, we can have some of them. We ought to have all those highways which are essential to the conduct of business – the conduct of our military establishment. All of these highways will help to win the war.”

He concluded:

It seems reasonable to me that the movement of all the freight in the future in America for moderate distances is going to be over the highways from door to door. This is certainly worthy of your careful study. You are going to see articles and literature of all sorts, and you will have all sorts of opportunities to become more familiar with it, because the development of highway transportation is looked up as news to-day.

I want to impress on you that you can help guide this form of transportation. This is your opportunity to be in at the beginning of the wonderful new form of transport in these United States, and to each one of you individually to help guide the future of this wonderful new mode of transportation. [Chapin, Roy D., “New Conditions in Transportation,” *Motor Age*, April 18, 1918, pages 18-20]

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce adopted a resolution calling for:

Whereas, it is apparent that the present traffic burden is beyond the capacity of the railroads, and that the vigorous and successful prosecution of the war is hampered thereby; it is therefore imperative that our great rivers, canals and intercoastal water routes, as well as our main highways, should be forthwith used to move freight; be it therefore

Resolved by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States that the Government,

through the president and Director-General of Railroads, be petitioned:

1. To organize and operate existing equipment and construct new equipment for use upon the inland and coastwise waterways in accordance with the authority recently conferred by Congress in the Transportation bill.
2. To complete trunk highways for heavy traffic where they can be useful in relieving railroad congestion.
3. To adopt a permanent policy, assuring co-ordination of railroads, water routes and highways for traffic service. ["U.S.C. of C. Meeting," *The Road-Maker*, May 1918, page 41]

Adapting to Highway Transportation

Highway development, to a large extent, depended on bond issues by State and local governments to pay for their own work and to provide revenue to match Federal-aid highway funds. Members of AASHO's executive committee met in Washington with Federal officials to discuss the limitation of highway bond issues in a way that will be most helpful to the country during the war. F. H. Goff, a member of the Capital Issues Advisory Committee, represented the Federal Reserve. OPRRE Director Logan Page participated in the meeting.

The AASHO representatives quoted a letter from Secretary McAdoo in which he said:

We are engaged in a great war, a war in which the very safety of America is seriously imperilled. We can not win this war unless every resource of the Nation is carefully husbanded and used with the utmost intelligence. The great financial operations of the government, greater than those ever undertaken by any government in the history of civilization, make it essential that every unnecessary expenditure by the Government, by the States and municipalities, and by private corporations, and individuals be avoided while the war is in progress. Unless this is done it will be impossible for the people of the United States to support its soldiers and sailors who are shedding their blood for us upon the battlefields.

Goff made clear that in the Federal Reserve's view, State, county, municipal, corporate, and individual "financing should be strictly limited to projects which will contribute to the successful prosecution of the war, or which are necessary for public health and welfare." Local and personal interests must be subordinated to the public welfare. Only by enforcing "the most rigid economy" in all such matters, could the United States "hope to bear its part of the financial burden of the war and to release sufficient labor and materials for war purposes without depletion of our resources."

An account of the meeting in *Better Roads and Streets* added:

Highway construction and maintenance calls during normal times for an outlay of some three hundred million dollars annually. The Federal Government co-operates directly with the States through a large Federal appropriation and pays fifty per cent. of the cost

of selected roads. L. W. Page, director of the Bureau of Public Roads, explained that already his bureau was co-operating with all of the forty-eight State highway departments in a most rigid selective consideration of all highway projects under the provisions of the Federal Aid Road Act, to the end that only those which are of military or special economic importance should be approved. That the people should be taken fully into the confidence of the State and Federal officials and asked to co-operate in the weeding out of unnecessary public improvements, was the unanimous sentiment of the officials present. [*Better Roads and Streets*, April 1918, pages 150-151]

Highway Transportation Jeopardized

S. M. Williams of the Highway Industries Association addressed the Highway Traffic Association of the State of New York on April 16, 1918. Williams began:

Are we as a people serious as to the importance of highway transportation? Do we believe that highway transportation is necessary for the building up of the great industrial and agricultural industries of our country? It will be necessary for us to come to a definite conclusion as to these facts before we are in a position to consider highway transportation as being jeopardized.

Because transportation is “the foundation of civilization” in any country, neglect of the roads “would mean that they would be left behind in the race by more enlightened localities.” The importance of roads at present differed from the past only “in the increased demand”:

Official Washington has for many years closed both eyes and ears to the public highway, and their refusal to allow the highways of our country to be improved so that they might take their proper place in our great system of transportation is to-day penalizing the country many times the cost of highway improvement.

In this time of war, he believes citizens had a duty to support the government “in whatever it undertakes,” but also to “frankly and fearlessly” call attention to its “errors in judgment when we conscientiously believe they exist and are of great importance to the welfare of our country.”

Notwithstanding the importance of good roads to the war effort, “we find ourselves facing a second year of retrenchment in highway improvement, and only a few months ago the public was astonished to read that the highway construction of our country was placed in the same classification as the manufacture of musical instruments and the building of theaters.” Given that attitude, those who understand the importance of good roads must “join together and place their collective experience and energy at the disposal of the country and back of an intelligent campaign of highway education”:

It is time that our National Government should assume its own responsibility in highway development, and should build and maintain certain classes of roads without obligating States and counties. In this I do not mean that States or counties should be relieved of their own individual responsibilities in highway development.

There should be co-ordination of responsibilities based upon definite policies that will insure an intelligent highway program upon the part of the Nation, State, and county.

Williams pointed out that nine government departments were “directly interested in highway development – the departments of Agriculture, War, Post Office, Commerce, Interior, Labor, the Food, Fuel, and Railroad Administration – and that notwithstanding our highways are just as important to our country as our railways, we find the highways without similar consideration or representation.”

State highway officials complained that they had no centralized national authority with power to act. “The Office of Public Roads is doing all they can, but they are without either authority or power.” The agency was “subordinate to another branch of the government, which should not be the case.” The time was “fast approaching, if it is not here, when the people of the United States will not stand for further subordination of the highways of our country to the interests of other agencies of transportation.”

The warring countries of Europe would, “for years at least,” look to the United States “for a large part of the enormous quantities of materials of construction that will be required in repairing the hundreds of millions of dollars’ damage from shell fire” and other sources. Demand in the United States also will increase. “It is safe to say that in the minds of the people of the United States there must be many changes and more efficiency in all transportation of our country”:

They will no longer be satisfied with its development upon a single trackplan – that of the railroads; they will demand that every form of transportation, including the highways, waterways, and railways, steam and electric, be developed to their highest point of efficiency so that each type may take its proper place in the general system of transportation.

With regard to the “dilatatory and negligent policy of general highway development,” he cited the difficulty of road building “because labor must be considered for the industries, the farms, and lumber camps.” Williams considered this assumption a misunderstanding. Many workers who left the road field for war-related work had returned to their original field. This reality illustrates “that labor to a degree only is mobile and that a workman skilled in one line, mastered in from ten to twenty years, cannot quickly, if at all, become proficient in an entirely new craft.” In addition, prisons had many “able-bodied and sound-minded male prisoners” who could be used in highway construction.

The other issue affecting road construction was the shortage of rail cars for the movement of roadbuilding materials. It demanded “serious consideration”:

What the result will be, I am not able to predict, but I am sure as necessity of road construction and maintenance is forced upon Government by the complete breaking down of our highways under the excessive traffic demands, ways and means will be found for the movement of necessary materials.

Williams stated that railroad officials had told him that if the question were left to them and the communities they serve, “in most cases the equipment can be furnished in such a manner as to not seriously interfere with the movement of other commodities.”

He also noted the “considerable comment” from officials about the need to curtail road construction “on account of finance and great emphasis is placed upon the passing of the Capital Issues committee upon all bonds for road improvement in amounts over one hundred thousand dollars”:

They fail, however, to tell the public that from eighty to eighty-five per cent. of all road construction in the United States is financed by tax levy, automobile and motor truck fees, and that only fifteen to twenty per cent. comes from bond issues. They also overlook the fact that the money from tax levy or fees is raised regardless of war and that it cannot be used for any other purpose than road construction or maintenance.

Williams concluded the speech with a brief discussion of the situation in New York State that had been in the news recently. In 1916, the New York State Highway Commission had failed to meet its road construction quota for the first time. It finished only half the mileage completed in 1915. The high cost of labor was partly responsible, a problem that worsened in 1917 because of the war. Michael R. Fein, in his book about the State’s road building program, explained that Highway Commissioner Edwin Duffey, an attorney and political operative, was concerned about labor costs:

Duffey recommended a decreased appropriation until the price of labor stabilized. After the United States declared war on the Central Powers in April, the legislature made no highway appropriations at all. The wartime emergency sharply reduced the supply of men and materials and limited the availability of transportation service. Highway work ground to a standstill. Completed mileage (primarily projects begun in 1916) totaled about a third of the peak 1915 mileage. No new construction was begun in the wartime year of 1918. [Fein, Michael R., *Paving the Way: New York Road Building and the American State, 1880-1956*, University Press of Kansas, 2008, page 73]

Williams asked, “Does it not cause you to wonder whether the policy of road construction in your State has not been to secure the greatest number of miles with the money available rather than the building of such highways that will meet the traffic burdens awaiting them?” He could not agree with a “non-go-ahead program in highway building,” explaining:

Traffic will not stop growing because we stop highway work. We might just as well talk about stopping railroad development, and then expect the railroads to meet the traffic demands upon them.

He concluded:

While highway transportation, through the use of the motor truck has already reached some proportion, it is really in its infancy and we must provide for it in no uncertain

terms. We must build roads and more roads, and they must provide for a very heavy increase in heavy tonnage in the near future.

We must also give consideration to adequate bridge construction. A road is only as strong as its weakest link, hence a heavy tonnage highway with weak bridges would be of little value

We should remember that our highway officials cannot build roads beyond the expectation and demand of their constituents and therefore if we do not support them in the building of roads that will be adequate for the traffic demands of to-day with safe margin for future traffic development, we will fail in our duty as good citizens. [Williams, S. M., "Highway Transportation Jeopardized," *Better Roads and Streets*, May 1918, pages 198-201]

Signs That Signify

In May 1918, *Motor Age* published an article about the value of signs. Signboards helped motorists find their way, but also assisted them in finding needed services and sights worth seeing:

Naturally, the motorist could halt his car and make inquiry, provided he is within inquiring distance of some one or some place. The difficulty with this plan is that in addition to loss of time, the person he directs this question to may not know the answer. Many disappointing replies have been received in answer to questions made by transcontinental or even local motorists. The source of information may be honestly mistaken or he may give data as to a turn at this tall tree and the passing of that school house, another turn at the white church, "not the brick church, just beyond, you understand."

The author cited several examples from a recent tour from Chicago to Colorado:

The National Old Trails, of which the Boone's Lick Trail is a part, served for most of the course across Missouri. In most localities it is pre-eminently well marked as to banded telephone poles and metal corner signs mounted usually upon metal posts and indicating the main trail, as distinguished from tributary roads, also giving distances to the nearest small towns and the most important large cities, as Kansas City. Columbia has in the middle of a business street an excellent sign of this route, mounted upon a pedestal, naming the city itself, with a westward arrow showing the direction and distance of Boonville and Kansas City and an eastward arrow pointing, with the terms of mileage, to Fulton and St. Louis.

The state of Missouri has co-operated with the Daughters of the American Revolution to place red granite monuments further marking this trail at scattered intervals. Among the most elaborate of these is one at the Salt Creek Church site. Beside it a high arch, borne by pillars, crosses the road, indicating the cemetery beyond, established in 1817, just a

century before these markers were photographed. The site is a “heaven-kissing hill” with an inspiring outlook, an ideal spot for a halt to meditate upon the past of a fair land. The old church is gone, but the mossy, toppling gravestones remain and the grass is kept cut. Most of the burial dates were about 1844.

At New Franklin, not far from the mid-state channel of the chocolate-brown Missouri, this same body of patriotic women has erected an even larger monument to the pioneers who trod this road before us. The inscription is, “Capt. William Bicknell, of Franklin, father of the Santa Fe Trail, with four companions led the first organized trade expedition to Santa Fe, Sept. 1, 1821 . . . This trail, one of the greatest highways of the world, stretched nearly 1000 miles from Franklin, Mo., to Santa Fe, N. Mex. From Civilization to Sundown. Marked by the Daughters of the Revolution and the State of Missouri, 1909.”

A justifiable mention of family pride and a feeling of public spirit seems to have prompted one farmer. Framed by a high background of trees, shrubs and vines a large sign at the fence reads, “Old Homestead settled by J. F. Rice, 1852. Best Wishes to All. J. D. Rice.”

Along the Santa Fe trail occasional stone monuments appeared, as upon the other historic trail to the eastward. At Buckner three of these stones are grouped.

One progressive farmer had painted his silo as a landmark using three broad bands, the red, white and blue of the National Old Trails group of connecting old roads, now modernized.

Educative signs picked up in the Sunflower state, including those giving the altitudes of cities. Those who had never visited the state before may have a mistaken idea that the high plain begins in Eastern Colorado. Successive city signs teach the error, for the western portion of the state is much higher above sea level than the eastern. Among signs of interest Bonner Springs warns, “Ten dollars’ fine for hallooing and disturbing the peace.” The Ogden monument marks the geographical center of the United States. At Brookville was the first signs of a free camp ground. Wilson placards, “Tourists welcome. Wilson Club. Telephone Building.” Near Ellinwood is a stone Santa Fe marker. Pawnee Rock does a worth-while act in placarding on its main street the existence and direction to Pawnee Rock State park, a few blocks away.” Here a monument in a neatly kept square, surmounting a little hill where pioneers, with several famous scouts, held the Indians at bay, is dedicated, “In honor of the brave men and women who, passing over the old Santa Fe Trail, endured the hardships of frontier life and blazed the path of civilization for posterity.”

LaJunta offers camps at 25 cents per night per car, fuel and water to boot. Rocky Ford advertises to wayfarers a free camp site at her fairgrounds. [“Signs That Signify,” *Motor Age*, May 16, 1918, pages 5-7]

New Restrictions

In OPRRE's annual report for fiscal year (FY) 1918, Director Page explained that in the early spring, "it became apparent that unless positive action was taken, serious difficulty might arise in obtaining the necessary bituminous materials for highway work during the season of 1918." He worked with the Fuel Administration to establish a permitting plan that was released to road and street officials seeking bituminous materials for use in road and street work. The message began:

In order that the fuel oil requirements of our Allies, as well as our own Army and Navy and essential war industries, may be fully satisfied, it is found necessary to limit the use of petroleum and coal in the manufacture of road products, such as asphalt, road binders, road oils, tar binders or dressings.

The United States is now being drawn upon to an ever increasing extent for petroleum products, especially fuel oil. It will be appreciated that this demand must be satisfied. Commencing this date we request that all highway work in your state of any character, including municipal work involving the use of the above mentioned materials, be passed upon by your State Highway Department. A special permit of the Fuel Administration, Oil Division, will be required before delivery of purchases will be authorized

Preference will be given to material for maintenance and repair work. The supply of the above materials is so limited that it is requested that all new construction involving these materials be deferred this year except in cases where such work is necessary toward winning the war.

He included the forms for approval to use the oil-based materials for maintenance, reconstruction, or new construction. The forms were to be approved by the State highway department and mailed to Page, "acting as chairman of a committee which will consider the necessity of the material being supplied and make their recommendations to the Oil Division of the Fuel Administration, which will issue permits in accordance with the recommendations when the necessary material is available." The State's certificate would indicate that State officials were fully aware of the project and that "a genuine and urgent necessity existed for the work therein described."

Page requested that each recipient of his letter "give this matter full publicity, so that all parties concerned will be familiar with the procedure necessary to procure supply of these materials." ["Government Restrictions on Bituminous Materials for Roads and Streets," *Good Roads*, May 18, 1918, page 254]

Page summarized the result in the annual report:

Under that arrangement several thousand applications for approval of highway projects were submitted to the office and permits were issued by the Fuel Administration in line with the arrangement for amounts of bituminous materials equivalent to upward of 100,000,000 gallons. This work, however, was merged in June 1918, into the work of the

United States Highways Council, and the totals to June 30, inclusive, cover in addition to results obtained under the original arrangement, those obtained under the operation of the United States Highways Council for the period from June 8 to June 30, inclusive. To the close of the fiscal year, a total of 2,235 applications had been received, calling for the equivalent of 75,000,000 gallons of bituminous materials, of which 58,000,000 gallons had been approved and permits issued. [Page, L. W., Report of the Director of the Bureau of Public Roads, October 14, 1918, *Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture* for the Year Ended June 30, 1918, page 374]

On May 31, the Council on National Defense altered Priority Order No. 2 to allow open-top freight railcars to carry sand, gravel, and other road material according to a ruling of the Railroad War Board. Suitable open-top cars “should be furnished preferentially” for transportation of coal, coke, and ore. Those not suitable for the preferred use “may be furnished for the transportation of stone, sand and gravel, and when so furnished shall be used preferentially for highway maintenance materials.” The suitable cars, on return trips to mines or ovens “should be utilized wherever practicable in furnishing car supply for stone, sand and gravel.” Every effort should be made, “consistent with keeping up the production of coal, coke and ore, to furnish shippers of stone, sand and gravel with a minimum of 40 per cent of their normal weekly transportation requirements.”

The revised order added:

Where the transportation needs of essential road construction or maintenance projects cannot be met by car supply furnished in accordance with the above rules, the state, county or municipal officials in charge of the work should, through their proper state highway department, apply to the Director of the Bureau of Public Roads, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for assistance. Such applications will be considered by representatives of the Department of Agriculture, the War Department, the War Industries Board, the Fuel Administration and the Railroad Administration, and in accordance with the recommendations of such representatives, the Car Service Section will endeavor to furnish car supply necessary for approved essential road construction or maintenance.

It must be understood that car supply for stone, sand and gravel must not be permitted to jeopardize the essential production of coal, coke or ore. If at any time such a result is apparent on individual roads, or generally, orders will immediately issue to curtail the car supply for stone, sand and gravel. [“Road Work Gets Cars,” *Motor Age*, June 6, 1918, page 13]

Still, coordination remained a problem, as Director Page explained in his 1918 annual report:

It became apparent early in the fiscal year that some method of coordinating the various powers of the Government with reference to highways was essential, not only to the appropriate regulation of highway work during the period of the war, but to enable really essential highway work to proceed. Evidence of this existed in the fact that the Capital

Issues Committee passed upon the highway bond issues; the Railroad Administration controlled cars which were required in the transportation of highway materials; the War Industries Board had power to control essential highway materials, such as steel, cement, brick, crushed stone, etc.; the Fuel Administration exercised control over bituminous materials, such as oil, asphalt, and tars; the Department of Agriculture exercised the direct power of the Government with reference to highways under the terms of the Federal aid road act, and the appropriation for the Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering; the War Department was directly interested in highways which serve military purposes, such as Army truck routes, etc. Any highway project which required several of the facilities controlled by these various Government agencies was compelled, therefore, to be subjected to the delay and hazard of securing approval separately from each Government organization.

To resolve the situation, Secretary of Agriculture Houston as well as the Secretary of War, the Director General of Railroads, the chairman of the War Industries Board, and the Fuel Administrator each named a representative to serve with Page on a council to coordinate these activities. "In accordance with the Secretary's suggestion, the United States Highways Council was formed and held its first session on June 8, 1918." Director Page served as chairman, while OPRRE's Chief of Management, J. E. Pennybacker, served as secretary:

An immense amount of regulatory work has been done by the council since its organization The office provided engineering and clerical assistance to the council as well as office room, necessary stationery, and printing. Engineers of the office made inspections of projects on which the council desired information. [*Report*, pages 374-375]

To explain the attitude and policies of Federal agencies on road building and maintenance, the Council of National Defense transmitted a letter from Secretary Houston to the State councils in late June:

Fully recognizing the vital military and economic importance of the highways of the country, the council has emphasized certain important policies set forth therein, and urged the state councils to cooperate with the state highway departments to the end that consideration be given to the following in connection with all road construction and maintenance:

1. All plans for road construction and maintenance should be viewed in the light of war conditions and expenditure of labor and materials should be directed only to those roads which are of prime importance for economic and military purposes.
2. It is desirable to avoid offering to the market issues of bonds which are not urgent from the point of view of aiding the nation in winning the war.
3. As far as practicable important highways already constructed should be maintained, and only those should be constructed and completed which are of vital importance because of their bearing on the war situation. They may be summarized as follows:

- a. Those which are utilized or will be utilized by the military establishment.
- b. Those which carry considerable volume of material and supplies essential to war industries.
- c. Those which have a bearing on the production and distribution of food supplies, connecting population and shipping centers with surrounding agricultural areas.
- d. It is especially desirable to use, wherever possible, local road materials in order to simplify the rail transportation problem. ["Road Construction Urged by Council of National Defense," *Good Roads*, June 29, 1918, pages 325-326]

The Impatience of Judge Lowe

Judge Lowe wrote to Roy Chapin in what *Better Roads and Streets* called "an excellent argument in favor of a go-ahead road building policy at this time." After referencing "some literature" he was sending under separate cover "which may or may not interest you," he got to the point:

I write chiefly for the purpose of protesting most seriously against the attitude of the Federal Reserve Board, etc., regarding the marketing of road bonds. While I concur heartily in the position that these boards should adopt a selective system and approve only such issues as will tend to the immediate advantage of the country both as to military needs and commercial interests, yet I do sincerely protest that the situation should be handled in such a way as to not only further the best interests of the Government, but so as not to put an everlasting "quietus" on the road question.

History teaches how easy it is to destroy a movement even after it has reached such headway as the road question has at this time. There is a world of people not much inclined at best, to do anything, who will immediately become inoculated with so much patriotism that they dodge behind a situation like this and proclaim with much fervor that all these matters ought to be postponed until the war is over. The most important question in my poor judgment, that we are facing, next, of course, to winning the war, is the situation that will confront us when the war is over and our boys all come home. They reply to this that we should go ahead and get ready, carry bond elections, etc., and then hold up until the war is ended. The complete answer to this is that when you tell us to stop now, it is foolish to urge our people to go ahead. As I see it, unless we take immediate steps to get this situation ironed out and put properly before the public, our movement is going to suffer very serious damage. [*Better Roads and Streets*, June 1918, pages 241-242]

On July 3, Judge Lowe wrote to members of the National Old Trails Road Association, "particularly in Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona:

The National Old Trails Road is either completely hard-surfaced or its permanent

construction is completely financed from Washington to Saint Louis. A few counties and road districts have been slow to take final steps for financing the road in each of the states west of the Mississippi River.

The final adjourned meeting of the executive committee will be held at this office on the 17th day of August. Immediately thereafter, a new map of the road will be gotten out with such revisions and possible local changes as may be ordered at that time. A complete set of plates have been ordered and it only remains for each county or subdivision thereof, where permanent action has not been taken, to be ready with final reports at the time. It is squarely up to you whether the road through your county or district shall remain on the map as now established. No added days of grace will be permitted; you have had ample time, and the committee will be slow to consider any excuse or apology.

I repeat a statement often heretofore made, that the policy of "slowing down" in road work does not, and I am assured will not apply in building the National Old Trails Road. The "wild-eyed" and "blind-fold" policy adopted by many of the state and road associations has never been the policy governing this association. We have adhered logically and consistently to the building of this great National Highway. We have no "shotgun" system of firing money in the air and letting it fall where it will. We have opposed with all our might, the "pork-barrel" principle of scattering money in building little patches of road. We feel perfectly assured that this policy and purpose consistently pursued by this association, takes it entirely out of that class of propaganda, and insures us that no opposition will be made in our effort to finance the construction of this road. Each state through which the road runs will be reported as a whole, to the proper authorities at Washington, and there is no question of their approval; therefore, there is no excuse for dodging or hiding behind a general policy adopted by some of the committees at Washington.

Keep in mind that the 27th day of August will soon be here, and that no added days of grade will be tolerated. [National Archives at College Park]

Many highway critics considered the Federal-aid highway program established by the 1916 Act to be a pork barrel program. Politicians, in this view, would spread each State's money over every political subdivision to secure votes rather than the long-distance roads that were needed.

On July 11, Raymond Beck, field engineer for the Highways Transport Committee of the Council of National Defense in Washington, wrote to Judge Lowe:

It probably is of interest to you to know that the writer was largely responsible for the immediate completion of the National Old Trails Road in Ohio, and that the stretches of fourteen and twelve miles of unimproved road will be completed before the end of August this year.

I attach hereto a copy of the "Official Bulletin" with regard to the Government policy of

road building this year, and call your particular attention to Paragraph 4, enumerated therein.

Judge Lowe included the letter at the top of his July 15 letter to association members:

The above letter drives the faint-hearted and lukewarm from hiding behind the general policy of the Advisory Committee regarding the continued construction of the National Old Trails Road. There has never been any doubt regarding the attitude of the Government toward this road. If the people earnestly desire it, and your State Highway Boards are ready to cooperate with the General Government, then there is no excuse for delay. There is no record that bonds for this road have been discouraged, nor are they likely to be. The completion of the road in Ohio is conclusive evidence that no obstruction has been or will be contemplated.

Paragraph 4 referred to by Mr. Beck, copied from the Official Bulletin of the Council of National Defense, reads as follows:

“It is especially desirable to use, wherever possible, local materials in order to simplify the rail transportation problem.” In the states west of the Mississippi it is easy to comply with this request as there is abundance of local road material at hand. There is no excuse for getting tangled up with the transportation problem.

Both Federal and State money will be turned back into the treasuries because the people have not accepted the proffered assistance. The materials at hand may not build the ideal road some people have in mind, but it will build a good road – such as the Federal and State authorities will be glad to approve. I repeat, no bonds issued for the building of this road in any of the States have been discouraged anywhere, and are not likely to be. More than one-half the mileage is built or provided for; and instead of discouraging, both the State and Federal authorities urge us to go ahead and complete it. The Federal money is appropriated and waiting, and so is the States’ share in some of the States. In Missouri, the State Highway Board is begging for the opportunity to pay one-half the cost of construction. The money is in the treasury. Why wait? The State Boards of Kansas and Colorado will go the limit of their authority in the effort to build. Why wait! [National Archives at College Park]

The August 1918 issue of *Better Roads and Streets* published a bulletin from Judge Lowe under the headline “We Are Making Progress.” In it, Judge Lowe returned to his longstanding opposition to the Federal-aid concept:

One of the most hopeful indications at present is that, notwithstanding the discouragement of active road work, because of the action of certain boards and individuals at Washington, yet there has recently been a road organization established with headquarters in the city of Washington, known as the Highway Industries Association, composed of some of the leading and most prominent men of the nation.

For many years we have been constantly urging that the true, if not the only solution of the road problem in this country was, for the Government to establish, build, and maintain a large system of national highways. This solution, notwithstanding the circumstances of the present, is making rapid progress throughout the country.

This new organization above mentioned seems to comprehend the situation and is taking hold of it with that degree of vigor which insures success.

The bulletin issued by this [Highways Industries] association, July 26, ought to be in the hands of all the people. After showing that we have about three million miles of roads in this country, they show in this bulletin that it will take about 166 years at the present rate of progress to build all these highways, and they show conclusively that this cannot be done unless the Government shall build and maintain, at least, the great leading trunk-line roads of the country. This bulletin says, "Our highways must be lifted out of the mud, and we must be up and doing and add at least three times as much fuel as heretofore has been used to the smoldering embers."

He reprinted a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Virginia Council of National Defense, "at which were present citizens from twenty-four counties and nine cities":

Resolved, That this meeting hereby recommends the adoption by the National Government of a definite highway policy, and the establishment of a National Highway System; this system to include only the main arteries of travel, and to be constructed and maintained by the National Government.

Judge Lowe also reprinted a similar resolution adopted by the National Real Estate Board at its eighth annual convention in St. Louis:

Be It Further Resolved, That we recommend to the Government, the creation of a prominent highway commission, for the purpose of preparing plans for the construction of a national highway system.

Judge Lowe continued:

The action of these two conventions, and of many others recently held, is emphasized by the Highway Industries Association, above mentioned, and indicates most clearly that the wild-eyed, pork-barrel system has come to an end.

If this war has taught us anything, it is that all industrial and development work must be organized and carried on in the most sensible and efficient manner possible. This great purpose can only be achieved by fixing the responsibility and carrying forward the work in a well-grounded, systematic manner. This can only be done when the Government builds and maintains its own roads under the supervision of its own engineers, and when the States and counties pursue a like policy.

Day is not only dawning, but the sun is high up toward the meridian, and the light is shining in full effulgence on all the dark and obscure places in the country. This is no time for any one to sound a note of discouragement. When farm lands are paying for themselves twice over with the produce of two or three crops, why say the time is “inopportune” for road development? Why slow down when there is every encouragement to go forward with renewed energy? Pile high the fuel on the “smoldering embers,” and it will burst into a flame of prosperity and wealth such as this country has not seen. [Lowe, J. M., “We Are Making Progress,” *Better Roads and Streets*, August 1918, page 314]

The Road-Maker published the bulletin in slightly different form. It added that Henry Shirley, secretary of the Highway Industries Association, indicated that the association appreciated Judge Lowe’s statement “and wishes to amplify what has been heretofore said in the efforts it proposes putting forward to accomplish that which seems most important to the welfare of the country, viz: The laying out and construction of a national system of highways by the national government.” (Shirley had resigned as chief engineer of the Maryland State Roads Commission until on April 15, 1918) [“We Are Making Progress,” *The Road-Maker*, September 1918, pages 29-30]

On August 14, Judge Lowe addressed the Young Men’s Division of the Chamber of Commerce of Kansas City, Missouri, at the Baltimore Hotel. He told them:

We are facing a crisis on the road question much more serious than is generally considered. It is simply astounding that with a full realization of the important part which transportation bears in this war we should have deliberately and premeditatedly struck down at a single blow the principal factor, that of building and maintaining the common highways of the country.

An editorial in the *Manufacturers’ Record* aptly stated the true situation as follows:

All that has been done by all the bureaus and departments in Washington on this subject has been negative rather than positive as compared with the needs of the time. We had negation instead of positive aggression, with a chaos in highway work that must have delighted the heart of every pro-German in the nation.

We are spending a billion dollars for railroad betterments, a sum wholly inadequate with the actual needs of the hour, but we are spending almost nothing in the development of highways for motor truck hauling, though motor trucks are increasing in every part of the country where a passable highway is to be found. The government itself has depended upon motor trucks for work which the railroads cannot do. The Government is wearing out existing railroads; it is shipping stuff all over the country by motor trucks and yet it makes no solitary move of any significance whatsoever toward the maintenance of existing highways or to the building of new highways adequate to meet the needs of the hour.

It looks as though no hope can come from any of the existing governmental activities which control and suppress highway improvements. We can see no hope except through an organization formed by President Wilson himself, in co-operation with Congress, or by Congress taking the lead for creating a commission committed wholly and absolutely to the one great issue of building highways.

Judge Lowe continued:

Consider for one moment that the appropriation of a billion dollars to rehabilitate the railroads would, if a like amount were appropriated to the building and maintenance of the common roads, which belong to the people, if the average cost of construction be estimated at \$10,000 per mile, would build 100,000 miles of roads, and if the average cost be placed at the high estimate of \$20,000 a mile, a billion dollars would build 50,000 miles of road.

Moreover, when this money appropriated to the railroads is expended, however important and necessary such expenditure may be, it will not have added one dollar additional value to our national wealth. Whereas, if 100,000 miles of common roads were built and maintained by the government, they would absolutely pay their entire cost before the roads could be completed, in the increase of additional values, thus adding immensely to the national wealth.

I know of no other scheme of internal improvements that would add so much to our betterment, would add so much to the wealth and prosperity, and accomplish a greater amount of good toward winning the war. If the government cannot see its way clear to do this great work, and do it *now*, by all means it ought to at least get out of the way and let the people, who stand ready and willing, build their own roads. But we are facing the amazing spectacle of the government refusing to contribute to this great cause and, through these committees, bureaus and departments, absolutely discouraging and suppressing the effort of the people to build them at their own expense. We have waited with patience because no man or association of men desire to be placed in the attitude of criticizing or opposing any plan designed to help forward war measures, but all the dictates and impulses of genuine patriotism require that we should speak out plainly and emphatically even at this late day, and undertake to reverse this Washington attitude.

When we shall have 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 men on the battlefields of Europe it will tax our productive and transportation energies to the very utmost to keep them supplied with necessary provisions, arms and ammunition. Under such circumstances, facing such a condition as this, shall we halt or hesitate. No, a thousand times no! Every patriotic impulse, every drop of American blood, should be enlisted in this, the world's greatest and world's most glorious and righteous war on the part of the Allies, and no other act on our part can do more to bring a speedy and righteous verdict than going forward in this great work, so necessary in the solution of war problems. ["The Crisis of the Road," *The Road-Maker*, September 1918, page 28]

The Young Men's Division adopted resolutions calling for "a definite highway policy and the establishment of a national highway system – this system to include only the main arteries of travel of the nation, and to be constructed and maintained by the National Government." The Federal Government should establish "a permanent highway commission" to build the system. Given the importance of roads to the war effort, President Wilson and Congress should take immediate steps "to encourage, expedite, and promote the building of such a national system rather than to continue the policy of discouragement and suppression as heretofore practiced." If it was "practical and profitable" to appropriate public funds for the railroads, which "belong to individuals and corporations," it was "practical and important" to use public funds for building and maintaining the common roads of the country, "which belong to the general public." In short, the division called for creation of an "organization in Washington, committed absolutely to the building of highways and nothing else." The resolution concluded:

The chaotic condition which now prevails throughout the country in highway work, at a time when every mile of bad road of main highways lessens our fighting power and increases the cost of our food and fuel situation, and lengthens the duration of the war, is intolerable.

The railroads of the country have absolutely broken down, and proven their utter incompetency. It has been demonstrated that the utmost stretch of work that can be given to their expansion will scarcely more than take care of their deterioration under the strain under which they are working.

Motor trucks over our highways can materially aid the situation, supplemented by waterways and railroads, but it is arrant nonsense to encourage the building of trucks if there are no roads over which they can run. ["RESOLUTIONS," *Better Roads and Streets*, September 1918, page 339; Judge Lowe's speech is on pages 338-339]

The Road Evolves

On August 5-7, 1918, the Spanish Trail Highway Association held its annual convention in Durango, Colorado, with over 600 delegates in attendance. (The name referred to a trail pioneered by American and Mexican traders from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, via Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, not the 19th century trail known as the Old Spanish Trail or the rival trails in Kansas.) One of the important resolutions adopted was to change the name of the organization to the Spanish Trail-Mesa Verde Highway Association. As a report on the convention observed, "The addition of the words 'Mesa Verde' immediately places the location of the Spanish Trail-Mesa Verde route in the mind of the stranger, and the convention no doubt acted wisely in making the change." The report added:

Probably the most important business transacted by the convention was the acceptance of a proposition made by the National Old Trails Road Association to this association, wherein the former offered to place upon its maps and in its road guide the route of the Spanish Trail-Mesa Verde highway, and to declare it the summer route for all transcontinental automobile traffic between New York and Los Angeles along their

national line. The Old Trail route touches the Spanish Trail-Mesa Verde route at Pueblo, where the latter begins, and instead of passing down thru New Mexico, would traverse the La Veta pass, the San Luis valley, Wolf Creek Pass and the San Juan basin, again touching its former line at Gallup, New Mexico.

Life memberships in the Old Trails were offered at \$5.00 each, and since the date of the convention in Durango, the membership campaign has been vigorously pushed, and 1,000 members will be secured during the present month. Thru this action, the Spanish Trail-Mesa Verde route will have as additional backing, the influence of one of the strongest good roads associations in the United States, and it is expected that the time is not far distant when the entire route will be hard surfaced and become a part of a great transcontinental route, leading from New York to Los Angeles. [“Spanish Trail-Mesa Verde Holds Great Convention,” *Colorado Highways Bulletin*, September 1918, pages 5, 22]

The August issue of *Dependable Highways*, published by the National Paving Brick Manufacturers Association, featured an article on the surfaces of the historic National Road from Cumberland to St. Louis, all of it incorporated in the National Old Trails Road. An editor’s note explained:

Data for this article are compiled chiefly from reports to the editors made by surveyors of counties through which the National Road passes. While the information disclosed is not alarming in the sense that it is unexpected, it is alarming as indicative of the lack of progress really made in highway improvements. The National Road affords a striking example of the error of the restrictive policy toward road building during the war, as well as a basis for demanding Federal participation in highway improvement on a large scale as a national necessity in war time. The National Road should awaken us to the fact that, so far, nothing has been done. How much farther will we get in the next 110 years?

The comment about 110 years referred to the origins of the Cumberland/National Road, which dated to when President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation on March 29, 1806. The initial construction from Cumberland to Wheeling was completed in the late 1810s, built to the highest standards of the time, but by then already deteriorating from heavy use. It would eventually be converted to the innovative macadam type of pavement. In 1820s, Congress approved extension of the road to the Mississippi River, but stopped funding the work after a final appropriation in 1838, so the western section was never completed or, from mid-Ohio west, built to a high standard. Piece by piece, the States took over and converted it to a toll road even as the spread of railroads became the primary mode of interstate travel. (The limited federally funded work in Illinois ended in Vandalia, then the capital of the State. Disputes on whether the road would cross the Mississippi River at Alton, Illinois, or St. Louis prevented further progress and was unresolved when Federal funds came to an end.)

Even with this history, the magazine pointed out, “there is yet no completed thoroughfare”:

Control over the highway and its improvement reverted to the states and counties through

which it passes, and at no time in its history has it been a passable thoroughfare from end to end; improved sections have been interspersed with stretches of mud; the improved portions themselves vary in type and quality. Altogether the road is a veritable Joseph's coat and its history has been one of sloth and dawdling.

The National Road passed through 29 counties from Cumberland to St. Louis, a distance of 725 miles. Based on condition, the mileage was classified as:

	Miles	Percent
Brick	96.89	13.4
Concrete	48.00	6.6
Gravel	53.98	21.2
Macadam, all kinds	185.89	25.7
Unimproved*	<u>240.48</u>	<u>33.1</u>
Total	725.24	100.0

*Includes a few miles sparsely improved.

The article continued:

Fitness for travel most concerns the country at large and it is through lack of it, from end to end, that a large measure of the usefulness of the National Road fails to be realized upon. One Indiana county deplores the fact that "the road is unfit for military use until permanently improved." Another, near the metropolis of Indiana, complains that an unimproved section is "rough and full of holes." Over in Illinois a county surveyor remarks that "some of the creeks are not bridged." Another county in the same state describes what is universally true of dirt roads: "unimproved mileage good from nine to ten months in the year." Many sections once improved are much in need of repair, if not of entire reconstruction. An Indiana county succinctly declares that "eighteen miles of gravel and stone are in poor condition; six miles are rotten."

Only 20 percent of the National Road is surfaced with materials capable of bearing traffic without constant and perpetual maintenance; reports reflect the quality of brick and concrete improvements by a predominance of "excellent" and "good" and some "fair." Belmont County, Ohio, paved with bricks entirely across the county, claims "the honor of having the best brick road between Pittsburgh and Kansas City."

Macadam and gravel sections show the need of early repairs, maintenance or reconstruction if previous expenditures are not to be irrevocably lost. We read from an Ohio county: "surface rough and almost worn out"; from another in the same state: "very bad condition." The National Road is virtually unimproved across Illinois, excluding 20 miles in Clark County. It is difficult of travel and in many places impassable in the winter and spring months, helping to account for the hundreds of thousands of bushels of old corn stored on the farms of eastern Illinois that could not be marketed earlier in the year. Improvement of the road in Illinois is contemplated

however.

The article included a table showing the composition of surface through the road:

State	Counties	Miles	Brick	Concrete	Macadam	Gravel	Unimproved
MD	1	13.30	1.25	3.00	8.80	None	.25
PA	3	80.80	6.22	None			
			.80*		8.00*	None	5.66
WV	1	15.00	8.50	None	4.00	None	2.50
OH	9	220.24	46.74	25.10	46.32	62.48	3.60
					11.15*	9.35**	
IN	8	151.90	18.25	16.00	35.00	79.15	2.50
				1.00*			
IL**	<u>7</u>	<u>244.00</u>	<u>1.50</u>	<u>2.90</u>	<u>12.50</u>	<u>3.00</u>	<u>224.10</u>
Total:	29	725.24	96.89	48.00	183.89	153.98	240.48

*Under Construction

**Approximately only, 3 counties report, balance derived from other sources.

[“National Road Is Like Patchwork: Demonstrated Need of Federal Participation in Road Building,” *Dependable Highways*, August 1918, pages 5-7]

American Highways

The new role of motor trucks in the country’s freight network prompted *Sinclair’s Magazine*, founded by the Sinclair Oil and Refinery Corporation, to publish a series of articles beginning in March 1918 until the general title “American Highways.” The articles, most written by Victoria Faber Stevenson, covered a wide range of topics, including several on named trails. In addition to articles about the Lincoln Highway/Dixie Highway and the Yellowstone Trail/Pike’s Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, Stevenson wrote about the National Old Trails Road in the sixth article of the series.

The article in the September 1918 issue began:

“There are no dirt men present, I see. That is because we are looking forward, not backward,” announced Judge J. M. Lowe, the president of the National Old Trails Association [sic], when he presided at the recent convention of that organization in Kansas City. Evidently dirt men are becoming scarce among the members of that Association, the president of which is a leader in advocating modern resurfacing of the road, extending from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles. Unlike most lengthy highways, the National Old Trail Road was not “routed.” It is a continuous transcontinental thoroughfare, made by joining shorter highways which grew as the Republic expanded westward, each road representing an epoch in the Nation’s history.

After describing the historic roads included in the national highway, Stevenson continued:

A story of the various conditions of these trails since they first became useful would cause the tourist to wonder why his ancestors ever traveled, but the condition of this highway to-day encourages him to take to the roads as thousands have done before. The efforts of "hard surface men" are rebuilding this path from coast to coast so that the road may tell its story to a greater number of Americans who are tempted to take long journeys. Already this highway is hard surfaced as far as the Mississippi River, or funds are provided for that kind of construction. Across Missouri, Kansas and Colorado the greater part of the road has been rebuilt, or funds have been procured for the work, for Kansas alone is represented on this highway by nearly four hundred miles of road costing from twelve thousand to thirty thousand dollars a mile, with more such roads planned. An account of the progress which has been made in grading and hard surfacing in Arizona shows what live interest can do. A description of three hundred miles of California's rebuilt road with its veritable boulevards through the Mohave desert is an allurement to the motorist to start across the continent on the National Old Trails Road and thus to turn the pages of United States history as he proceeds to follow the course the infant Republic took as it toddled west and grew to its giant strength of to-day.

She began a history of each segment, starting with the Cumberland Road:

The restless young Nation's demand for a practical outlet west found its earliest satisfaction in the Cumberland Pike, or the old National Road. It was from a plank taken out of the middle of this road where it was placed about eighty years ago that the gavel was made which Judge Lowe used at the April convention. No road in the United States has received as much attention from a historical standpoint as this one, for it was the only road of any length built and maintained by the Federal Government.

The article concluded with the Santa Fe Trail segment, noting:

This eleven-hundred-mile trail, passable at all times, for no bridges were needed on its entire length, was later surveyed by a road commission appointed by the United States through the efforts of Thomas Hart Benton, of Missouri, who made a trip to Monticello to enlist Jefferson's support in the undertaking.

The article concluded:

With mention of the acquisition of the far southwest, the National Old Trails Road closes its story of national history; but he who seeks natural beauty may find further interest in the highway on the section recently added to include a road to Mesa Verde, where a sunset alone is considered worth a trip to southwest Colorado.

Other articles in the American Highways series included "Uncle Sam as a Road Builder," about BPR's work implementing the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916; "A Challenge to Battle," about the fight to clear the main roads after snowstorms; "Wanted – A Master System of Highways,"

discussing the need to develop a plan for a national system before the war ends; “Highways: An Opportunity for Returned Soldiers,” about post-war employment opportunities; “Road Building with Convict Labor,” which pointed out that, “The man who toils at this useful work of road-building and who does his best during his term of punishment to provide for his dependents gains courage and strength to ‘come back’ to the big world to share its responsibilities and joys”; and “Highways of Tomorrow,” which included this observation:

Tomorrow’s trunk lines must be broader as well as thicker than those of to-day. Officials believe road-beds should be twenty or preferably twenty-two feet wide with substantial, well-built shoulders of from three to five feet on each side Broad thoroughfares allow traffic room for unexpected maneuvers and provide safety in case of skidding as well as affording sufficient space for the repairs of vehicles in case of accident when motor-cars are passing in both directions. Another safety precaution is the careful attention to be given to the banking of curves. The skilful [sic] management often required by the operator of the heavy truck should not be unduly taxed by preventable hazards of the road.

[Stevenson, Victoria Faber, “National Old Trails Road,” *Sinclair’s Magazine*, September 1918, pages 10-15. The first American Highways articles, including those cited here, were collected in Stevenson, Victoria Faber, *American Highways*, Vol. 1, Winship Publishing Company, 1919, but the series continued through January 1921.]

Tightening the Wartime Restrictions

The United States Highways Council issued Bulletin No. 1 on August 5, 1918. All proposed highway and street work should be submitted to the council through the State highway departments. The council urged that highway and street work “be confined to the most essential needs. If this is done there will be a far greater probability that the work thus selected can be promptly and effectively carried through to completion than if an amount far in excess of available facilities were to be undertaken.” Further, “No manufacturer will furnish any road building material until the project has been approved by the United States Highways Council.”

First consideration would go “to maintenance with a view to conserving all the highways already completed if possible.” Reconstruction of a highway would be “favorably considered by the Council only where it is clearly established that maintenance is no longer possible except at prohibitive cost.” New construction would be considered if the work was of military or national economic value. The bulletin defined military value:

A highway of military value is one used regularly for the transportation of military supplies in considerable quantity; for the movement as an established practice of army truck trains, or which is essential to the efficient operation of a military cantonment, post or plant.

It also defined national economic value:

A highway of national economic value is one which serves or will serve, if properly improved, directly to promote the welfare of the Nation, and not merely the local welfare. As examples it may be stated that in this class would be placed (1) highways which although not directly used for military purposes, yet serve to help win the war by greatly facilitating the output or movement of war munitions and supplies; (2) highways which can clearly be shown to relieve congestion on railroad lines in a territory which is actually in need of such relief; (3) highways which give access to or promote the output of natural products needed by the Nation to a marked degree; (4) highways which further housing operations undertaken by the Federal Government or by other agencies with the approval of the Federal Government would justify at times this designation.

The council recommended that State highway departments “give most careful consideration to each application on its merits in the light of the policy announced.” In addition, the council planned to work with BPR and the State highway departments to prepare “a program of road and street construction, reconstruction and maintenance throughout the United States for the working season of 1919.” The council urged officials to “so materially eliminate the less essential projects as to make it possible for the Council to render active aid on the projects it approves.”

The bulletin, which went into effect on September 10, 1918, attached forms for carrying out the stated procedures, including:

HC-3 – Application for approval of projects

H-C-4 – Schedule for use in submitting program of proposed highway and street work during the working season of 1919. [“New U.S. Highway Council,” *Better Roads and Streets*, September 1918, pages 354, 356]

On August 27, the council issued Bulletin No. 2 on “Petroleum, Asphalt, and Tar Products as Road Materials.” The general policy was based on “the enormous increase in the demand for fuel oil due to war activities.” As a result, the supply of petroleum, asphalt, and tar products had to be regulated. “Most of these materials are made from raw products which are either directly or indirectly available as fuel.” Each product “logically should be used where it will be of the greatest benefit to the country as a whole.”

During the war, the use of petroleum products for dust abatement on macadam, slag, or gravel was “considered the least important use of petroleum, asphalt, and tar products.”

However, no “hard and fast rules can be applied; every application “must be considered on its own merits in the light of existing fuel conditions at that time.” All applications had to be approved by the State highway department, except for those for direct Federal purposes; they required council approval. The bulletin explained the steps for securing approvals via application forms HC-3.

Further, any violations should be brought to the attention of the Fuel Administration, “giving the

name, and address of the producer who sells material without permit, and the location to which the material has been shipped.” The bulletin added, “Cases have come to notice where fuel, oil, for which no permit is required, has been sold as such, and illegally used for treating roads.”

[*Better Roads and Streets*, September 1918, pages 334-335]

On September 26, the United States Highways Council issued Bulletin No. 3, which covered highway bridge work during the war:

In view of the absolute necessity of providing for military and naval purposes such large quantities of steel and iron that the use of these materials even for the indirect war needs of the Federal Government has been necessarily curtailed, often against the strong protests of Government engineers. It is the opinion of the United States Highways Council that the street and highway bridge policy of all sections of the country should be based until further notice upon the following principles.

Every endeavor should be made to keep existing structures in service by all available means, such as (a) effective supervision, (b) suitable repairs, (c) control of traffic, (d) prohibition of use of bridges by street car, road rollers, traction engines, and other heavy vehicles.

The bulletin cautioned officials to remember that because products such as cement and bricks require fuel for their production, they cannot be produced in peace time quantities for civil purposes. Consequently, public officials are not justified in assuming that if they change their plans for proposed structures from steel to concrete, it will be possible for them to build new bridges without any difficulty.

If a bridge cannot be maintained or replaced by a temporary bridge, officials should apply to the council, through the State highway department, for approval of a new bridge. “Public officials are reminded that the United States Highways Council looks to them for assistance in reducing to the absolute minimum the bridge materials required.” Three classes of bridge projects were considered worthy of consideration during the war:

- (1) A bridge urgently required as a military necessity and so recommended by the representative of the War Department to the United States Highways Council.
- (2) The replacement of an unsafe bridge which can not be made safe through suitable repairs, traffic regulations, or detour.
- (3) Replacement of a bridge which has been destroyed and which is essential as a direct or indirect war need. [“Highway Bridge Work Under War Conditions,” *Good Roads*, October 5, 1918, page 131]

Also on September 26, the council advised the State highway departments that the Priority Commissioner had issued a ruling that contractors and others engaged in construction of streets, pavements, and roadways “now substantially on the way” were authorized to continue such construction and materials suppliers and distributors “may continue to furnish same for such

construction work up to November 1, 1918”:

Application for permits should be promptly made to the United States Highways Council through State Highway departments for the completion of all such work now under contract, and under construction which cannot be completed prior to November first. No new contracts for the maintenance, construction, or reconstruction of streets, pavements, and highways should be entered into, or no new construction not now in progress undertaken, either prior to or subsequent to November 1, without first obtaining a permit from the United States Highways Council through the State Highway department. [Better Roads and Streets, October 1918, pages 378-379]

On September 17-19, the regional chairmen of the Highways Transport Committee of the Council of National Defense met in Washington. They heard addresses from Roy Chapin, chairman; R. C. Hargraves, secretary; Food Administrator Herbert Hoover; Labor Secretary William B. Wilson; Commerce Secretary William C. Bedford; Interior Secretary Franklin K. Lane; Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels; Major General George W. Goethals, and others.

Chapin told the regional chairmen that the purpose of the Highways Transport Committee was to provide more transportation to advance the war effort. He outlined the committee's efforts to move military supplies, speed up war-related work, increase food production, and relieve railroads of short-haul traffic. The committee divided the country on the basis of highway centers and 11 regional chairmen, and 15,000 committeemen who were relied on to expand the country's war program.

Hoover warned of present and future food conditions:

The world never is more than 60 days ahead of famine between harvests, and in consequence of the draining of men from the usual occupations of food producing large areas of Europe today are facing starvation. In the coming winter the deaths from starvation probably will exceed the deaths at the front.

He estimated that after the war ends, the United States would be called on to supply food to millions of hungry Europeans. “If we are to do our duty by the world and ourselves, we must utilize every means to increase production and distribute food efficiently.”

He spoke of the role of highways:

One of the results of a perfected highways use would be to cut down the waste of perishable foods. Fifty per cent of our perishables never reach the consumer. We lose from 40 per cent to 60 per cent of our potatoes yearly. Not only is the producing area of our perishables congested, but in general the producers are too remote from the markets.

Besides stopping this terrific waste a highly developed rural express would work to establish lower prices. Europe has an intimate system of railway lines and canals to transport these products to nearby markets. Where the rural express has been developed

in this country it has operated to these ends. I should say that the failure of public markets in this country is due to the tremendous loss of perishables shipped from remote distances. A network of rural deliveries will provide the economic basis for a successful public market.

A further effect would be to bring into productive activity the large potential of labor now on the farm but not actively producing. Wherever mechanical transportation can be employed there will be a decrease of work animals necessary. Our 25,000,000 to 40,000,000 work animals are eating the crops of an acreage, that, planted to food, would sustain 40,000,000 more people. I believe the Highways Transportation Committee in its brief career has demonstrated the value of rural express, returns loads and generally more efficient use of the country's highways. Let me pledge you the support of my administration and of the local organizations we have the country over in any way we can assist you in promoting your work.

(The Post Office Department had begun using motor vehicles for rural mail delivery on July 1, 1915 at Quarryville, Pennsylvania. In July 1916, Congress authorized experiments to determine "the most practical means of extending the operations of the parcel post in the direction of promoting the marketing of farm products and furthering direct transactions between producers and consumers." The department operated the initial eight routes in the Baltimore-Philadelphia-Washington area with 19 government-owned 1-ton trucks. In May 1918, Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson reported to Congress that the routes were profitable, except for the route between Philadelphia and Atlantic City, New Jersey. Projecting gross revenues of \$80 million if the network were extended throughout the country, Burleson estimated a surplus of \$40 million that he recommended could be used to improve a 10,000-mile rural express network to reduce transportation costs and increase speeds. He suggested roads of concrete or brick should be at least 16 feet wide and 9 inches thick. They would cost about \$20,000 per mile or \$200 million for the network.

(The experimental routes proved popular. As in the quoted comments, Administrator Hoover praised the service as a way of saving food. However, in July 1918, a Senate bill to launch the network failed in committee and Congress, instead, included \$300,000 in the Post Office Department's FY 1919 appropriation act for experiments in motor truck delivery in the vicinity of large cities "to promote the conservation of food products and to facilitate the collection and delivery thereof from producer to consumer, and the delivery of articles necessary in the production of such food products." Before progress could be made, the war ended and private enterprise soon filled the vacuum the experiment was designed to cover. [*America's Highways 1776-1976*, pages 99-100])

Secretary Lane anticipated that the government would give returning soldiers farming opportunities that would be united by rural expresses operated on the highways. The Highways Transport Committee would be invaluable in developing these farming communities. He said, "you can judge the civilization of a nation, of a people, of a continent, or any part of a nation, by

the character of its highways”:

If you will think over that proposition you will realize that what I have said is true, that those parts of this Nation are most backward, where people live most alone, where they develop those diseases of the mind which come from living alone, where they develop supreme discontent with what is done at Washington, or what is done in their own State legislatures, where they are unhappy and discontented, and movements that make against the welfare of our country arise, are those parts where there are poor highways, and consequently a lack of communication between the people.

Regarding the war, he observed:

And why has it been possible for France to carry on for four years, a successful war against the greatest military power that the world has ever seen? Because France had the benefit of the engineering skill, and of the foresight of two men who are 1,800 years apart – Napoleon and Caesar. Those men built the roads of France. Without those roads, conceived and built originally by Caesar for the conquest of the Gauls, and for the conquest of the Teutons, without the roads built by Napoleon to stand off the enemies of France, and to make aggressions to the eastward, Paris would have fallen at least two years ago. So that you gentlemen, who are engaged in the business of developing the highways of the country, and putting them to greater use may properly conceive of yourselves as engaged in a very farsighted, important bit of a statesmanship, work that does not have its only concern as to the farmer of this country, or the helping of freight movement during this winter alone, but may have consequences that extend throughout the centuries

It is not sufficient to pay \$25,000 a mile for a concrete foundation, but you must put aside ten cents out of every dollar for the maintenance of these roads, or your money has gone to waste, and your conception is idle. And you gentlemen know if you continue, as I hope you will after the war, you will have not merely a function in the securing of the building of good roads, but will have a very great function in the maintaining of these roads as actual arteries in the system of transportation of the country.

Secretary Redfield explained:

The transportation system of the United States is not a unity. It cannot be run on what we may call unitarian lines. It is a trinity, and has to be run on trinitarian lines. You must link up railroads and waterways and highways to get a perfect transportation system for this country.

The railroad, for many years, dominated transportation to the detriment of waterways and highways:

Then came into the world a new tool: The internal combustion engine, destined to work almost as great a change in the human life as the steam engine in its time, making

possible a tool for the waterway that the waterway had never had before, making it possible to use for the highway what the highway had never had before, making necessary the alteration of the highway to suit the new tool built for it.

He was concerned that some States had forbidden motor trucks because of the damage they did to the roads. If the States, he said, had taken the same attitude toward the railroads, locomotive development would have stopped 40 years earlier:

Up to a very few years ago, all of us who are not far-seeing would have thought of public transportation as meaning essentially the railroads. Yet so rapidly in the last five years has the law of transportation been developed that it is a little bit difficult for us to keep up with the rush of this movement.

He said in closing:

So many are familiar with the automobile, not as familiar, I believe, as they are going to be, that it seems hard to think it can work as revolutionary a change in their life as it is going to do. But I am perfectly certain that there abide these three elements of transportation, railway, waterway, and highway, that they are one, and that none of them will reach its full value to the community without the other and that each is the friend of the other.

Joseph D. Baker of the Priorities Division of the War Industries Board discussed the possibility of Federal licensing of motor car and truck licensing. The idea was to conserve fuel, lubricants, steel, and workers employed in service stations.

Senator Chamberlain address the meeting as well. He discussed the problems the railroad had experienced during the war, but as for highways, he said that the "strict doctrine of state rights is not contended for as it used to be," leading to new possibilities for Federal cooperation "for purposes undreamed of in the days gone by":

The subject of the utilization of the highways of the country is, or ought to be, near to the heart of everybody and there is no reason why you should not find active co-operation everywhere in your effort to develop this system of transportation of state and interstate purposes

We are just beginning to realize the uses to which the highways of the country may be utilized to aid in the great work of motor transportation. The war has compelled a resort to it, and I believe that congress may be induced to aid the movement by large appropriations to be spent in cooperation with the states and by placing these highways used for interstate purposes under the control of a federal agency with power to prescribe rates and unify the licensing system so that no handicap will be placed upon the utilization of those highways by conflicting laws of the several states.

You have but to present the matter as forcefully as I am sure you can to your

representatives in congress and I predict that good results will flow from your efforts.

When the conference ended on September 20, participants called on President Wilson at the White House. The President extended his thanks to Chapin for his important work and for organizing the nationwide movement for developing rural motor express services, including return loads bureaus, and the use of the highways. The regional directors expressed their thanks to Chapin by presented him a loving cup.

[“Regional Highways Chairman in Meeting,” *Motor Age*, September 26, 1918, page 10; “The Food Situation,” *The Washington Post*, September 19, 1918, page 6; “Declares States Delay highways,” *The Washington Post*, September 20, 1918, page 4; Lane, Franklin, K., “A Story of Why Our Highways Should Be Greatly Developed,” *Better Roads and Streets*, October 1918, pages 369-370, 394, 396; Redfield, William C., “Highway Development as Important as Railroad and Waterway Development,” *Municipal and County Engineering*, November 1918, pages 170-172]

On September 18, the Council of National Defense announced it was creating a Field Division that would merge the State Councils section and the Woman’s Committee of the Council. In accordance with President Wilson’s idea that the whole people should be involved in war activities, the move would put men and women of the council under one Washington body. The combination would help channel the widespread desire of the country’s women to be of service in the war effort. The new Field Division began operations on October 1. An article in *The Baltimore Sun* said of the new division, “The part which women are playing in this war, and the increasing part which they are taking in making it possible to maintain it, make this consolidation no more than the recognition of a fact – all men and women are making, and are to make, common sacrifice and effort.”

[“United Women’s War Bodies,” *The New York Times*, September 19, 1918, page 14; “To Arouse Nation Upon War: Field Division of Council of Defense Begins Work,” *The Baltimore Sun*, October 2, 1918, page 2]

Progress on the National Old Trails Road

While road officials adapted to changes in wartime conditions, Judge Lowe continued to promote construction of the National Old Trails Road.

He publicized a letter he received from W. B. Cauthorn, a civil engineer of Columbia, Missouri. “You will be interested to know that the plans for the National Old Trails have been completed and that the money is available for the Millersburg district, in Callaway county, Missouri, approximately \$44,000.” Work was planned for several other locations:

Harg district, in Boone County, will advertise for bids immediately. We hope to have this construction under way by September 15. Columbia special road district is to be widened to 18 feet; bituminous macadam; estimate \$33,000; work to begin at once. Midway district surveys under way and will be completed about September 10, when

funds will be available for immediate construction; estimate approximately \$40,000.

That part of National Old Trails in Boone county not lying in special road districts will be taken care of by the county court. Surveys will be completed in the next 10 days or two weeks.

This finances and assures completion of the new hard surface road from Rocheport on the Missouri River to Fulton. This means substantially a new road, including new bridges of modern type, from Rocheport to Fulton.

Cauthorn concluded:

Know you will be glad to learn of the real progress in this vicinity. This is not enthusiasm alone, but dirt, concrete, and real hard dollars. [“Real Progress in Missouri,” *The Road-Maker*, October 1918, page 60]

On October 22, 1918, Ohio staged an elaborate ceremony for the opening “of the Nation’s most modern and substantial highway” on what was known as the East Pike out of Zanesville, Ohio. The State highway department had submitted it to OPRRE in August 1917 as Ohio’s first Federal-aid highway project. When the plan for driving new trucks to East Coast ports for shipment to France proved viable, this road became especially important. BPR’s magazine *Public Roads* stated:

On account of its importance as a direct route for trucks between Detroit, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, and other points west, to Washington, it has been kept in very good shape, with the exception of a few stretches. One of these unimproved sections was this section presented by the State of Ohio as a Federal project under the Federal aid act.

It was proposed at the time the project was submitted to proceed with the work in the regular fashion, letting the work to contract after duly advertising for bids. Early in 1918, however, the Federal Government advocated the early completion of this contract in order to facilitate the movement of Army trucks and other war munitions east. The matter was taken up with Gov. Cox, of Ohio, and through the State highway department, with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture, a contract was let on a cost-plus basis with a time limit, and a bonus for completion under this time limit, and a penalty for failure to complete within the time limit

The contract was dated the 22d day of March, 1918. Work was started about the 1st of May, 1918, and practically completed about the latter part of October. It may be said that the entire 14 miles were completed in approximately six months. The cost was undoubtedly more than it would have been by the usual form of contract, but it was considered that the time gained was well worth the difference. [“Work on Ohio Project No. 1 Rushed to Move Army Trucks,” *Public Roads*, March 1919, page 28]

American Motorist covered the opening ceremony:

Simultaneous celebration of the 100th birthday of the Ohio section [of] Old National Highway and the completion of its most modern link was effected October 22, when, in the presence of approximately 5,000 persons, Governor James M. Cox put into place the final brick of the new 16-mile stretch between Zanesville and New Concord, in Muskingum county

A photograph of the event depicted “Little Harriet Dodd,” about 2 or 3 years old, presenting the final brick to Governor Cox. They and others stood around the opening where the brick was needed to complete the project:

Ohioans from every walk of life made the opening of the Zanesville-New Concord highway a gala occasion. In each direction along the road – as far as the human eye could reach – motor cars were parked, while the human freight they had brought to witness the consummation of a great construction plan surged against the last brick-hole and cheered the beginning of a new era in Muskingum county.

The Road-Maker explained the project:

The improved road is a 13¾ mile section of the National Highway between New Concord and Zanesville, Ohio, and was rebuilt by order of the United States government as a necessary war measure

Actual work of regrading was begun March 22 and the urgent need of the highway for motor-truck transportation of army supplies called for an early completion of the job.

First, the original worn earth road was carefully graded by wheel scrapers after the low grades were filled and the necessary cuts made, with the use of plows, in higher elevated sections. Then forms for concrete curbs were built to form a curb 30 in. deep by 6 in. width.

After the removal of the forms, there was laid between curbs a 15-in. course of run-of-crusher slag from the Bellaire furnaces of the Carnegie Steel Co. When this had been thoroughly rolled and bonded, sufficient granulated slag from the Riverside furnaces of the National Tube Co. at Benwood, W. Va, and Wheeling Steel & Iron Co., Wheeling, W. Va., was placed to fill up the interstices in the slag base. This course was then also thoroughly rolled and compacted.

On the slag bed thus prepared was laid a 2-in. cushion course of the same granulated slag carefully leveled, on which was placed 4 by 9 paving brick. Bricks were laid in record time, the crew of two bricklayers and helpers laying as many as 54,000 bricks a day.

The advantages of run-of-crusher slag for road work are excellent bottom drainage, complete interlocking of the materials and the perfect consolidation and maximum

density of the structure under the brick paving.

This type of base with a 2-in. layer of granulated slag forms a resilient cushion of great flexibility to take up expansion. This expansion in the brick is taken up by the tar joints.

Under the personal supervision of R. C. Burton, of Zanesville, who was appointed to represent Ohio, a record in modern road construction was established by completing the improvement early in October, although handicapped by the severe weather conditions and a critical labor shortage that materially delayed operations earlier in the season.

After recalling the history of the road dating to the first half of the 19th century, the article concluded:

It is natural therefore that the National Highway, the greatest factor in the development of the Western states – harmonizing and strengthening the Union, and so vital in the present crisis – should be proclaimed the Nation's most important roadway.

The project cost between \$500,000 and \$600,000. ["Ohioans Add Strength to Old Road," *American Motorist*, December 1, 1918, pages 16, 27; "East Pike Improvement – National Highway," *The Road-Maker*, January 1919, pages 18-20; "National Road Completed in Muskingum County, Ohio," *Dependable Highways*, October 1918, pages 5-7;]

About the Highway Industries Association

In early August 1918, Henry Shirley addressed the North Carolina Good Roads Association about the activities of the Highway Industries Association. Shirley, who had been AASHO's first president, had played key roles in development of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 and development of OPRRE's initial regulations for implementing the program. Now, he explained that the manufacturers of road material machinery and "etc." had formed the association to "promote good roads and nothing else." The association sold nothing but "the idea of good roads and the benefits derived therefrom." The association would help any road organization "in supplying literature and speakers in any campaign for better roads, or for larger appropriations, and in every way possible for the advancement of the good roads subject."

The association had focused its efforts:

The time has arrived when there should be a Federal System of roads, a State System of roads, and county and township systems, and it is the object of the Highway Industries Association to co-operate with all these bodies to the end that this most beneficial result will be obtained

The time is here when it is necessary for the Federal Government to take over, build and maintain the trunk lines of this Nation, both east and west, and north and south; the State Highway Departments to take over, build and maintain the main State arteries leading into the federal system, and the counties and townships to take over those roads of local

importance.

Similar proposals had been defeated in 1916 when Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act. The ideas, however, had not disappeared, only placed on hold during the war:

The war has only emphasized the close and logical co-operation between the State and Federal Government to secure the very best results, and the same co-operation must exist between the counties and townships, and the Highway Departments to secure similar results.

The State highway departments “have come to stay,” he said, but “their usefulness may be delayed by petty jealousies, small politicians and sectional narrowness, but it is such an important constructive unit that it is bound to take a most active part in the State and National road affairs.” Each State had people “who seem to think it is their special mission in life to object to everything that goes to the promotion and advancement of the general welfare of the State, or changes the condition that existed twenty years ago . . . especially in road matters.” He had seen how these people work against the State highway departments that were “legislated out of existence, or their appropriations and powers so restricted that they would be practically useless, and while struggling under such handicaps and burdens it was being attacked and criticized in the most vitriolic and scathing languages.”

Out of “the embers of the destroyed structure, restricted laws or burdens,” the modern State highway departments had emerged. They were essential, especially because the Federal Government “undoubtedly will undertake to assist in constructing the main trunk lines of the country, and you may rest assured that they will not deal with a smaller unit than a State, and for this reason it is most essential that each State clothe its Highway Department with proper powers and appropriations to meet all the requirements that may be placed on such road construction by the National Government.”

He concluded:

I can not impress upon your minds too forcibly the great necessity of formulating a plan, and system of State and county highways, for the development and returns from such development that will take place in the State when such a system has been constructed will far exceed the cost of such a system, not considering the recreational and many other advantages that are derived therefrom. [“The Highway Industries Association,” *Better Roads and Streets*, October 1918, pages 375, 397-398]

By then, the long-distance road advocates who had not carried the day in 1916 saw an opportunity to renew the old fight in the country’s deteriorating roads amid the growing importance of motor trucks. In October, the Highway Industries Association and AASHO announced a Joint Highway Congress for December in Chicago. AASHO was to meet on December 2 and 3 at the La Salle Hotel. The Joint Highway Congress would take place on December 4 and 5 at the Congress Hotel in Chicago. On December 6, the Highway Industries Association and AASHO would hold separate meetings. The invitation stated that, “Your

presence at the convention will greatly assist in meeting the conditions our country will face in highway development and control after the war.”

The invitation included a copy of S. 4993, which Senator George E. Chamberlain of Oregon had introduced in the United States Senate on October 17. It was, the invitation explained, “a very important measure especially to those States on whose roads is a great deal of Army motor truck traffic as well as the abnormal traffic that is now being carried by a great many roads on account of war activities.” The bill would give “the Secretary of War the right to take over, and establish those highways that will be of greatest military value to the country.” In meetings with State highway authorities, the Secretary would “disclose, so far as reasonably practicable, the outlines of his plans for highways designed for military purposes to the end that unnecessary duplication of highways be avoided, and that highways constructed for other than military purposes may be in a strategic location wherever reasonably possible.” The Secretary would construct the system “in such installments or divisions as may seem . . . expedient and desirable”:

That the Secretary of War shall forthwith proceed to take over, improve, construct, and maintain such roads of said system of highways as are most necessary to the welfare of the people of the United States.

The bill would appropriate \$100 million “for the purposes of defraying the expenses pertaining to taking over, improving, constructing, and maintaining of said highway system.”

The invitation advised, “Everyone interested in this Bill should write his representative in Congress asking for aid in having it speedily passed.” [“Important,” *Better Roads and Streets*, October 1918, pages 386-388]

Numerous organizations endorsed the Joint Congress, including AAA and the National Old Trails Road Association, the Lincoln Highway Association, and several other named trail associations. “The program will be devoted to the most important phases of highway development, both National and state, covering such subjects as:

Development of the motor parcel routes, and the great possibility of their future usefulness.
Neglect of highways during the war.
A suggested National highway policy and plan.
Highway transportation, present and future.
Underlying principles of laying out, marking and maintaining a state trunk highway system.
Proper license fees for motor vehicles and drivers.
Motor trucks and trailers as transportation essentials.
Regulation of speed, weight, width and height.

The road situation has become so critical that aggressive measures are considered necessary to put it on a sensible and constructive basis. The amount of highway traffic is increasing at a much greater rate than highway construction, and it is necessary to

provide for this traffic by increasing the amount of road construction. At least 450,000 miles of roads today should be surfaced, but they have not been improved. Economical development of traffic demands that at least a third of this mileage should be built quickly and plans are to be formulated and worked out, if possible, at this convention whereby the country at large can undertake the work immediately and push it to completion. ["Road Organizations Endorse Meeting," *Motor Age*, November 14, 1918, page 11]

The Armistice

In September, President Wilson kicked off the Fourth Liberty Loan drive to raise funds for the war. On September 27, he explained that, "The common will of mankind has been substituted for the particular purposes of individual states." He said:

Individual statesmen may have started the conflict, but neither they nor their opponents can stop it as they please. It has become a peoples' war, and peoples of all sorts and races, of every degree of power and variety of fortune, are involved in its sweeping processes of change and settlement.

The drive raised \$7 billion.

As Wilson biographer A. Scott Berg described:

Two days later, Bulgaria became the first of the Central Powers to surrender; and independence spread across the region. Within eight days, Poland declared itself an independent state; the following week a provisional government of Czechoslovakia formed; and eleven days later a council established itself in Budapest to create a Hungarian nation separate from Austria. The Germans, recognizing the inevitable, realized that their best hope for rational terms of surrender was with the opponent they had fought for the shortest time.

On October 6, a representative of Germany formally asked President Wilson "to take steps for the restoration of peace, to notify all belligerents of this request, and to invite them to delegate Plenipotentiaries for the purpose of taking up negotiations."

Germany accepted President Wilson's terms on October 12, "but their army kept fighting":

Days later, Germany agreed to cease submarine warfare; and by the end of the month, the Allied commanders met to discuss means of rendering Germany militarily impotent. While the Kaiser went into seclusion in Belgium, refusing to abdicate, Sultan Mehmed VI of the Ottoman Empire requested terms of capitulation, as did the Emperor of Austria. At the end of the first week of November, Prince Max [von Baden, the German Imperial Chancellor] sent a delegation of diplomats to France to negotiate specifics of his nation's surrender and then announced his resignation.

Although President Wilson had brought the country through what was known as the Great War, voters did not reward him during the November 5 mid-term elections. Republicans took control of both Houses of Congress, a reality that would have major implications for the peace:

Despite his joy that the war was ending, Wilson privately revealed that he was “of course disturbed by the result of Tuesday’s elections, because they create obstacles to the settlement of the many difficult questions which throng so on every side”

While it was Woodrow Wilson’s intention to lead his nation into a millennium, he now faced a hostile incoming Congress. Notwithstanding, he remained confident that “by one means or another the great thing we have to do will work itself out.” After all, he reminded one junior member of the Administration, “I have an implicit faith in Divine providence” [Berg, A. Scott, *Wilson*, G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2013, pages 502-507]

Germany and its allies signed the Armistice on November 7. Word spread around the world. It was to take effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

On that day, November 11, 1918, President appeared before a joint session of Congress at 1 p.m.

Wearing a black tailcoat and light gray pants, he strode before the Congress. A standing ovation welcomed him, the audience’s cheers extending to the gallery as the presiding officers permitted the spectators to join in the demonstration. Wilson quieted the chamber and launched into defining the terms to which the Germans had agreed in “these anxious times of rapid and stupendous change. [page 514]

After spelling out the conditions of the Armistice in detail, he continued:

The war thus comes to an end; for, having accepted these terms of armistice, it will be impossible for the German command to renew it.

It is not now possible to assess the consequences of this great consummation. We know only that this tragical war, whose consuming flames swept from one nation to another until all the world was on fire, is at an end and that it was the privilege of our own people to enter it at its most critical juncture in such fashion and in such force as to contribute in a way of which we are all deeply proud to the great result.

He discussed the impacts on the countries and people freed from “the yoke of arbitrary government and who are now coming at last into their freedom.” He concluded:

There are some happy signs that they know and will choose the way of self-control and peaceful accommodation. If they do, we shall put our aid at their disposal in every way that we can. If they do not, we must await with patience and sympathy the awakening and recovery that will assuredly come at last.

Berg described public reaction to the Armistice:

Washington celebrated all day, sweeping even Wilson into the festivities. November 11 happened to be the birthday of the King of Italy, and the Italian Ambassador was celebrating the occasion that night with a ball. A little before 11 o'clock, the President proposed to [First Lady] Edith that they crash the party. The Ambassador was only too happy to welcome a giddy Wilson, who toasted the King and lingered for another hour. Back at the White House, Woodrow and Edith sat on a couch by her bedroom fireplace, where he read a chapter from the Bible before retiring. [pages 514-515]

As a headline in *The Baltimore Sun* put it on November 12:

THE WHOLE COUNTRY GOES WILD WITH JOY AT ADVENT OF PEACE

The Post-War Period Begins

The highway business soon felt the impact of peace.

Automobile Topics declared in its November 16th issue:

Brightening skies in world events have brought with them something of immediate relief to industrial conditions in the United States, so far as supplies of raw materials are concerned. That is in effect the substance of a statement given out by the War Industries Board this week in Washington. Priorities, which heretofore have imposed relentless restrictions on all industries in the greater need of materials for war manufactures, have been so altered as to allow tentative steps to be taken toward production of non-war products on a larger scale than has been possible during the past few months

Restrictions are entirely removed from some of the activities which have been held tightly in check heretofore. In this class are included construction and maintenance of highways.

The War Industries Board's action would benefit the automobile industry as it converted to peacetime production. ["Priorities Change To Usher in Peace," *Automobile Topics*, November 16, 1918, page 121]

Before the Armistice, BPR Director Page had written to State Highway Departments on November 4 in anticipation of the war's end:

The Secretary of Agriculture, having in mind the return of our soldiers after the war, and wishing to assist in providing employment for such of them as need it, is anxious to ascertain as early as is practicable, the number of returned soldiers who may be employed to advantage on road repair, construction and maintenance. The co-operation of the State Highway Departments is earnestly sought in the matter.

It is believed, with minor exceptions, the soldiers will naturally desire to return to the localities they came from. Unquestionably, such a wide distribution would result in a more ready absorption into the industries in which they will be needed. It would seem, too, that they should be given the preference by employers.

For the purpose of determining the value of highway work as a field for such labor you are requested to furnish a statement in letter form, of the approximate number of men your State Department could use in connection with either force account or contract operations. It would be convenient to have the statement indicate separately the number of skilled and unskilled men that could probably be employed, including in the skilled labor, carpenters, masons, stationary engineers, roller-men, quarry bosses, etc., and also the period of the year for which they would be employed.

We, of course, wish to get this information together as soon as practicable, because, although the need may not be immediate, it will be necessary to compile the data and correlate it with similar information obtained for other activities. This will probably take considerable time. [“Government Asked to Aid Colorado Roads,” *Colorado Highways Bulletin*, December 1918, page 12]

After the Armistice, Page convened a final meeting of the United States Highways Council on November 13. To that date, the council had held 25 meetings for the transaction of business. Now, as chairman, he sent a telegram after the meeting to the State highway departments conveying the council’s decisions:

United States Highways Council announces no further applications need be made to it for approval of highway projects, and that previous disapprovals are revoked, and pending applications require no further action. Procedure in securing materials and transportation should follow normal practices. Removal of restrictions does not affect highway bond issues which are by law under control of Capital Issues Committee. State Highway Departments will not be asked to submit programs for next year’s work.

Chairman Page followed the telegram with a letter to the State highway departments later in the day:

This action has been taken as a result of the general release of bituminous road materials by the Fuels Administration and the general release of other materials except steel, by the War Industries Board. The use of steel in highway structures is still under restriction, and it is impracticable at this time to furnish information concerning the future control of the use of this material for road purposes. The suggestion is made that if steel and iron products are required for highway purposes, it may be practicable to obtain them with minimum difficulty if the dealer from which they are ordered will state that he will not replenish his stock for the remainder of the year, provided he is authorized to fill this order.

State Highway Departments will please notify all applicants of this decision and not

transmit copies of HC3 to the Highways Council after this. [“Embargo Raised on Road Building in U.S.,” *Colorado Highways Bulletin*, December 1918, page 3]

BPR’s annual report for 1919 summarized the council’s work:

Applications for approval, including those which had been submitted to the Office of Public Roads prior to the establishment of the council, reached a total of 7,307. Many of these applications were considered several times by reason of requests for reconsideration or by reason of requirements by the council of further information, so that the total number of considerations aggregated 9,712. No statement as to the exact number of approvals or disapprovals can be given, as many cases were merely deferred and not disapproved, others were conditionally approved or disapproved, others were reconsidered, and still others were affected by an amendment issued September 16 by the War Industries Board to circular 21 permitting the completion to November 1 for projects substantially under way. Still other projects were pending at the time the council ceased its activities, and in consequence it is impossible to segregate those applications which might be considered as definitely disapproved.

On capital issues such as road bonds, the Capital Issues Committee had jurisdiction, with the council serving as an aid. Overall, the committee had considered requests for \$49,538,075, but overall approvals totaled to \$7,334,821. [*Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture for the Year Ended June 30, 1919*, page 395]

Secretary of Agriculture Houston expressed his views, including on road building, to agriculture editors at a meeting in Washington; he released the remarks to the public on November 27. *The Evening Star* in Washington summarized the remarks in a front-page article:

Reconstruction plans, in the opinion of Secretary Houston, should include resumption of highway construction under the Federal Aid Road act, creation of a system of personal credit unions for farmers, systematic supervision of land settlement, provisions for safeguarding the rights of tenants and encouragement of farm ownership, continuation of government supervision of stockyards and related industries, and extension of the benefits of modern medicine and sanitation.

He predicted that because the agriculture sector in the United States “probably was the best-prepared interest in the nation when the war came,” it would be the first to adjust to peacetime. He anticipated that many of the returning soldiers would go back to the farms or want to start their own farms:

The public highways, the secretary told the editors, will be a vital factor in the reconstruction period. For that reason, he said, highway construction should be started as soon as possible. Under the federal aid road act federal and state funds, appropriated for road building and not expended owing to the stoppage of construction by the war, will amount this year to about \$75,000,000. Road building he termed a worthy project for employment of the surplus labor supply expected to result from demobilization of the

Army.

He indicated that about \$20 million would be available in the following year, but added that “it seems to me that we should take a further step It would be in the public interest to make available larger appropriations from the Federal treasury to be used separately or in conjunction with state or local support”:

It seems to me that we should take a further step – take this step not only because of the importance of good roads, but also because of the desirability of furnishing worthy projects on which unemployed labor during the period of readjustment may be engaged There need be no delay in the execution of such a program; the nation has already provided the machinery in the Department of Agriculture and in the state highway commissions. The Federal Aid Road Act was fruitful of good legislation, and each state in the Union now has a central highway authority with power and funds to meet the terms of the federal act. The two agencies, in conjunction, have been engaged in devising well considered road systems and in making surveys, plans and specifications. The task will be one of selection, and those roads should be designated for improvement which are of the greatest economic importance, with due regard to such military and other needs as are proper for consideration.

There is no necessity for any departure from this scheme. The suggestions made have been canvassed with the President, the Secretary of War, and the Postmaster General, and they are in accord with the view that additional funds should be made available to this department and that they should be expended through the existing machinery.

By letter, Secretary of War Baker agreed with Secretary Houston "that there should not only be a prompt resumption of road construction under the Federal Aid Road Act . . . but also that additional funds should be made available to your department for the extension of such work."

President Wilson also supported the idea in a letter to Secretary Houston:

I heartily agree with you that it would be in the public interest to resume in full measure the highway construction operations under the Federal Aid Road Act, and to do so as speedily as possible. I understand the necessity which existed for their contraction during the stress through which we have been passing, but that obstacle is now removed.

I believe that it would be highly desirable to have an additional appropriation made available to the Department of Agriculture, to be used in conjunction, if possible, with any surplus state and community funds, in order that these operations may be extended. It is important not only to develop good highways throughout the country as quickly as possible, but it is also at this time especially advisable to resume and extend all such essential public works, with a view to furnishing employment for laborers who may be seeking new tasks during the period of readjustment. Knowing that the Department of Agriculture and the state highway authorities in each state have been carefully working out road systems and developing plans and specifications, I have no doubt that all

activities in this field can be vigorously conducted through these two sets of existing agencies, acting in full accord.

News of the official favor for road construction was widely reported around the country and in the good roads magazines of the day.

E. J. Mehren, editor of the weekly *Engineering News-Record* and a strong supporter of the Highway Industries Association, prepared an editorial that focused on one word in Secretary

Houston's speech:

The important word in this statement is the word "separately," which we have taken the liberty to put in italics. Later in the interview the secretary stated that he had canvassed his various suggestions regarding highway work with the President, the Secretary of War, and the Postmaster General, and had found them in accord with regard to the appropriation of additional funds. He does not say in the latter connection that he specifically canvassed the matter of separate expenditure of funds by the Federal Government but it is presumed from the context that such was the case.

The statement does not commit the secretary to the policy of building a national highway system, but, by considering it as an alternative of Federal aid, he shows at least that he is not averse to such a proposal. The Government attitude in the past has been strongly set against a national highway system, to be built and maintained by Federal funds. In thus taking a step forward, the President and his cabinet advisers are merely reading, and reading aright, not only the public demand but the new conditions which had made necessary the adoption of a policy of national highway construction. *Engineering News-Record* in the past has been opposed to a national system, but new conditions introduced by motor trucking have so changed the situation as to leave no doubt of the necessity of completing the highway net of the country by adding to our county and state systems a national system tying in the various states just as efficiently as rail lines now do for the bulk of our transportation.

Secretary Houston's views lend added importance to the highway congress which will convene under the joint auspices of the American Association of State Highway Officials and the Highway Industries Association in Chicago next week. The subject will be among the other broad questions of policy discussed. The meeting, taking its cue from Secretary Houston, should do much to crystallize the nation's thinking on highway work, particularly as to the advisability of building a national highway system.

["Deems Good Roads Vital to Farmer," *The Evening Star*, November 27, 1918, page 1; "Would Expedite Highway Development," *Engineering News-Record*, December 5, 1918, page 1045; "Cabinet Attitude on a National Highway System," *Engineering News-Record*, December 5, 1918, page 1010; "Wilson for Early Resumption of Construction Work," *The Road-Maker*, January 1918, page 16; "President and Cabinet Officers Favor Additional Federal Road

Expenditures,” *Good Roads*, December 7, 1918, pages 222, 224]

On the Road to Chicago

Around this time, BPR Director Page was in Denver, Colorado, for several days before heading to Chicago for the AASHO/Highway Industries Association meeting.

Page was in Denver for conferences with BPR’s western district engineers, each of whom oversaw work in several States, and the U.S. Forest Service. He also met with State road officials to get a sense of road conditions in the west, “in which he was keenly interested,” according to an article in *Colorado Highways Bulletin*. He also inspected the new State road from Denver to Littleton built under the Federal-aid highway program.

Like Secretary Houston, Page anticipated increased Federal-aid funding. He said:

Everywhere in the United States the demand for good roads is crystallizing, people who had not thought of the subject a few years ago, today recognize the economic value of better highways, and it is my belief that this sentiment will soon find its reflection in Congress.

At the present time the Post Office and Post Roads Committee of the Senate has under consideration amendments to the Federal Aid act which will, if passed, add some \$500,000,000 to the road fund to be expended over a term of years, which with the state and local funds will aggregate probably \$1,000,000,000.

Thus it is proposed to make immediately available the sum of \$50,000,000, the sum of \$75,000,000 which will become available July 1, 1920, and in the four years following the sums of \$100,000,000 annually are to be provided for road work.

These expenditures, the bill provides, will be made under the Federal Aid act provisions with two new amendments.

The first of these would make possible the expenditure of these funds on other than roads designated as rural post routes, thus eliminating the limitation which has worked much hardship on state departments in the past since there are many important highways which do not come within the post route definition.

The second and more important of the two refers to the clause which now provides that the states shall meet each government appropriation on a dollar for dollar basis. There are seven mountain states which cannot meet the provisions of the new appropriation, since a limited valuation does not give them enough funds. There are other states not quite so badly situated but still unable to cope with the proposed increase.

Accordingly the senate committee has under consideration a classification of states

according to their valuations and mileage, under which it is probable that there will be roughly speaking, four classes as follows:

First, states where the government will spend not more than 80 per cent. to the state's 20; second, states where the government will spend not more than 70 per cent. to the state's 30; third, states where the government will spend not more than 60 per cent. to the state's 40, and fourth, where the government will spend not more than 50 per cent.

With these amendments and with the greatly increased funds, so made available, it is my belief that the government will be in a position to aid the states very materially in one of the most important constructive works now facing Union.

Asked about the "enormous increase in heavy motor truck traffic," Page said he was "unalterably opposed" to heavy trucks using roads not designed for them:

The solution to this question rests in remedial legislation. Motor trucks should possibly be limited to about 450 to 500 pounds dead weight to every running inch width of tire, which would provide a reasonable factor of safety on roads with a 6-inch base. It is unfair, unjust, to expect the taxpayer to pay for roads, then stand by and see them torn to pieces by commercial vehicles operated for the profit of the individual. Sooner or later this legislation will have to come or we may expect to see road work stopped. And that, of course, is impossible if the future prosperity of the nation is considered.

He also commented on proposals for a national highway system that would be the central issue of the Chicago joint congress. He thought the Federal-aid highway program contained ample authority for construction of such a system by agreement between State highway officials and BPR:

The road problem is a state and local one. We are not building our highways for transcontinental transportation, because the cost of such operations is too great to ever permit them to become competitors to the railroads.

What this country needs is better county highways, better state highways. Each one reflects material benefit upon its community, and accordingly, upon the nation. Give us good county and state highways and immediately you have not one but a series of transcontinental highways if you care to designate them as such, since you will have complete communication across the country. But road building is not carried on for pleasure travel. We want that of course, but the fundamental economic reason for the road, is its commercial value, which is and will always be local.

While in Denver, Page also addressed the Civic and Commercial Association, where he praised Colorado's system of roads in contrast with his visit to the State 12 years earlier when roads existed more in name than reality. ["May Increase Federal Aid Appropriations," *Colorado Highways Bulletin*, January 1919, pages 9, 27]

President Wilson's Annual Message

On December 2, President Wilson appeared before a joint session of Congress to deliver his sixth annual message before leaving for peace talks in Paris. (Wilson was the first President since John Adams to routinely deliver the annual message as a speech that is today known as the State of the Union Address.) According to news accounts, he received strong applause from Democratic Members of Congress, and silence from the Republicans who would take control of Congress in 1919. *The Baltimore Sun* commented on the Republicans' response:

Their much-discussed purpose to take him off the high horse which they say he has been riding, and to bring him to his knees, found expression in silence.

They wanted to challenge him, but thought better of it. "So, the best they could do seemed to be an occasional faint grunt of derision"

Berg summarized the reaction:

By the time Wilson tried to rally the Congress behind him in his sixth Annual Message on the State of the Union, the lawmakers felt marginalized. He entered the overflowing chamber on December 2, 1918, to what one onlooker called an "ominous silence." Even delivering a patriotic speech did little to thaw his audience. Starting with an evaluation of the nation's war effort, Wilson attributed most of its success to "the mettle and quality of the officers and men we sent over and of the sailors who kept the seas, and the spirit of the nation that stood behind them." He singled out various bureaus and constituencies that had contributed to the nation's success – especially America's women. He spoke of the specific challenges ahead as the country returned to a peacetime economy. Still, little received applause, even when his supporters tried to incite an ovation. [Navy] Secretary Daniels found the Congressional reserve nothing short of "churlish." But one diplomat's wife, who viewed the proceedings through her opera glasses, wrote in her diary that "the President's *complete* disregard of the Senate following on top of his very tactless appeal to the country to return a Democratic Congress, has made him about as thoroughly and completely unpopular in his own country as any president has been or could be."

Speaking of the returning soldiers, President Wilson said that private initiative could not employ all of them. Those with technical training, others who could return to their peacetime work, and those willing to return to farm work "will find no difficulty, it is safe to say, in finding place and employment":

But there will be others who will be at a loss where to gain a livelihood unless pains are taken to guide them and put them in the way of work. There will be a large floating residuum of labor which should not be left wholly to shift for itself. It seems to me important, therefore, that the development of public works of every sort should be promptly resumed in order that opportunities should be created for unskilled labor in particular and that plans should be made for such developments of our unused lands and our natural resources as we have hitherto lacked stimulation to undertake.

In the course of the remarks, President Wilson discussed the future of the railroads after the Federal Government relinquished them to the private sector. “It was necessary that the administration of the railways should be taken over by the government so long as the war lasted.” Otherwise, the country would not have been able “to establish and carry through under a single direction the necessary priorities of shipment.”

Now, he called on Congress for their counsel on the subject of what to do about the peacetime railroads:

The one conclusion that I am ready to state with confidence is that it would be a disservice alike to the country and to the owners of the railroads to return to the old conditions unmodified. Those are conditions of restraint without development. There is nothing affirmative or helpful about them. What the country chiefly needs is that all its means of transportation should be developed, its railways, its waterways, its highways, and its countryside roads. Some new element of policy, therefore, is absolutely necessary – necessary for the service of the public, necessary for the release of credit to those who are administering the railways, necessary for the protection of their security holders. The old policy may be changed much or little, but surely it cannot wisely be left as it was. I hope that the Congress will have a complete and impartial study of the whole problem instituted at once and prosecuted as rapidly as possible. I stand ready and anxious to release the roads from the present control and I must do so at a very early date if by waiting until the statutory limit of time is reached I shall be merely prolonging the period of doubt and uncertainty which is hurtful to every interest concerned.

This section drew considerable comment about the future of the railroads. *The New York Times* gave the issue front page coverage with an article under the headline “Approve Wilson’s Railroad Ideas” that began:

The President’s statement, in his address to Congress today, that he had no policy with regard to the future disposition of the railroads, and that unless, before the expiration of the statutory period, there was a clear prospect of a legislative solution of the problem he would turn the roads back to their owners, caused some surprise here.

The expectation, as recently as 2 weeks earlier, was that until the peace was signed, the Railroad Administration would retain “the unification of the system with the improvements of the various [rail]roads in so far as funds could be obtained, in order to show to the full the advantages of some form of centralized control.”

The article’s subheads were:

Avowal That He Has No Policy Regarding the Roads Surprises Congressmen

Quick Action Looked For

Advocates of Public Ownership Find Themselves With a Champion.

At the same time, the highway community, about to meet in Chicago, took heart in the reference to public works and to highways and country roads as evidence of the sentiment he had expressed in his letter to Secretary Houston about the need for increased appropriations for road building. [Berg, pages 518-519; Owens, John W., "President Says It's His Paramount Duty to Attend Peace Conference; Republicans Hear Him In Silence," *The Baltimore Sun*, December 3, 1918, page 1; "Approve Wilson's Railroad Ideas," *The New York Times*, December 3, 1918, page 1]

On December 4, President Wilson set sail on the *George Washington*, arriving in France on December 13.

A Southern California Perspective

An article in the March issue of *Touring Topics* reported that California had 2,225 miles of highways that were portions of transcontinental routes, including "the National Old Trails Road, the Midland Trail, the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, the Borderland Route, the Old Spanish Trail, Lincoln Highway and Pacific Highway." Collectively, these routes brought an estimated 10,000 automobiles into southern California in 1917. The National Old Trails Road brought the most, approximately 4,000 automobiles:

Twelve hundred cars were driven into Southern California over the Midland Trail, 800 arrived over the Lincoln Highway, 1000 over the northern routes, and three thousand reached California over the various southern routes. ["Total of 4,467 Miles of Paved Road in California," *Touring Topics*, March 1918, pages 20, 24]

The club's signposting crews remained active during 1918. The October issue reported that the sign posting truck had covered a "record of 6,228 miles of eastern highways since July 1st" before returning to Los Angeles on September 21. The crew completed location and replacement signs on the Lincoln Highway and the National Old Trails Road, as well as on the Midland Trail, which ended in Los Angeles.

The Lincoln Highway, with its terminus in San Francisco, was "carrying an increasing proportion of transcontinental automobile traffic," with 75 percent of the traffic on the highway reaching Los Angeles by the Midland Trail. The National Old Trails Road "has likewise carried an increasing amount of travel in the past six months and with the return of pre-war conditions there is no doubt that the amount of motor travel California-bound over the National Old Trails route will be several-fold larger than it has been in any past year."

The sign crew followed the Lincoln Highway before turning toward southern California at Trinidad, Colorado. "The roadway, like all Colorado roads, is very good." From Trinidad to La Junta, "the route is being changed to parallel the Santa Fe railroad, and by late Fall this work will be completed and will furnish a first class highway that will be good the year round."

Between Trinidad and Albuquerque, "the construction crew found fair dirt roads with short stretches rutted from recent rains." Of the alternative routes between Albuquerque and

Holbrook, the crew placed signs on both. “The route by way of Gallup is sixty miles shorter than the Springerville alternative, but is not in quite as good condition as the latter roadway”:

Between Holbrook and Flagstaff, Arizona, there is considerable mileage between the first named town and Winslow that is very rough with the exception of the last ten miles into Winslow. A new alternative road has been built on the northside of the Santa Fe railroad between these points which has just been opened and which will be in very good condition within a few weeks, or as soon as there is rain which will permit the roadbuilders to sand and roll the highway. The stretch from Winslow to Flagstaff is now rough but is being repaired.

From Flagstaff the car was sent into the Grand Canyon and much rough roadway was encountered near Christmas Flats, due to a recent cloudburst that had washed out the dirt from the road and left the boulders protruding. The more westerly roadway into Grand Canyon from Williams is in excellent condition. It has been recently worked and is in better shape than at any time within the past few years.

The road between Flagstaff and Williams “has been recently worked by the State Highway Commission and is a veritable boulevard.” The new road was “constructed from disintegrated gravel which has been well graded and rolled and which will make this particular piece of highway travelable the year round except during heavy snows.”

The road was in good condition between Williams and Kingman, “except in Nelson Canyon, where it has been badly washed out for a distance of about 10 miles and is in urgent need of improvement”:

From Kingman to Topock the road is good and between Topock and Needles it is very bad in places, due to recent heavy rains. From Needles to Barstow the highway is good except for a distance of about eighteen miles between Amboy and Ludlow which is badly washed out and very rough. From Barstow on into Los Angeles the roadway is in excellent shape. [“Club Posts 6228 Miles of Eastern Highways,” *Touring Topics*, October 1918, pages 9-11]

In December 1918, with the war at an end, the magazine reported that eastern car owners were “flocking to the Land of Motor Roads and Sunshine by the thousands”:

The reasons for this unprecedented influx of eastern motorists are not difficult to understand. Surcease from war worry, long postponed vacations, generally prosperous business conditions – all have had their effect in turning the eastern motoring public Californiaward [sic] this winter. And, the final impulse that was needed in really getting these tourists started on the journey out here, has been the nationwide advertising that has accrued to California through the fame of its motor boulevards and the publicity that has been given to the activities of the Automobile Club of Southern California in signposting the Lincoln Highway and the National Old Trails Road.

Where a few years ago a scant hundred or two automobiles were driven over the National Old Trails highway, now there is literally a procession of cars westward bound. The numbers of automobiles that have entered California over this transcontinental road in the past six months run into the thousands and each day new arrivals are reporting at the Touring Information Desk at Club Headquarters.

The same was true for the Lincoln Highway but to a lesser degree, despite the signposting. "Travelers over this route have to contend with more severe winter weather conditions than do those over the southern route and for this reason comparatively few machines will arrive over the Lincoln Highway during the remaining winter months."

The article concluded:

And these trips, taken together, will serve to inform the visitor why it is that Southern Californians are so proud of their land and also why the residents of each portion of it are such keen partisans of their particular locality. There is no sameness to Southern California. It is varied as the colors of the prism, and the man is indeed hard to please who does not become keenly enthusiastic over some one of its manifold aspects. ["Eastern Motorist Flocking Into California," *Touring Topics*, December 1918, page 12, 14]

A census by the Automobile Club of western cars over the previous 7 years documented the value of the signposting along the National Old Trails Road:

This count shows that in 1912 there were only 113 automobiles driven through Springerville into California over the N.O.T. In 1913 the number was 194. During the next year the number of cars increased to 419. This increase was directly due to the signposting work of the Club and the attendant publicity given to this all-year transcontinental highway to Southern California. In 1915 the work of locating signposts as far east as Kansas City was completed and that year the number of California-bound cars that passed through Springerville jumped to 1367.

In 1916 the number of machines increased to 1774 and in 1917 cars to the total of 2607 had passed through the Arizona gateway enroute to California. During the year of 1918 the full fruits of the Club's signposting work on the N.O.T. and the resulting publicity to this highway is shown in the tremendous use of the highway by eastern motorists. Up to December 24th of last year 4240 motor parties were checked at Springerville and that number is probably 100 less than the total number of transcontinental west-bound machines, since a number must have passed through at night unnoticed.

The value of this travel "runs into the millions" for southern California "and this is a benefit that has accrued to this territory through the work and efforts of the Club" ["Nearly 40 Times Increase in Travel Over National Old Trails Road," *Touring Topics*, January 1919, page 15]

A Plea for the Joint Congress

With peace at hand and the stated attitude of President Wilson and other government leaders in support of increased highway construction, highway officials and supporters were looking forward to the Joint Highway Congress in Chicago where the long running battle among advocates of Federal-aid could debate those who favored national roads.

The congress, however, had been delayed so some participants could attend a previously scheduled War Emergency and Reconstruction Congress under the auspices of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on December 2 at the Traymore Hotel in Atlantic City. Participants included members of AASHO, AAA, the Highway Industries Association, the Highways Transport Committee, Logan Page, and others. In a speech to the group, S. M. Williams began, "It was extremely unfortunate that it became advisable for a change in the date of the Highway Congress in Chicago and unfortunately I am afraid that some of the highway officials did not realize the importance of the change, but I hope by the end of the meeting here this week they will fully appreciate that it was proper."

He commented on Secretary Houston's statement about increased Federal funding for roads. He called it "the most significant statement ever made in this country regarding highway work in detail. But he urged his listeners to "not be carried away in enthusiasm over this statement from Mr. Houston." He recalled the enthusiasm that greeted creation of the United States Highways Council "because we believed it was the solution of our problems" after being assured that those in charge of highway work "need have no fear" that the country's essential work would be halted. "The work of the council proved otherwise and we were well satisfied when the time came for their retirement."

Secretary Houston had said that the "necessary machinery already exists" in the form of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. He did not believe that highway construction should be under the control of an agency "where they will always be of secondary consideration and where they may again be ignored." Instead, delegates should favor "a separate commission whose sole duty shall be the administration of the highway problem of our country and be directly responsible to the President of the United States."

He urged his listeners to remember that choice when the indications in the Secretary's statement "fail to become realizations":

The safest plan is, for those who have the highway interests of this country at heart, to make it their business to see that there will be no doubt in the matter, and make this statement without any intention of reflection upon the words of Secretary Houston.

I would sincerely congratulate him upon his final awakening to the country's needs in highway development, but I feel I am in position to say to you, without fear of contradiction, that I do not believe the Department of Agriculture believes the country will be satisfied to allow the highways to remain under their present control, nor from public expression in Washington, I do not believe Congress will agree to any

considerable increase in our highway program involving a national highway system, or any extension of federal aid to states, so long as the highways are a second or third consideration of any one department of the government.

I thoroughly believe it is our duty to demand and work for a definite and intelligent solution of the *entire* highway problem *regardless* of individuals or departments.

We are fortunate to be here and to take part in this great meeting. Let us send a highway message from here that will meet the approval of the entire country. [Williams, S. M., "A Plea for the Chicago Road Congress," *The Road-Maker*, December 1918, pages 32-33]

The road congress considered numerous general resolutions, but one, introduced by Major Group 10, Industrial Professionals, was specific in recommending "suitable action on the part of the Federal Government to secure the construction and maintenance of a modern system of well built trunk line highways connecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and the northern and southern sections of the country as well, utilizing existing highways where available and suitable." Further, the resolution recommended "that this action be taken as quickly as possible, so that if there be a surplus of available labor from the demobilization of our troops and war industries' employees they may be utilized upon this work." ["National Road System Recommended," *Engineering News-Record*, December 19, 1918, page 1150]

AASHO's Resolution

The shape of the postwar program was the primary theme when the Chicago meetings of AASHO and the Highway Industries Association began a week later than planned.

AASHO held its fourth annual meeting in the La Salle Hotel on December 9 and 10. The executive committee considered two resolutions that embodied the point of the Joint Congress, as described in *Good Roads*, relating to Federal participation in road work:

Two quite different proposals for such participation were placed before the officials. The first recommended increased appropriations by Congress and the administration of the work by the Bureau of Public Roads of the Department of Agriculture, under the existing federal aid law. The other plan called for a system of national roads, built and maintained by the Government through a federal commission of seven members appointed by the President. It also called for a federal appropriation of \$500,000,000.

A long debate on these two measures followed their introduction and after a close vote had been taken, the matter was referred to committee with instructions to bring in a modified measure.

The result was a compromise favoring Federal-aid, with some elements added to satisfy supporters of national roads. AASHO endorsed Page's legislative proposals, introduced by Senator Claude A. Swanson of Virginia, for consideration during the third and final session of

the 65th Congress (December 2, 1918 to March 3, 1919) calling for a revamping of BPR:

BE IT MOVED, by the American Association of State Highway Officials, assembled in convention, at Chicago, on December 10, 1918:

That the so-called Page Bill, introduced by Senator Swanson, amending the present provisions of the Federal Aid Road Act, be indorsed by the Association, and its immediate passage urged without further referendum to the various states.

That the executive committee is requested not to submit any further legislation to the present short session of Congress.

That the executive committee formulate and submit to the various state departments, as soon as may be, a separate bill providing for a federal body or officer with adequate power and funds to administer all federal aid highway laws, which are now, or may hereafter be, in effect. It is the sense of this meeting that the law should be so drawn as to take the fullest possible advantage of the experience and personnel of the present federal administrative body, the effectiveness of the work of which is hampered by the present limitations on salaries and the present too great centralization of the administrative functions, especially as concerns construction matters.

We favor an adequate federal highway system upon which the federal aid funds may be concentrated. The federal system should be selected by the various states and connected at the state lines by the federal department in cases where connections are not made by adjoining states. Nothing in any federal enactment should prevent any state from gaining all the federal aid accruing to it nor deprive any state of the full administrative and legal control of all highways within its borders, and of the location of the improvements on the federal highway system. ["The Road Meetings in Chicago," *Good Roads*, December 21, 1918, pages 243-244]

According to a recollection of these events, written in 1943 by Iowa State Highway Engineer Fred R. White, AASHO "began to waver on the principle of Federal-State cooperation conceived by its founders and written into the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916." He described what occurred during the 1918 annual meeting in Chicago:

It was inevitable that the battle of Federal-aid versus National Highways would come to a show-down at that convention. And it did. On the show-down resolution to endorse the National Highway plan, the convention voted 50-50. It was a tie. With the delegation present and voting from every State represented at the convention, we were split exactly even. By that slender margin and with not a single vote to spare, did this Association cling to its ideal of Federal-State cooperation laid down by its founders.

You will find no account of this incident in the official records of the Association. With rare judgment and foresight the presiding officer suggested that in a matter of this importance and with the Association so evenly divided, it would be well to expunge the

record from the Minutes of the convention. Both sides readily agreed. The record was expunged. [White, Fred R., "Federal-State Road Building Plan vs. Complete National Control," *American Highways*, January 1943, pages 11-12.]

The Joint Congress Convenes

AASHO joined the Highway Industries Association for joint sessions at the Congress Hotel on December 11 and 12.

During the first joint session, the first speaker after welcoming speeches was to be BPR Director Logan W. Page on "Highway Control by the Federal Government Under War Conditions." On December 8, 1918, while at the La Salle Hotel for a meeting of AASHO's executive committee, he became ill during dinner. Page retired to his room, where he died a few hours later on December 9.

Illinois Governor Frank O. Lowden greeted AASHO and the Highway Industries Association to the Congress Hotel in Chicago. *Engineering News-Record* reported that economics and ultimate service were the burden of his address in Illinois, "where a \$60,000,000 bond issue has recently been voted":

"Keep the good-roads idea sold like good salesmen," was his advice to those who would stop the good-roads propaganda. That appointing officials must keep out incompetents, that engineers must recognize their heavy responsibility to build the roads as economically as private companies would, that material men must be satisfied with a fair profit (for upon this factor largely depends the beginning of the building in Illinois) – these were sentiments upon which the Governor elaborated.

One of the speakers on the first day was Roy Chapin, whose topic was "The Present and Future of Highway Transport in America." He said:

A year ago highways transport had arrived nationally, though few of us knew it. Today it is known, discussed, praised, criticized, encouraged, and every month sees it grow in volume by leaps and bounds. The war pointed out that our highways could greatly supplement all other forms of transportation, and who can tell just how much our share in the war was speeded by highway transport, not only here but in France?

Today it is our duty to develop broadly this mighty, new form of transportation, properly coordinate it with others, safely guide it through these early stages of growth and make it responsible for opening up every nook and corner of our land.

There must be regulation of highways transport. Its full development is dependent, partly, on the elimination of irresponsible operators, the stabilizing of rates, the working out of uniform bills of lading, and methods of insuring loads. Analysis must be made of the desirability of exclusive franchises to operate over certain highways. It is the present thought of our committee that such franchises are not conducive to the best interests of

the people. Provided rates for traffic are properly stabilized, competition over the highways would seem far better for the shippers, and only in this way will rates finally come down.

During the post-war period of readjustment, Chapin thought that Washington should have a comprehensive organization to administer Federal road funds, but also for an exhaustive study of the possible growth of highways traffic during the next decade. The outcome should be recommendations to highway officials on which types of roads should be built to handle evolving traffic patterns.

Editor Mehren of *Engineering News-Record* delivered a speech on national highway policy that began:

Ten years ago the highways of this country were subjected to a traffic scarcely different from that which they had borne in Revolutionary days. In fact, the traffic was not much different from that which the Romans had imposed on their roads nineteen centuries ago. Indeed, highway transportation has changed to a greater extent in the past 10 years than it did in all the nineteen hundred years preceding. The motor vehicle is responsible for this revolution in conveyance, and to it is due the stress to which our roads are subjected.

The new reality was reflected in total annual expenditures for highway work. BPR indicated that total cash expenditures for roads in 1915 totaled \$267 million. "This already large sum is sure to be rapidly increased because of the attitude on highway improvement in every part of the country." The change is reflected in New York State's \$50 million bond issue and comparable issues by Pennsylvania for \$50 million and Illinois for \$60 million.

To understand the Federal attitude, he cited BPR, "which cannot be charged with anything but the utmost conservatism." In the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, Congress authorized \$85 million to be spread over 5 years. "This law, making a great stride forward in our highway policy and constituting the first step toward a national highway system, is in itself merely the culmination of a movement that has been going on for a quarter of a century" (dating to the Bicycle Craze of the late 19th century).

The question now was whether the next step should be taken. He recalled Secretary's Houston's statement on November 27 that "it would be in the public interest to make available larger appropriations from the Federal treasury, to be used separately or in conjunction with state and local support." As Mehren had done at the time, he suggested that the word "separately" could refer to a national system to be built by the Federal Government. "Note that the Secretary does not commit himself to that system. He does, however, place it on a par with the Federal-aid plan."

Based on wartime experience, especially the growth of motor truck traffic, Mehren did not believe that an extension of the Federal-aid plan would suffice. By his canvass of State highway engineers, he said, "I can assure you the opinion is overwhelming that the Federal-aid system is

inadequate to secure the building and proper maintenance of through trunk routes of a single high standard, conformable to the traffic that must be borne.”

He proposed a plan for a 50,000-mile system, consisting of 5 east-west routes and 10 north-south routes. The system would include 2 percent of all roads, would pass through every State, and could, Mehren estimated, be built for \$1.25 billion, or \$25,000 per mile. At \$100 million a year, the Federal Government could build the system in about 12 years. “Surely, this is not a heavy strain upon the resources of a country which has raised over \$15,000,000,000 in Liberty Loans in 18 months’ time.” (More than \$17 billion had been raised to support the war effort.) He also discussed how to administer the plan:

There is but one plan, in my judgment, adequate to the national importance of the highway problem, and that is through a national highway commission. In the past our Federal road bureau has been buried as a subordinate office in a great Governmental department, whose chief interest lies in another direction. It would be as logical for me to advocate the abolition of all state highway commissions and the putting of their work under the respective state departments of agriculture, as to advocate the continuance of the Bureau of Public Roads under the Department of Agriculture

Some will say that Congress will not appoint a highway commission. I submit that Congress will be glad to do that which the people of this country really want.

He described the agencies created by Congress during war time, in each case “because the problems had grown to be of such a magnitude that their broad-gaged consideration and administration could no longer be trusted for efficient handling to administration departments”:

I submit that the highway problem has now come into the same class, and that it is of such national importance that broad-gaged consideration can be secured only by putting the problem in the hands of a separate board.

He concluded:

To sum up, then, I come to you with a plea that the United States Government shall take the final step to rounding out the highway system of the country, by superimposing upon our excellent county and state systems a national highway system, to be built, maintained and controlled by the national Government itself. In its effect upon the farm, in its effect upon the cost of living, in its influence on national morale, no single transportation agency is as important as the highways, and I urge that the Federal Government, as the only agency capable of building and administering an adequate system, embark on this great project. It will return in increased property values, and in lower transportation costs, all that is invested in it, and it will contribute very materially to the further welding together of all the people of the country.

During the joint session with the Highway Industries Association, AASHO's Federal-aid supporters were far outnumbered by representatives of AAA, the National Automobile Chamber

of Commerce (NACC), the trucking industry, and other interests favoring a national highway system constructed by the Federal Government. The delegates, according to an account in *Good Roads* magazine, "were overwhelmingly in favor of the more far-reaching plan of federal participation." *Engineering News-Record* stated that the discussion "waxed strongest on the question of proposed Federal legislation" and noted AASHO's resistance to "any bill which might curtail or restrict the powers of state officials."

Despite AASHO's concerns, the Joint Highway Congress approved a resolution based on Mehren's proposal that began by quoting President Wilson's recent statements.

WHEREAS, the President of the United States in his recent message to the Congress recognized the value of improved highways in the general transportation system of the nation and definitely recommended and urged their rapid development; and
WHEREAS, this work is necessary to give employment to our returning soldiers and also to furnish worthy projects on which unemployed labor can be engaged during the period of readjustment; and
WHEREAS, we recognize the necessity for a well-defined and connected system of improved highways in order to expedite the distribution of large volumes of foodstuffs now wasted on account of the lack of prompt and adequate highway transportation and to better serve the economic and military needs of the nation;
Therefore, Be it resolved: That a Federal Highways Commission be created to promote and guide this powerful economic development of both highways and highway traffic and establish a national highway system.
Be it further resolved: That the present appropriations for Federal Aid to the States be continued and increased, and the States urged to undertake extensive highway construction so as to keep pace with the development of this country and its transportation needs and that in carrying out the provisions of the present Federal Aid Act, or any amendment thereto that the State Highway Departments shall co-operate with the Federal Highway Commission.
Be it further resolved: That all governmental activities with respect to highways be administered by the Federal Highway Commission.

The Resolutions Committee of the Highway Industries Association consisted of many representatives of member groups, including Judge Lowe.

The Highway Industries Association held its annual meeting the day after the Joint Congress. *Engineering News-Record* reported that in addition to routine matters, the meeting endorsed the resolution of the Highway Congress in favor of increased Federal-aid funds, a national highway commission, and a national highway system, and authorized the president of the association to appoint a finance committee and a membership and organization committee." The association retained S. M. Williams as its president, with Mehren as the third vice-president.

S. M. Williams, in a closing address to the Joint Congress, said:

You have, during the last two days, witnessed a gathering unique in its formation and

exception in the history of our country. For the first time you have witnessed cooperation on the part of the state highway officials as an association with an organization promoting highway development. For the first time in the history of our country you have witnessed a willingness to drop their own individual projects and to join hands in a united effort for the general cause of highway development.

Every national highway association in the United States was represented in the meeting this week. Forty-eight such associations are registered. Again, for the first time you have witnessed a very large representation of chambers of commerce and other civic organizations throughout the United States gathered together in the interest of highway development. I am sure you will agree that in bringing together the various representatives to which I have referred, the Highway Industries Association has gone a long way toward the active and far-reaching campaign in favor of a radical change in the policy of our country toward highway development and control both national and state.

["The Road Meetings at Chicago," *Good Roads*, December 21, 1918, pages 243-244; "State Highway Officials and Highway Industries Association to Meet at Chicago, Illinois," *Good Roads*, December 7, 1918, page 218; Loomis, Fred M., "Wanted: A Federal Highway Commissioner," *Motor Age*, December 19, 1918, pages 22-22; "National Highway System Gets Strong Backing" (page 1108); and from *Engineering News-Record*, December 19, 1918: Mehren, E. J., "A Suggested National Highway Policy and Plan," pages 1112-1117; "Representative Highway Congress in Chicago Unit for National System," pages 1145-1146, 1149; "Highway Industries Association Holds Annual Meeting," page 1146].

Judge Lowe at the Joint Congress

On December 12, Judge Lowe addressed the Joint Congress about the past, the present, and the future:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Convention:

We meet under most favorable conditions. The nightmare of war is over, and the Dove of Peace is hovering over all the land.

Wisely, or otherwise, the Federal Government ignored the economic value of highway construction in its plans for winning the war, but with the coming of peace, all restrictions were removed, and we were urged to go forward with our work. We are losing millions because of the inability to market the products of the country. There is high authority for the statement that fifty per cent of our perishable products are wasted through inability to get them to market. One of the great causes for this condition of affairs has been brought about because official Washington has had both eyes and ears closed to it's [sic] importance, and all our energies have been buried in one of the branches of our government, from which I have always believed it must be rescued, if our country is to retain its place among the civilized nations. Indicating that this is in no sense a late or a capricious conclusion, you will pardon me if I quote from a letter written

to the Kansas City Star in August, 1911. I was then making an automobile tour across the country, studying the road situation, and wrote a letter from Decatur, Illinois, in part as follows: "The Department of Roads under the direction of Logan Waller Page, has done much valuable work, but there should be a Department of Highways, just as there is a Department of Agriculture, of the Interior, etc."

We have all looked toward this Department to lead the way, but the work is so vast, and the duties of the Department so comprehensive, it is evident that if we are to have a vast system of National Highways, we should have a commission, divorced from all other departments, whose supreme business it will be to have charge of the construction and maintenance of such system.

Those only who have been engaged in this work the longest can realize the slow, but at the same time the vast, progress we have made.

Congress has found no difficulty in appropriating billions of dollars to the railroads. A like appropriation will build, if the average cost be ten thousand dollars per mile, one hundred thousand miles of National Highways. Moreover, the billion dollars appropriated to the railroads, however necessary it may have been, did not add one dollar to the National wealth, while every dollar invested in roads increases the wealth of the Nation. Or if the system, as outlined by my good friend, Charles Henry Davis, President of the National Highways Association, of one hundred and fifty thousand miles, as mapped and contended for by him and others, shall be adopted, then at an average cost of twenty thousand dollars per mile, three billion dollars will be required; and this, if strung out for twenty years, would require an appropriation of one hundred and fifty million dollars per annum.

Any way you may think of it, we shall never accomplish the great work that we should, until we have a large, instead of a small, system of National Highways, built and maintained out of the National revenues; supplemented by systems of State roads, built and maintained by the State Governments, and supplemented again by systems of county and township roads. These systems to be under the supervision and control of these different departments; but if, in addition, a more inefficient idea shall prevail, and the General Government shall furnish a part of the cost of a State system as well, leaving the balance of such cost to be raised by the States, then by all means, if the money is to be mixed, the construction and supervision of such State roads ought also to be mixed. This, in my judgment, is unwise, and will lead to conflicts and delays among the various Departments; as it has already. Nothing is quite so helpful in material affairs as *fixed responsibility*. Of course, there are patriots anxious for "Federal Aid," provided Uncle Sam will let them have full supervision in spending it, and this fits the "pork barrel politician," who wants it applied where it will do the most good – to him.

I desire to congratulate you most heartily upon the organization of the Highway Industries Association, under the direction of my good friend, Mr. S. M. Williams; I have

known him long and well. This is no afterthought or scheme of his, to make himself a place in this great work. I will state, that as far back as 1914, he and I had repeated conversations on this subject. The thought was then incubating in his mind as to the value of such an organization. He has thrown his whole heart into this great work, and you will pardon me for saying, that it is high time the various industries, who shall reap great profits from this enterprise, were taking a more pronounced and effectual stand on this question. Let me emphasize the fact that the farmers and the people of the small towns have gone far ahead of you in this work.

Illustrating again, by mentioning the National Old Trails Road Association, let me say that at the time of its organization in 1912, not one mile of it was in good, usable condition. We organized the people all along this line, never received one dollar from any manufacturing or material industry, but derived all of our support from the people along it's [sic] line, and we have built and rebuilt the road, or have it's [sic] building fully financed, from Washington and Baltimore, to the Mississippi river. And within the next sixty days we shall have it completely financed from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains. If we could do that, under most adverse circumstances, what may we not expect when two such great organizations as those assembled here to-day, shall put their shoulders to the wheel and concentrate their mighty energies to this great purpose?

I congratulate you further, that so many of the National Associations have united behind your Association for a *National plan*, each forgetting for the moment our individual projects, because we now realize, as perhaps never before, that the success of a National plan will necessarily include, sooner or later, any road to which our hearts are devoted, provided it has merit; if it has not, it ought not be included. If this war has taught us anything, it is the value of co-operation.

In conclusion, I congratulate you above all things that this cruel and unnatural war is over; and that the American Army, under the gallant John J. Pershing, so gloriously turned the tide of battle at Chateau Thierry, and won a victory to rank in history far above Waterloo or Gettysburg. Discredit our country all you can – call it but “two per cent. of achievement,” if you will, and it still remains the greatest in the annals of war.

The three most marvelous months in the history of the human race were from July 15 to October 15, 1918. Of the earlier date, even the stout-hearted British warrior, General [Douglas] Haig, cried out, “Our backs are to the wall,” and shells were falling daily in Paris. More than a million inhabitants had fled from Paris; men sat down and looked at each other in sullen gloom and despair. Teutonic dreams of World Empire were well nigh realized. Thus it was in July; but in October came the American Army, and three million of the picked veterans of Germany were in full retreat, and suing for Peace.

I congratulate you further that the American President has today arrived in Paris, and will take his place as the presiding genius over the greatest convention that has ever assembled in the history of all the ages – a convention, assembled, in part, for the purpose

of translating into practical reality, the inspired vision of Tennyson, when he exclaimed:

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw a vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;
Till the war drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world.

We are living in a brand new world – the most gloriously inspiring epoch of all time.
Let's stop talking of military roads, built by military despots, for military conquests. Any
road good enough for Peace is good enough for War. *No road is good enough for either
War or Peace which does not meet the demands of modern traffic.*

Judge Lowe concluded with familiar language from earlier correspondence:

Let's stop pessimistic lamentation. Pessimism never won a fight on any of life's
battlefields. It never gave birth to a great purpose, nor added anything to the general
good. It never offered cool water to parched lips, nor planted hope in the heart of the
dying. It never cuts the brambles and thorns, nor smooths the rough places in life's
pathway. It has neither inventive genius nor imagination. It never inspired a line worth
remembering, nor added anything of value to the world's literature. If this had been the
only principle to escape from Pandora's box – if optimism, hope, imagination had not
opposed it from the beginning, the world would have indeed, and in fact, been nothing
but a mad-house. All the joys of life, all the hopes of the future, would have been
destroyed. Man, now, "but little lower than the angels," would then have been but little
higher than the brute. Let him go "with his head in the clouds," if you will; it is infinitely
better than burrowing in the earth. I would, had I the power, drive it out of all hearts and
back to it's [sic] Native Hell, it's [sic] congenial habitat. Keep your eyes toward the
sunrise, and your "wagon hitched to a star" is the only safe and sane rule of life.

Victor Hugo's hero of the French Revolution, in his dungeon cell, the night before his
execution, exclaimed: "My motto is: Always Forward! If God had wished man to go
backward, he would have put an eye in the back of his head. Let us always look toward
the sunrise, development, birth." It is the sunrise of Hope which has no night, and will
lead us on to Victory, Prosperity and Happiness. ["Our Motto is: Always Forward,"
Better Roads and Streets, January 1919, pages 7, 33-34. The poetic excerpt is from
Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*, written in 1835 and included in *Poems*, a
collection published in 1842. As noted earlier, the Victor Hugo quote is from his final
novel, *Ninety-Three*, published in 1874.]

In several editions of *The Great Historic Highway*, Judge Lowe's reprint of the speech is slightly
different and includes a lengthy history of the Cumberland Road and creation of the National Old
Trails Road Association. In his published version, the speech ended:

We cannot dwell further upon the historic features surrounding it but hasten to a

conclusion by saying that today it is completely hard surfaced from the Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi at St. Louis. It has now been taken over practically throughout its entire length across this state as the first interstate highway to be built under the late Act of the Missouri legislature. This insures its completion in the near future to Kansas City. Very much of the road between Kansas City and Los Angeles has already been built, and is in good travelable condition.

It is hoped that the road West of the Mississippi will be 24 feet wide, and this road from Kansas City west will be uniformly 24 feet wide. It is already practically all graded and bridged. It is the only road you can take at the Mississippi River and reach the Atlantic Seaboard over a hard surfaced road. It is the only National road ever established in the history of this country, and will be the first to be completed. [“The Amended Federal Aid Act,” 1924, pages 160-167]

This version did not include the “My motto” conclusion.

Chapin Resigns

While the Joint Congress was underway, Roy Chapin announced that he was resigning as chairman of the Highways Transport Committee and would return to his duties as president of the Hudson Motor Company. His biographer, J. C. Long, explained Chapin’s attitude after Germany surrendered:

Germany gave in on November 11, 1918, and the car manufacturers immediately began to plan for reconversion to peace time; but Roy’s work in Washington was not yet completed. He wrote to [his wife] Inez on November 19:

“Am working hard now on the bill for Congress and expect to put in most of my time on this from now on. If we can get it through this winter and I think we can – it will more than repay all the hard work we have put in and will start the country off on a sane, logical policy for highways and highways transport.

“After that is accomplished my work is done and I hope we can go somewhere this spring with our kiddies and get into balmy weather – or stay in Detroit together or do whatever *you* would like to just so it doesn’t separate us.”

Every day, however, Roy found it more difficult to persuade himself to stay in Washington. “So many are leaving here now,” he wrote home on November 23, “it’s mighty hard to stick out and finish the job – or try to.” Things were winding up rapidly. Roy had various conferences with Secretary Baker on maintaining the highway work in peace time. The Council of National Defense decided to continue its various state groups until the next Spring which provided some degree of organization for promoting the highway transport work. With this much assured and with an able paid staff keeping on at Washington, Roy felt that at last he might go home. On December 14, 1918 he returned to Detroit, as he wrote to Inez in advance, “happy in the thought that the war is

won and we can again plan our future along more definite lines.” [Long, page 172]

The work of the committee would continue with John S. Cravens, chief of the field division, Council of National Defense, serving as chairman. The announcement of Chapin’s departure indicated, “It is thought that the development of roads is as important if not even more so in time of peace as in the days of war, and in consequence the complete nation-wide organization built up by Mr. Chapin will be maintained.”

A brief article about the resignation in *Automobile Topics* noted of Chapin:

Being a good roads enthusiast, he eagerly applied himself to the difficult task of demonstrating the practical urgency of the good roads proposition as a factor in winning the war. The rural express movement, relating both highway and automobile movements, was a popular outgrowth of this effort. Of far more direct importance was the work of his committee in planning routes and otherwise facilitating the movement of Army trucks. [“Chapin Back to Hudson,” *Motor Age*, December 19, 1918, pages 16-17; “Roy D. Chapin Returns to Detroit,” *Automobile Topics*, December 14, 1918, page 520]

Returning to Detroit, Chapin unveiled a new moderately priced car, the Essex, in January 1919, and it would remain in production until the early 1930s. Chapin, however, could not turn fully away from his good roads advocacy. The Highway Committee of the NACC became his means of continuing the work he had begun on the Highways Transport Committee. Pyke Johnson, the executive secretary of the Highways Transport Committee, joined Chapin in his new forum for advancing the good roads cause. Chapin was chairman, with S. M. Williams a member of the committee. [Long, pages 174, 176-177]

Judge Lowe on Paying For the National Highway System

On January 3, 1919, the chairmen of the War Service Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States met in New York City. Among issues addressed, the chairmen adopted a good roads amendment drafted by S. M. Williams:

Whereas, the President of the United States in his recent message to Congress recognized the value of improved highways in the general transportation system of the nation and definitely recommended and urged their rapid development; and

Whereas, this work is necessary to give employment to our returning soldiers, and also to furnish worthy projects on which unemployed labor can be engaged during the period of re-adjustment; and

Whereas, we recognize the necessity for a well defined and connected system of improved highways in order to expedite the distribution of large volumes of foodstuffs now wasted on account of the lack of prompt and adequate highway transportation, and to better serve the economic and military needs of the nation; therefore, be it Resolved, that a Federal Highways Commission be created to promote the guide this powerful economic development of both highways and highway traffic and establish a National Highway System; therefore, be it further

Resolved, that the present appropriations for Federal aid to the states be continued and increased and the states urged to undertake extensive highway construction so as to keep pace with the development of this country and its transportation needs, and in carrying out the provisions of the present Federal Aid act or any amendment thereto that the State Highway Departments shall co-operate with the Federal Highway Commission; be it further

Resolved, that all Government activities with respect to highways be administered by the Federal Highway Commission. ["For Better Highways," *The Baltimore Sun*, January 19, 1919, page CA12]

Better Roads and Streets, in its February 1919 issue, published what was basically one of Judge Lowe's bulletins. It recalled the resolution of the Joint Highway Congress in support of a National Highway System, adding:

At a meeting of Chairmen of the two hundred and sixty-five War Service Committees of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States in New York on January 3, they unanimously endorsed the resolution of the Highway Congress calling for a Federal Highway Commission, a National Highway System, and an extension of the present Federal Aid System.

The Pioneer Good Roads Statesman, Senator John H. Bankhead, has introduced a Bill to appropriate \$600,000,000 in Federal Aid to the States, in addition to the \$75,000,000 appropriated two years ago, \$50,000,000 of which shall immediately become available, and \$75,000,000 available July 1, 1919. This Bill is quite likely to pass. It has received the approval of President Wilson, and Secretaries Houston and Baker.

The article asked:

Are you ready for it? You have had two years in which to draw down your part of the \$75,000,000 heretofore appropriated. How much has Missouri and Kansas and the other States through which the National Old Trails Road runs, west of the Mississippi, drawn down of that appropriation? Why continue "Federal Aid" appropriations if the States, counties, and road districts do not take the necessary steps to reciprocate.

Judge Lowe was referring to how the States would provide their 50-percent match of the Federal-aid funds. Some States used State resources to pay the matching share, but in other States, the funds had to come in whole or part from counties or road districts:

There is but one way by which we can receive any Federal Aid under these bills, and that is by Bond issues. We urged State Road Bond issues, based upon capitalizing the automobile license tax seven years ago, and Illinois voted a \$60,000,000 road bond issue at the last election, based on this idea, and will build five to six thousand miles of State Highways without levying one dollar of additional taxes upon the people. The Kansas City Journal, May 1, 1912, contained a news item from which is taken the following

excerpt:

A plan by which motor car owners, without increasing their present license taxes, can build great trunk highways in every State in the Union, has been devised by Judge J. M. Lowe of Kansas City, president of the National Old Trails Road Association. In behalf of the plan, it is urged that the farmer would get much of his road building done for nothing, and the motorist would have the satisfaction of seeing his license fees applied to a purpose that would benefit him.

“I propose that the amounts collected in license fees on motor cars in each State shall form the basis of bond issues,” said Judge Lowe yesterday. “The long and short of the plan, which, so far as I have been able to learn, is an entirely new one, is the capitalization of the motor car tax for good roads purposes.”

On May 3, 1912, the Journal published an editorial, in part as follows: “As an advocate of good roads J. M. Lowe of this city, president of the National Old Trails Road Association, makes a suggestion that is at least extremely practical, and is worthy of serious consideration. Of course, there may not be much left of it by the time the lawyers get through with it, but for the purpose of showing how it can be aided, Mr. Lowe’s suggestion that the state motor car license be used to pay the interest on good roads bonds is at least worth considering. When people begin to hunt for ways of doing things, a way is usually found sooner or later.”

The Missouri Old Trails Association, in 1912, had called for a \$50 million State road bond issue, “which was favorably received. And now we are at last ready to take action in both Missouri and Kansas”:

The Bills will undoubtedly provide for those progressive communities where bonds have already carried, and will provide for refunding to any county or road district any funds already voted to any state highway, whenever the automobile tax shall be sufficient, which it will be, long before the bonds mature.

It has been said that conditions are different in Illinois from those in some other States. There may be some difference, as for instance: roads can be built in Missouri or Kansas at less than one-half the cost of those in Illinois. But it is said Illinois has more licensed automobiles. Who will say this will be true when the bonds mature?

But, if instead of this plan, a different one shall be adopted, no matter, the automobile and truck taxes will take care of it, in any event. Moreover, the enhanced values of real estate alone will take care of the bond issue, before the roads are completed. Let me repeat, if the “Federal Aid” plan is to prevail, then there is no other way to obtain it except by issuing bonds. The Government has signified its willingness to co-operate. \$60,000,000 of the last appropriation remains in the treasury, subject to call. [Untitled, *Better Roads and Streets*, February 1919, pages 51-52]

Hopes Delayed

Despite the hopes raised by the Joint Highway Congress, little time remained to consider a major policy shift in the highway program in the short post-war Congress, meeting from December 2, 1918, to March 4, 1919, after which Republicans would take over control of Congress from the Democrats. Congress and the Administration were eager to resume highway construction on a large scale, but facing many other post-war questions, time to debate major changes in highway policy was not available.

Several measures had been proposed in addition to Page's ideas, embodied in the Administration bill introduced by Senator Swanson. Senator Bankhead, chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, and several members of the Senate and House introduced nearly identical bills to modify the definition of "rural post road," increase approved funding levels, and extend funding through FY 1925. Senator Smoot, a member of the same Committee, had introduced a bill that would establish a United States Highway Fund by issuing 50-year bonds to generate up to \$1 billion that would be loaned to the States for road construction. Another bill, also sponsored by Senator Swanson, embodied a proposal by the Postmaster General to use revenue from motor parcel post to improve a Federal network of motor express routes.

In the end, an amendment introduced by Senator Bankhead was incorporated into the Post Office Appropriation Bill for 1920, which President Wilson approved on February 28, 1919. The Bankhead amendment authorized additional funds to supplement current authorizations (\$50 million more for FY 1919, and \$75 million each for FYs 1920 and 1921). It also carried appropriations of \$3 million for FYs 1919-1921 as a continuation of the forest roads provision in the 1916 Act. Bankhead explained the increase funds for the 1916 Act programs:

By reason of the fact that highway improvement has been held back during the past two years, large amounts of money have accumulated in State and county treasuries, many bond issues have been held back, and many improvements which ordinarily would have been made during the past two years will be undertaken in the near future. This will insure a much larger outlay in 1919, and it would seem that if the Federal Government is to become an influential factor in highway work, its contribution should be very materially increased. ["Senator Bankhead on Federal Road Legislation," *Southern Good Roads*, March 1919, page 102]

In addition to increased authorizations, the legislation amended the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 to address concerns about the program. It increased the limitation of payments to \$20,000 per mile to aid States with higher traffic volumes. Another key change involved the definition of "rural post road," which the Bankhead amendment changed to read:

... any public road a major portion of which is now used, or can be used, or forms a connecting link not to exceed ten miles in length of any road or roads now or hereafter used for the transportation of the United States mails.

This definition retained the "post road" concept from the Constitution, but essentially made every road, including the long-distance roads, eligible for Federal-aid highway funds regardless of whether it carried the mail. Senator Charles S. Thomas of Colorado objected to the revision, saying it "commits the United States to the improvement of every cattle trail, every cow path, and every right of way in the United States." *America's Highways 1776-1976* observed:

This, of course, was exactly the effect desired by the Administration when it proposed the amendment. The new post road definition ended the pretense that Federal aid for highways rested even in part on Congress' constitutional power to establish a postal system. [*America's Highways 1776-1976*, page 102]

The amendment also authorized the Secretary of War to transfer war materials no longer needed by the War Department to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary of Agriculture was to retain 10 percent of the material for BPR's work in National Forests, while distributing the balance to the State highway departments for use on Federal-aid highway projects. Each State was entitled to material valued in amounts on the same basis as apportionment of funds under the 1916 Act. BPR established a special division to receive the War Department's lists of surplus war materials. The division forwarded the lists to the State highway departments, which then requested the items they could use. The States received only the equipment they requested, but because total value for each State was limited to its Federal-aid percentage, not all requests could be satisfied. [Holt, W. Stull, *The Bureau of Public Roads: Its History, Activities, and Organization*, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1923, pages 22-24]

Although the outcome was disappointing to advocates for a Federal Highway Commission, Senator Charles E. Townsend, a Republican from Michigan, introduced S. 5626 on February 18, 1919:

To create a Federal Highway Commission, to establish a National Highway System, to promote efficient and economic highway transportation, and to amend an act to provide that the United States shall aid the states in the construction of rural post roads and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled, that there is hereby created a Federal Highway Commission, and to provide a connected system of main highways adequate to sustain the demands of interstate commerce to provide adequate post roads for the transportation of the United States mails and parcel post, and to provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare of the people of the United States, there is hereby authorized to be established, constructed, and maintained a system of highways, hereinafter referred to as the National Highway System, to comprise not less than two main trunk-line roads in each state, and joining the National Highway System in the adjacent states and counties.

The commission "shall determine the types of construction and reconstruction and the character of improvement, repair and maintenance of all highways included in the National Highway

System.” However, only “durable types and adequate widths of surface shall be adopted for any highway as will effectively meet the traffic conditions thereon and the probable future traffic needs.” A “highway,” within the meaning of the bill, “shall be deemed to include the necessary bridges, drainage structures, signs, guard rails, protective structures and housing”:

In consideration of the benefits to be derived by the state from the construction, reconstruction, improvements, repair and maintenance of the highways comprised in the National Highways [sic] System, and as a condition precedent to the construction of any such highways in any state a right of way therefor, not less than 60 ft. in width, except at such points where existing buildings or structures are of such value that the cost of their removal would, in the opinion of the commission, be excessive, shall be furnished to the United States without expense to it by, for, or on behalf of such state or any civil subdivision thereof.

In introducing the bill, he said:

I desire to introduce a bill for printing in the Record and reference to the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. The object is Federal highway aid and construction. It is not because I expect to bring it up or that it will receive any consideration at this session of Congress, but it illustrates in general the principles upon which I believe Federal highway activities should be based, and I introduce it at this time in order that it may receive that criticism and attention on the part of those people and organizations throughout the country who are interested in highway construction that will enable us at the next session of Congress to act intelligently upon the matter. Our Government has entered the good-roads field, and it will not retire therefrom. It is my desire to assist in directing the Federal activities along lines at once scientific and practical. I believe that the National Government should construct a national system of roads through the States connecting all the Commonwealths, and then should maintain these roads, and the States should construct and maintain all the other roads within their boundaries. The powers of the two governments should be as separate and distinct as possible. I present this bill for general consideration.

S. 5626 was read twice, referred to the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, and ordered to be printed in the Record.

Highway Engineer and Contractor reprinted the bill in full and suggested that, “Everyone interested in the betterment of our highways and the development of our country should give this bill their most active support when it comes up in the next Congress. [“Federal Highway Aid,” *Congressional Record – Senate*, February 18, 1919, pages 3635-3636; “National System of Highways – The Townsend Bill,” *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, May 1919, pages 39-40]

Chapin on Roads

Roy Chapin outlined his views in a Highways Committee bulletin on March 6, 1919. After

recalling the \$100 million added to the Federal-aid highway program the month before, he wrote:

When you consider the fact that it took years of educational work to get Congress up to the passage of the first Federal Aid Law, and this year the President, his Cabinet, and practically a unanimous Congress were behind a very great increase in that sum, you can realize that a great change has come to pass in highway sentiment. And this vast amount is available for road building only during the coming three years; it calls for the expenditure with that amount, of an equal sum on the part of all the different states. That is, the two hundred and seventy-odd millions for highways that is now available to the states of this country out of the Federal Treasury must be matched dollar for dollar by the various states.

He described the work of Pyke Johnson in Washington as well as Chapin's own effort "to spend as much time as possible in Washington, and is down there practically once a month, and as much oftener as it is necessary." He expected to increase his time in the capital "because we are going into a highways campaign of another type":

The time has come when we must have a more comprehensive plan. The Government should help direct the states as to the type of highways they should build. Lack of proper guidance has so far been one of the greatest faults in the construction of American highways. As a matter of fact, the Highways Committee is informed that of the projects approved by the Department of Agriculture, which comprise at the moment, I think, some five thousand miles of highway, much of which will be built this year, 80 per cent of these roads to be built from Government funds are to be of sand clay, gravel or dirt. And surely, I think that all of us will agree that the time has come when from our main highways at least, we must have a better type of service.

He illustrated the point by examples from the Army truck convoys organized by the Highways Transport Committee to East Coast ports for shipment to Europe:

We found, for instance, that the State of Ohio had no connections running into Pennsylvania, leading to Pittsburgh. There was no road on the eastern end of Ohio that was any good, and that there was no road from Beaver Falls [Pennsylvania] running over to the Ohio line that was worth while. And neither state seemed to be particularly interested in connecting up the two states by good routes. Pennsylvania was very much absorbed in building roads to connect up her own cities, and Ohio the same.

But we have come now, gentlemen, to a time when we know that interstate highway commerce is taking place and motor vehicles are running between the cities and passing through a number of states. We have known for years, of course, that the passenger car was an inter-state vehicle, and we have now come to a time when there is vast inter-state commerce by motor truck over the highways, and when the Federal Government, we believe, should step in and control a Federal system of highways.

He was “glad to say” that these thoughts had been “crystalized into” Senator Townsend’s bill, “calling for a Federal Highway System, Federal Highway Commission and a thorough study of the new problems of highway traffic and highways transport.” He continued:

We had in the last month, a letter from the Department of Labor asking the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce to cooperate with it by using all our influence to urge the building of highways, that the slack in labor may be taken up

I can say to you frankly that this is the Golden Age of highway construction. The automobile industry has helped it arrive by putting six million vehicles upon the road, and naturally the users of every one of those vehicles want better highways. The war has given tremendous impetus to good roads, and the returning soldier is going to add to that impetus for he has seen what fine highways mean to Europe. It is the time that we have all been waiting for, and it is here at least

I think we can congratulate ourselves that we have reached the point that we have so long hoped for and wished for, for roads are going to be built in this country, built on an enormous scale, and must be built to last.

It is our duty to see that these vast sums are wisely spent and full value is received in the right type of road mileage. [Long, pages 177-179]

George R. Stewart on the National Old Trails Road, 1919

Author and historian George R. Stewart wrote many books, including his classic highway book, *U.S. 40: A Cross Section of the United States*, published in 1953. As mentioned in the book, he had traveled part of the National Old Trails Road in 1919.

In 1917, shortly before graduating from Princeton University, he enlisted in the U.S. Army following the country’s entry into the European War. As biographer Donald M. Scott explained, Stewart was assigned to the U.S. Army Ambulance Corps, but the unit never received orders to go to Europe. Instead, he spent much of the war in Pennsylvania. In 1918, as the Spanish Flu pandemic hit the world with devastating impact, he contracted pneumonia, which he never completely recovered from. However, as he headed back to home in Pasadena, California, Stewart decided to hitchhike west on the National Old Trails Road created in 1912 by the initiative of Miss Gentry. Scott wrote that Stewart was “coughing from lingering effects of his pneumonia”:

Never one to let adversity or ill health hold him down, Stewart headed out, hitchhiking west, as soon as the spring of 1919 opened Miss Gentry’s new transcontinental road.

The National Old Trails Road, with its terminus in Los Angeles, was “the logical route for George R. Stewart to use on his hitchhiking trip” to Pasadena. During the “month of pilgrimages . . . he put on his army uniform, gathered up his kit, and stuck out his thumb.”

Stewart, in his book about U.S. 40, described the trip along the eastern portion of the National Old Trails Road:

In 1919, freshly discharged from the army, I hitchhiked westward from New York, and traveled along the National Old Trail [sic], as it then was known, from Washington, Pennsylvania, to St. Louis. The old S-bridges were still in use. As far as Terre Haute the road was, according to standards of the time, well paved and heavily traveled. But at the Illinois line the bottom dropped out of it. Only an occasional Model-T braved the morass, and the ruts, between towns. The redbud was in bloom and beautiful along the streams, but the road itself was unspeakable merely bogged down in the prairie gumbo

At its best, in time and in place, [the Cumberland Road to Vandalia] attained greatness. Moreover, it is safe for the future. From Columbus to Indianapolis and from Indianapolis to Vandalia the original route, whether called U.S. 40 or something else, will furnish the main traveled road until someone disproves the geometrical proposition that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. [Stewart, George R., *U.S. 40: A Cross Section of the United States*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953, pages 120-121]

Along the way, he took photographs, including one of the Automobile Club of Southern California's National Old Trails Road sign near Indianapolis:

Years later, when his friend Charles Camp asked him if it had been hard to get a ride, he answered that it wasn't hard to get a lift, but "in those days there weren't very many cars. If you made a hundred miles in one car that was a Big Ride. You rarely did that."

He didn't make it all the way home to Pasadena. The after-effects of the pneumonia finally caught up with him in Kansas and he abandoned his hitchhiking at Garden City. He took the train the rest of the way, a prudent choice

Even though the trip was cut short, it had been a fine adventure. Stewart hitchhiked more than halfway across the United States, through towns with names like Old Peculiar, Greenup, and Kingdom City, and across the Hundredth Meridian, gateway to the West He traveled the old trails, the National Road and the Santa Fe Trail, and the new automobile road that followed them. It was good preparation for books he would later write about place names, trails and highways. [Scott, Donald M., *The Life and Times of George R. Stewart: A Literary Biography of the Author of Earth Abides*, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012, pages 35-41]

A National Approach

Judge Lowe, from the start, had sought every opportunity to encourage officials of the Federal Government and States, counties, cities, and road districts to complete their segments of the National Old Trails Road. In this effort, he had embraced a national

approach to road construction. He eagerly supported Charles Henry Davis' National Highways Association's Good Roads Everywhere campaign and his proposed 50,000-mile National Highways network. Now, Judge Lowe also strongly supported the Highway Industries Association's proposed national highway system that inevitably would include the National Old Trails Road.

On January 21, 1919, Judge Lowe was prominent in creation of a new organization, the Associated Highways of America. Representatives of dozens of named trails met in Kansas City, Missouri, to establish the organization. *Motor Age* reported:

Its purpose is to promote the establishment and construction of a national highway system, to encourage highway associations in constructive work, to bring about establishment of a highway commission at Washington and to stimulate the utilization of the present Federal Aid act in highway improvement.

American Motorist stated that the new association made Kansas City "the working headquarters of a group of inter-State road associations which promise to be a forceful factor in the now country-wide effort to obtain a Federal system and a Federal commission from the Congress at Washington":

There was a whole day of earnest discussion as to the place which the new organization might fill, its methods of conduct, and who should be its officers.

Of course, resolutions were passed endorsing the plan of a Federal system and a Federal commission, and it is the hope of the various road associations represented that their lines of travel will be included in the great national plan when it is finally accomplished. No road association that did not pass through at least three States was given voice and vote.

Overall, 37 of the 47 associations participating in the meeting were admitted to membership, representing over 40,000 miles of named trails traversing 45 States:

Judge J. M. Lowe, of the National Old Trails Road, living in Kansas City, was naturally prominent in the day's proceedings. "Coin" Harvey, of the Ozark Trails Association, was another who figured. H. O. Cooley, of the Yellowstone Trail Association, entitled to the real credit for the calling of the meeting, insisted that having done this work, his part was more or less played, and he held that a place on the board of directors was all that should be given to him.

For president, the new group selected C. F. Adams, president of the Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway Association, "and there is no question as to his fitness for the position." The article added, "His administration is certain to be active and resultful, and, luckily, he has the time and the money so that he can afford to ride his favorite hobby." Frank A. Davis of the National Old Trails Association was picked as secretary. *American Motorist* pointed out that Davis "has been active in the promotion work of the National Old Trails Road, and also a moving factor in the King of Trails, reaching from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and possessing the hope to find an ultimate terminus in the City of Mexico." ["Associated Highways Now," *Motor Age*,

February 6, 1919, page 12; “Associated Highways of America Organized,” *American Motorist*, March 1919, page 36]

On April 12, 1919, the organization announced a touring bureau for all named trails associated with the organization:

H. O. Cooley, secretary of the Yellowstone trail, is developing the bureau plan, with the basis of the seven bureaus now operating along the Yellowstone trail. It is expected that this year one or more bureaus will be opened on each of the thirty or more routes in the A.H.A., the information on each route to be cleared through a central office for the benefit of all. It is the plan that each highway association employ a man on full time to collect and handle routing information. When the program is in operation, any bureau will be able to give touring information on any route in the A.H.A system.

Weather bureaus already are assisting materially in collection of road information in some districts, and this source of help will be cultivated. In Kansas City Patrick Connor, weather observer, gets information daily from his weather reports on condition of roads in eastern Kansas, western Missouri, northern Oklahoma. This information is given to inquirers, and is available for the local offices of the A.H.A. Frank A. Davis, secretary of the A.H.A., is securing from local members of road associations names of members who will report daily on road conditions to the local weather reporters, so that road data can be telegraphed with the weather report

The association also established a department to “assist highway associations affiliated with the A.H.A. in perfecting and financing their organizations”:

There are now thirty associations in the A.H.A., many of which are thoroughly organized; others, however, need help to get members and funds, and to put the work on a strong basis throughout the length of their routes. The A.H.A. itself operates on a small budget, paying no salaries, but stimulating the member highway associations to activity and acting as a clearing house for co-operative work. [“Touring Bureaus for All Highways,” *Motor Age*, April 17, 1919, page 14]

National Roads and National Aid

On March 15, 1919, Judge Lowe issued a revised bulletin in support of a national highway system, that compared “National Roads and National Aid,” beginning with a discussion of national aid:

No school is quite so instructive as the School of Experience. We have tried the National Aid plan for three years with the result that less than forty-five miles of roads, in widely detached sections, from 3 to 9 miles in length, have been built under its provisions, in the whole of these United States. But, it is fair to say that Federal money has gone into some 700 miles of roads not yet completed. At this rate it will take six thousand, six hundred and sixty-six years to build 100,000 miles of roads. (There are 2,500,000 miles of roads

in the United States.) Results thus far are that we have built 8 to 9 miles in length, scattered all over the United States – “radial roads,” beginning nowhere and ending nowhere! We have tried it out in absolute good faith for three years with the result as stated. Now we have another three-year period provided for, with \$260,000,000 of Federal money appropriated, and if we accept it, by putting up dollar for dollar as we must, we shall have \$520,000,000 with which to build National Aid Roads. Let’s give it the sincerest possible support, as a final test of this experiment. The Government is urging us to co-operation. Will we do it? Not by scattering and wasting the funds but by building **real roads**.

Next, Judge Lowe discussed national roads:

A system of National Highways, to be built and maintained by the General Government, is the additional plan we shall undoubtedly adopt under the Townsend Bill now pending, or some other. Under the “National Aid” plan above mentioned we shall have to raise \$260,000,000 before we can get the \$260,000,000 of “Aid” apportioned to the States. Assuming that we shall do so, as we should, then we shall have \$520,000,000. If the average cost per mile be \$25,000 this sum of money will build 20,000 miles of roads.

Suppose the 65th Congress had taken prompt action after the war, and we were ready to build an equal mileage (20,000) of continuous, through roads – 4 East and West and 4 North and South – the Labor question would have been solved, values would be greatly enhanced, and universal prosperity would be reigning. These National roads would have served as State and local highways in the States through which they would run, and thus relieve them of the cost of their construction and maintenance. National Aid, State and local road funds, could all be applied on State and local systems.

An objection to National wagon roads has been that, like railroads, they would be of special benefit to adjoining land, and to the towns through which they might pass, while not of immediate value to those not so fortunately located. There is some truth in this contention. This is always true. Abraham Lincoln met this objection in a speech made in Congress June 20, 1848, as follows:

Now, for the second portion of this message – namely that the burdens of improvements would be general, while their benefits would be local and partial, involving an obnoxious inequality. That there is some degree of truth in this position, I shall not deny. No commercial object of government patronage can be so exclusively general as to not be of some peculiar local advantage. The navy, as I understand it, was established and is maintained at a great annual expense, partly to be ready for war when war shall come, and partly also, and perhaps chiefly for the protection of our commerce on the high seas. This latter object is, for all I can see, in principle, the same as internal improvements. The driving a pirate from the track of commerce on the broad ocean, and the removing a snag from its more narrow path in the Mississippi River, can not, I think, be distinguished in

principle. Each is done to save life and property, and for nothing else

The just conclusion from all this is that if the nation refuse to make improvements of the more general kind their benefits may be somewhat local, a State may, for the same reason, refuse to make an improvement of a local kind because its benefits may be somewhat general. A State may well say to the nation, "If you will do nothing for me, I will do nothing for you." Thus it is seen that if this argument of "inequality" is sufficient anywhere, it is sufficient everywhere, and puts an end to improvements altogether. I hope and believe that if both the nation and the States would, in good faith, in their respective spheres, do what they could in the way of improvements, what of inequality might be produced in one place might be compensated in another, and the sum of the whole work might not be very unequal.

But suppose after all, there should be some degree of inequality? Inequality is certainly never to be embraced for its own sake; but is every good thing to be discarded which may be inseparably connected with some degree of it? If so we must discard all government. This capital is built at the public expense, for the public benefit; but does anyone doubt that it is of some peculiar advantage to the property holders and business people of Washington? Shall we remove it for this reason? And if so, where shall we set down, and be free from the difficulty? To make sure of our object, shall we locate it nowhere and have our Congress hereafter to hold its sessions, as the loafer lodged, "in spots about"?

When we have a system of National highways, supplemented by State and National Aid roads, and by Benefit District roads, the inequality of benefits will largely disappear.

We delight in saying, "We are the richest Nation in the world." And that is true, and it might be added, with the poorest roads.

Look at the situation today, at the close of this world war. Europe is prostrate, and the universal cry is for raw material, raw material, raw material. We are ready to furnish it. We, the United States, have but six per cent of the world's population, and own but seven per cent of the land, yet we produce seventy per cent of the world's copper, sixty-six per cent of the oil, seventy-five per cent of the corn, sixty-seven per cent of the meat, sixty per cent of the cotton, fifty-two per cent of the coal, thirty-three per cent of the silver, 40 per cent of the iron and steel, twenty-five per cent of the wheat, twenty per cent of the gold, and forty per cent of the railroads, totaling one-third or more of the total wealth of the world. At the beginning of the war we owed four billion dollars to foreign nations, and now foreign nations owe us ten billion dollars! We had no ships. In 1920 we will have twice as many ships as England with which to carry this immense commerce, unless the backward looking, political obstructionists, prevent it. Fifty per cent, however, of our perishable products never reach the markets on account of bad roads. We need but one additional factor to complete our felicity, and one, too, that will not impoverish, but

greatly enhance both private and National wealth, to-wit: National highways, supplemented by State, County and local roads, all connected, forming a complete system of good roads everywhere.

Our total railroad mileage is 231,177, distributed as follows:

The Eastern District has 59,080 miles. The Southern District has 42,752 miles.
The Western District has 129,345 miles, capitalized at \$22,000,000,000.

Less than one-third of this sum will build an equal mileage of dependable, hard-surfaced, wagon roads.

More than two-thirds of our railroad mileage is in the South and West, and more than four-fifths of the raw material, while the 9 Eastern States of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, having only 5 per cent of the area of the United States, have **one-half the national wealth**, and will, therefore, pay one-half the cost of building and forever after maintaining National Highways in the other thirty-nine States of the Union – therefore:

The people of Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming would each pay, each year, for their National Highways, only one dollar and fifty cents for 20 years, and you would never know how or when you paid it.

These thirty-nine States of the West, Middle West and South have 390 Senators and Representatives in Congress – a majority of 124 votes. Therefore, the West, Middle West and South have the power to gain National Highways at one-half their cost, and maintenance forever, by simply **waking up**.

And this is absolutely fair, equitable and just. It taxes all property equally, no matter where produced or owned. This purpose is not sectionally advocated by the West or South, but because it is fair, just and equitable, is warmly advocated by the far-seeing, enlightened, progressive and constructive statesmanship of many of the Eastern States. No National improvement is so general as not to be of some local advantage, and never so local as not to be of some general benefit. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Federal Highway Council

On April 8, 1919, backers of a national highway system met in Chicago to form the Federal Highway Council. The council's goal was a national system of interstate highways and a Federal Highway Commission to build it. Participants elected S. M. Williams as chairman. The

advisory committee for the council included representatives of many organizations:

One of the first things the council will give its attention to is the passage of the Townsend bill now pending in Congress, which provides for an appropriation of \$425,000,000 for highways. More than 720 organizations have endorsed this bill which provides for a Federal highway commission to control highways and highway construction, and the Highway Industries Association has received 365 acceptances of membership for the Federal Highway Council which will endeavor to co-ordinate the efforts for the national highway development.

Some opposition has developed to the Townsend bill also, there being some objection on the grounds that the bill would take away the control of road building entirely from the states and that the work of the various organizations would be superseded by national control. Opponents of the bill claim to have the support of President Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture Houston, and the highway officials of nineteen states. [“Road Council to Push Townsend Bill,” *Motor Age*, April 17, 1919, page 15]

The group was an outgrowth of the Joint Highway Congress held in December 1918. An account in *Highway Engineer and Contractor* explained:

Since then this Federal plan has received the endorsement of 425 Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade throughout the country. It has also received the endorsement of 350 other organizations, such as Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, Traveling Men’s Associations, and all of the national and state good roads organizations.

The nation-wide demand for a Federal Highway Commission and a national system of highways, as recognized in the recommendations of the Chicago Highway Congress, and later covered by the Townsend Bill, introduced in the last session of Congress, would assure the country of a definite national highway plan.

State highway officials, representing 40 states, have gone on record strongly in favor of a Federal Highway Commission and a national system of highways.

Williams said:

The time is here when we should not only consider the cost of highway development, but along with the cost we should consider and determine the value in dollars and cents of the highway to the community it serves or the country at large, if national highways. If we do that, the cost of any highway properly designed and constructed to carry the traffic upon it, with a safe margin for increased traffic, will fall into insignificance. Unfortunately we have not, as a country, awakened to the fact that our highways have an earning capacity which can only be increased with the improvement of the highways. [“Federal Highway Commission,” *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, May 1919, pages 53-54]

The question, a second article in *Highway Engineer and Contractor* explained, was whether BPR was “efficient, unbiased and so formed as to achieve the objects desired.” If so, a separate commission was not needed, “but if it can be shown that the formation of a Federal Highway Commission will hasten the construction of good highways, and that through its operation better roads will be constructed for less money in less time, then the Commission would be advisable.”

The magazine printed Secretary Houston’s views expressed on the subject in response to a May 2 inquiry from a city chamber of commerce:

I have been unable to see the need for the creation of a separate Federal highway commission or the wisdom of substituting for the present co-operative program a plan which would commit or limit the Federal Government to the construction of two federally owned and maintained trunk lines in each state of the Union.

He added that under the Federal-aid legislation, “there is no special obstacle, so far as I can see, to the construction in the different states of the Union of those roads which serve the greatest economic needs.” He pointed out that, “In the first place, the definition of the kind of roads that can be constructed has been greatly broadened and, in the second place, the limitation on the Federal contribution for any one road has been increased from \$10,000 to \$20,000 a mile.”

Moreover, under the 1916 Act, as amended in February 1919, the machinery was in place to implement the law. He called BPR “one of the largest and most effective organizations of its kind in the world,” which worked with the 48 State highway departments, “the two agencies working in close co-operation.” The States, which initiate projects, had planned State highway systems. “Of course, in formulating these systems, the engineers gave due regard to interstate connections, that is, to roads connecting the system of one state with that of another, and it is difficult to see why, as progress is made, the construction of through roads will not follow as a matter of course.”

Nearly \$300 million was now available from the Federal treasury. Given the amount already available, he wrote, “It seems scarcely likely . . . that the Congress, in the light of the financial situation, will make additional large appropriations, and it would be impossible, without creating many complications, to divert the existing appropriations from the purposes and plans already under way under the co-operative arrangements with the states.”

Secretary Houston concluded:

The road construction movement is growing very rapidly. The Federal Aid Road Act has done much to promote it. It has stimulated financial aid and has caused many state legislatures to create central highway departments. Experience has brought about amendments to the law and helpful changes in administration. Comprehensive road programs have been inaugurated. They are being pushed vigorously. They will result, in a shorter time than most people imagine, not only in a network of good substantial roads in the various states of the Union, but also in the requisite interstate highways.

Why at this stage introduce complications and embarrassments? Why should not the friends of the movement for roads to serve the people co-operate? It is difficult for me to see why all who are animated by high public spirit in their thinking concerning highways should not co-operate in the development of present programs and in the perfection of the existing processes and machinery, instead of attempting to overthrow them. I believe that many of those who are backing the proposed change do not know the facts and are not aware of existing conditions and possibilities. I believe also their proposal stands very little chance of being enacted into law.

The magazine followed Secretary Houston's letter with a short commentary by Dr. H. M. Rowe, former president of AAA and current member of its Good Roads Board, "which will devote much time to federal highway legislation." Rowe explained:

Highways should be considered in the same class of public activity as railways, waterways, merchant marine, the national banking system and, in fact, any of the great distinctly national undertakings. It seems a self-evident proposition that the building of a national system of highways will form an enterprise of such magnitude and such complexity as to put it entirely beyond the sphere of a single bureau or other subdivision of an executive department and if, therefore, it be considered in the class of these great national enterprises I have named, we should naturally expect to see the same kind of administrative machinery established for highways.

He cited examples, such as federalized railroads under the Director-General, who is not subject to the control of any cabinet officer," and, when free, under the independent Interstate Commerce Commission; the merchant marine industry was managed by the Shipping Board and the Emergency Fleet Corporation, "both functioning apart from executive departments"; and the banking system by the Federal Reserve Board "instead of a bureau of the Treasury Department":

There is no existing executive department which could legitimately take over the entire task of building a National Highway System. It might be contended that the Department of Agriculture should do the job because of the agricultural interests affected by highways, but immediately the counter-contention might be made that the War Department should build the system because of the military and national needs of the nation. The Post Office Department might very logically claim that its rural delivery and parcel post service should entitle it to control. The Department of the Interior being almost entirely a public works department, might contend that a constructive engineering task should fall in its domain.

In the end, all these possible claims lead to the "realization that highways are of such an all-embracing and of such general importance as to make it impracticable to entrust the task as a minor undertaking to any single government department. A commission would consider the needs of all of the departments."

Rowe concluded:

From the standpoint of directness, of responsibility, timeliness of action and comprehensiveness of knowledge, a commission devoting its whole time to the one single task could not fail to accomplish far greater results than would be possible through the medium of a cabinet officer who would be devoting the greater part of his time and attention to matters wholly foreign to highways. It would seem that the commission plan is unassailable. [“Federal Highway Commission Bill,” *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, June 1919, pages 35-37]

The magazine also reported that Senator Townsend had held a conference in Washington on May 20 to consider the bill he had introduced in the 65th Congress to stimulate discussion. It had prompted much constructive thought about how the bill could be adjusted to meet all future needs:

Constructive suggestions have been brought out to such an extent as to assure a comprehensive and well-balanced measure which if enacted into law will result in a national system of highways, built and maintained by the Federal Government under the supervision of a commission dealing exclusively with this one phase of national activity.

Participants in the meeting included Roy Chapin and Pyke Johnson of the Highways Committee of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce; A. R. Hirst, president of AASHO and George P. Coleman, chairman of its executive committee; S. M. Williams and Henry G. Shirley of the Highway Industries Association; J. E. Pennybacker, formerly of BPR, now Director of Roads with AAA and George C. Diehl, chairman of AAA’s Good Roads Board; W. O. Rutherford of the Motor and Accessory Manufacturers’ Association; and the top executive of State highway departments from Alabama, Maine, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Utah.

In addition, the magazine reprinted the resolution that the Chamber of Commerce of the United States adopted during its annual meeting on May 1, 1919, endorsing the national highway plan and policy of the Joint Highway Congress. The resolution endorsed a Federal Highway Commission to work with “any Federal agency that may have functions of articulating rail, trolley, water and highway transportation.” Congress should approve “substantial appropriations” for construction of the national system and its maintenance. “Expenditure of funds should be permitted only for highways which are of permanent type having thorough drainage, substantial foundations, sufficient width and a capacity for traffic which will be reasonably adequate for future needs.” [Ibid, page 37]

D.A.R.’s 1919 Congress

During D.A.R. April 1919 annual congress in Washington, Mrs. Van Brunt, chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee, was “unable to be present.” Mrs. George Edward George, the committee’s second vice-chairman, reported on its activities:

Reports this year of the work of the National Old Trails are not very numerous, but some

of those that have been received are very excellent and bespeak the interest in and loyalty to this beautiful and worthy undertaking of preserving to posterity the historic trails and roads of our own beloved country. Many and unforeseen things have arisen in the past two years to cause work on the old trails to be side-tracked for the time being – urgent demand for immediate war-relief work along various lines, and later a country-wide visitation of the influenza epidemic that completely paralyzed the efforts of entire communities for weeks and even months. But for all that, courage was undaunted in many directions, keeping alive the hope of those to whom this work is distinctly paramount.

One of the most vital tasks facing the country was “the re-absorption of war labor with peace industries, and one method of solving that problem seems to be universally thought of. It is the building of national roads”:

All of us have a vivid recollection of last winter’s freight blockage and the failure of the railroads to relieve the situation. We must build highways; that has been one of the lesson [sic] of this war. Men from every State in the Union meet in Chicago today and tomorrow to strive to formulate a plan for a national roads system.

She was referring to the Chicago meeting to create the Federal Highway Council.

The Daughters of the American Revolution had pledged their support to the National Old Trails Road, and were keeping that pledge:

This road, carved out of the wilderness by our fathers (our road) is not only the most practical road proposed, but has the sacredness that anything made by those who have gone on beyond the touch of our hands must always have for us.

This is our chance to preserve it, to make it our first great National Highway. We can do it if we – 100,000 earnest, patriotic women – will only stand together. Will you do it? [Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 14-19, 1919, pages 95-96]

The society adopted a resolution directing the National Old Trails Committee to work to include footpaths at the side of such roads for the safety of pedestrians. *The Baltimore Sun* explained:

The resolution calls attention to the fact that recently several school children were run down by an unidentified motorist while on their way to school near Towson, one of the children being killed and two others seriously injured. The tragedy would not have occurred, the resolution recited, had a footpath for the use of pedestrians been provided in building the road. [“D.A.R. Not to Change: Amendment to Reduce Representation Beaten,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 18, 1919, page 3]

Construction in Illinois and Indiana

As if to drive home the point about the effectiveness of the Federal-aid highway program, BPR's magazine, *Public Roads*, reported in its July 1919 issue that:

In June the record of Federal-aid statements approved surpassed that of all previous months in the numbers of projects, the mileage involved, the estimated cost of the roads to be built and the amount of Federal aid allowed. This is also true in regard to the record of the project statements for which agreements were signed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

During June, BPR considered 239 projects, with 133 new statements approved, 60 agreements executed, covering 1,426.84 miles at an estimated cost of \$25,611,314.99 (Federal share: \$11,725,500.61). The June statements approved "bring the total amount of Federal aid applied for up to \$54,654,984.44, almost \$5,000,000 in excess of the amount which would have been available up to the close of the fiscal year 1920 under the original Federal aid law."

The article illustrated the point by citing two projects in Illinois. One, project No. 8, involved construction of the East St. Louis-Springfield Highway (the portion from Granite City to Springfield). The other, project No. 9, "will undoubtedly hold the record for length and cost for some time to come [and was] of unusual interest aside from its great length and cost":

It contemplates, after the lapse of nearly a century, the completion of the Old National Road, extending from the Potomac to the Mississippi, which already has been largely improved as far west as the Indiana line. The Illinois improvement will extend from East St. Louis across the State to the Indiana line, traversing St. Clair, Madison, Bond, Fayette, Effingham, Cumberland, and Clark Counties.

The proposed type of surface is monolithic brick and concrete pavement, the average cost of which is about \$30,000 per mile. The proposed improvement includes also the construction of 40 bridge structures of lengths ranging from 22 feet to 300 feet. At present the highway is generally an unimproved earth road which becomes nearly impassable at certain seasons of the year. There are, however, near some of the villages short stretches of macadam pavement, generally in very poor condition. The local traffic consists of approximately 60 trucks, 700 motor vehicles, and 50 horse-drawn vehicles per day, to which is added during the summer months a through traffic of about 20 trucks, and 200 passenger motor vehicles.

The article summarized the history of the highway, dating to legislation that President Thomas Jefferson signed on March 29, 1806, through the final appropriation for construction purposes in 1838. The article did not mention that the National Road was part of the National Old Trails Road.

Indiana's participation in the Federal-aid highway program had been delayed by court challenges

to State law. However, that issue had been resolved, and the Indiana State Highway Commission was able to begin operations. "The first evidence of this fact was in June, when six project statements were submitted to the Bureau of Public Roads which were approved before the end of the month":

Two of the projects are very large ones, among the largest projects so far submitted from any State. The larger of the two is for 35.3 miles of road in Hancock and Henry Counties, and has an estimated cost of \$1,419,928, or about \$40,225 a mile. The other is for 35.1 miles in Vigo, Clay, and Putnam Counties, and its estimated cost is \$1,394,016.80, or \$39,713 a mile These two projects are for stretches of the Old National Road in Indiana, the former lying between Indianapolis and Richmond and the latter between Terre Haute and Indianapolis. A third project for a stretch of this road submitted is for 14.7 miles between Terre Haute and Indianapolis, in Hendricks County, estimated to cost \$610,606. These three projects will practically carry the rebuilding of the Old National Road across Indiana, and with the big Illinois project will about complete the reconstruction of that road from St. Louis to the Ohio-Indiana line. ["June a Record-Breaking Month for Federal-Aid Allotments," *Public Roads*, July 1919, pages 19-21]

State Exposition

Dr. S. M. Johnson of New Mexico was one of the good roads movement's prominent promoters. Perhaps his most famous contribution to the cause was the founding of the transcontinental Lee Highway as a southern counterpart to the Lincoln Highway. (Although Dr. Johnson had been involved with other southern routes, the Lee Highway Association was not formed until December 3, 1919.)

In mid-1919, he promoted the idea of establishing in Washington, D.C., "a great national permanent exposition to be composed of 48 State exhibits in which would be shown the individual resources of each of the States, its history, traditions, institutions and its local characteristics." The idea was not new, "but it took the stirring days of war to kindle the national spirit to a full appreciation of the wonderful possibilities of this mutual undertaking":

The State boundaries would be clearly marked, while the main avenues would correspond to the great transcontinental highways and would be clearly marked accordingly. Thus the "Lincoln Highway," the "National Old Trails," "the Bankhead National Highway," and other great cross-continental roads would be featured and their locations would become better known to those who visit the exposition

The proposed birdseye view of the national domain will help in familiarizing visitors to the National Capital with the geography, the political units of Government, the avenues of communication, the topography and the vast productive power of the land that saved the world from starvation and democracy from destruction. ["Highway Plan for States Exposition," *American Motorist*, June 1919, page 21]

Although many of Dr. Johnson's creative ideas were adopted, this one was not. (In addition to the Lee Highway, Dr. Johnson was largely responsible for the Zero Milestone installed in the Ellipse south of the White House; was the good roads speaker during the U.S. Army's first transcontinental motor-truck convoy in 1919; and played a key role in promoting construction of Arlington Memorial Bridge connecting the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery.)

Westgard's View

In June 1919, the *Kansas City Star* featured an article about the National Old Trails Road. It began:

Many motorists who have noticed the red, white and blue markers along certain roads in the vicinity of Kansas City fail to appreciate their significance. They blaze the route of the National Old Trails Road across the continent from Baltimore to Los Angeles.

The article quoted A. L. Westgard, a pioneer pathfinder of the early automobile era and then director of transcontinental highways of the National Highways Association:

The National Old Trails Road gets its name from following old historic trails, more or less closely, all the way across the continent. Thus it follows the National Pike, the first highway built by the nation, along a route reminiscent of the history of Washington, Braddock and of the French and Indian wars, from Washington or Baltimore to St. Louis by way of Cumberland, Wheeling, Columbus and Indianapolis. From St. Louis it follows the Boone Lick Road, named after the doughty Daniel Boone, to Kansas City. From Kansas City to Santa Fe it traces the famous Santa Fe Trail, gory with the blood of the pioneer hunters, trappers and traders who between 1872 and 1882, when the completed railroad caused its abandonment, plodded their weary way across the plains

From Santa Fe to California it trails the paths of Spanish conquistadors and the indomitable padres, who brought the gospel to the Pueblos. The length of this route is 3,030 miles from Washington to Los Angeles. Everything considered, it is the most scenic and by far the most historic route, besides offering the flavor of a trip into a foreign land on account of the Mexican population and numerous interesting tribes of Indians who in New Mexico and Arizona dwell contiguous to the route.

Hard surfaced roads will be found as far as Terra Haute in a continuous ribbon. While most of the balance of the route is financed for improvement, it is, aside from occasional stretches of macadam, a dragged dirt road good in dry weather. Substantial bridges and culverts are found along the entire route, even in sparsely settled sections of the Southwest and it is well sign posted. This route is provided with excellent hotel accommodations at the [sic] most of the natural night stops. Though open for traffic practically the entire year, except in January, February and March, the best time to travel this route is in the early autumn, leaving the East between September 1 and October 7.

[Reprinted as "National Old Trails a Historic Route," *The Baltimore Sun*, June 22, 1919,

Promoting the Federal Role

Despite disappointing results in the short third session of the 65th Congress, the Highway Industries Association and other advocates had high hopes for the 66th Congress. It would meet from May 19 to November 19, 1919; December 1, 1919, to June 20, 1920; and December 1, 1920, to June 5, 1921.

As a result of the mid-term elections in November 1918, Republicans controlled both Houses of the 66th Congress. Senator Townsend was chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. Born August 15, 1856, in Jackson County, Michigan, he was admitted to the Jackson bar to practice law in 1895. After serving in the House of Representatives from 1903, he was elected by the State legislature to join the Senate in 1911 and had won reelection in 1916. He was the sponsor of the bill most heavily favored by supporters of the Federal Highway Commission. Representative Thomas B. Dunn was chairman of the House Committee on Roads. Born on March 16, 1853, in Rhode Island, he had lived for many years in Rochester, New York. He was a businessman who had served in the State legislature and as State Treasurer before winning election to the House in 1912. He joined the Committee on Roads upon its creation in 1913. In 1916, he had been one of the leading opponents of the Federal Aid Road Act. In New York, he had been “an advocate of the general proposition connected with the question of good roads” and had been associated with good-roads legislation. However, he said he was troubled by the 1916 bill because there was, “to my mind, a very great difference between Federal aid for roads and Federal construction of roads.” The Federal-aid funds the bill authorized would be a “gift distribution” to the States, after which “control of the same is lost to the Federal authorities.”

He might have supported “an initial system of Federal trunk-line roads,” but “it does not appear to me that it is an opportune time to enact the measure now reported.” He explained his concern about the timing:

[The] subject of good roads is not a vital question at the present time nor is it one that has to be solved immediately. This Chamber is supposed to be the financial office as well as the legal office of this Government. We are expected to be careful of our own expenditures and to be rather more than careful about voting away the money of other people.

If instead of a minus Treasury we had a plus Treasury, if we had large revenues that provided for a surplus that could be fairly divided, if we were not confronted with complications throughout the world that may call for large appropriations to be made by this Congress, to be expended for what might be called involuntary expenditures, it possibly might be a proper time to consider this measure; but in view of the fact that we have little or no surplus, that we are already considering increasing our present internal taxation, I believe this entire subject should be deferred until matters of much graver importance are definitely settled. Believing as I do that this is not a good business measure to present at this time I can not, under the circumstances, justify myself in

supporting the same. ["Rural Post Roads," *Congressional Record-House*, January 24, 1916, page 1470; mini-biographies from "New Chairman in 66th Congress Whose Committees Will Handle National Roads Legislation," *American Motorist*, June 1919, page 30]

With these new chairmen in place, advocates for a Federal Highway Commission and a national highway system had every reason to be optimistic about congressional action. The new leader for BPR was another matter.

Although AASHO and the Highway Industries Association disagreed on the Nation's highway needs, they agreed on the need for a strong new leader of BPR. An editorial in *Engineering News-Record* for December 26, 1918, foresaw "a new era in highway work," one in which "an engineer of vision and strength" was essential for BPR, even though a Federal Highway Commission "should be created soon." The editorial stated, "Lack of vision and of sympathy with new conditions have been the chief deficiencies in the bureau in the immediate past."

AASHO recommended Thomas H. MacDonald for the job. Born in Leadville, Colorado, in 1881, MacDonald moved as a child with his family to Iowa in 1884. He became State Highway Engineer in 1907 and Chief Engineer of the Iowa State Highway Commission when it was formed in 1913. In this role, he worked with the small AASHO committee that drafted the Federal-aid bill that Senator Bankhead introduced and became the model for the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. He had been an ally of Logan Page and was dedicated to the Federal-aid concept.

In a letter to Secretary Houston on March 20, 1919, MacDonald said he wanted to ensure he would be able to make adjustments to "assist in changing the present attitude of criticism toward the Department and to insure the cordial co-operation of the state highway officials . . ." The changes were decentralization of responsibilities to BPR's multi-State District Engineers; increased salaries for the District Engineers to retain their services; adoption of the "most liberal policy possible" in interpreting existing laws to get construction underway rapidly; and provision for an advisory committee, to be selected by AASHO, to help improve Federal-State relations. MacDonald also conditioned his move to Washington on an increase in the position's salary of \$4,500 a year.

These conditions being acceptable, Secretary Houston appointed MacDonald on April 1, 1919, "engineer in immediate charge of the work under the Federal-aid road act." When the salary of \$6,000 was approved, he was appointed "Chief of Bureau" on July 1, 1919. ["Thomas H. MacDonald" in *Clearly Vicious as a Matter of Policy* on this Website at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/hwyhist02.cfm>]

With his firm commitment to the Federal-aid concept, MacDonald would be a strong opponent of the concept of a federally constructed national highway system.

Further, the rapid spread of Federal-aid highway projects around the country raised concerns among State highway officials that adoption of the Townsend bill would end the Federal-aid

funds they were receiving. Aware of this concern, Senator Townsend said late in 1919:

The object of the bill introduced by me is to establish and maintain a national system of highways according to a national plan connecting the different states of the union, and affording an example of proper highway construction, which will be beneficial to the states. The bill does not in any manner injuriously affect existing law, in fact it provides that the commission created under it shall have charge of the Federal Aid Law, and shall make reports annually to the Congress as to what is being accomplished under existing law, and to make such recommendations for the future as the operation of the law and its results seem to be necessary. The two systems of road building are separate and distinct, except that they are under control of the same Federal Commission. The appropriations, however, cannot be mingled and the results will be known and properly appraised by the people from time to time. If the present Federal Aid Law proves satisfactory, it will as a matter of course, be continued, and probably enlarged. If the proven results are not satisfactory, that law will be discontinued. And what I say of the Federal Aid Law will be true of the bill now pending before the Senate. The commission appointed under the Law, it may safely be presumed, will be high grade men, representing different sections of the country, and their life-work will be to serve the people by furnishing the best possible highway transportation facilities. ["To Strengthen Present Plan of Federal Aid for National Highways," *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, November 1919, page 52]

As these comments implied, 1919 had seemed to be the year of the Federal Highway Commission, but it was not to be, as Bruce E. Seely explained in *Building the American Highway System*:

Quarrels among the various backers of the Townsend bill over who should lead the campaign hampered genuine coordination of the public relations effort. A more serious problem was the continuance of federal aid, for even highway engineers who supported a national commission hesitated to jeopardize the money already appropriated. Congress in 1919 certainly had no desire to consider a plan that would not take effect for two years. So in spite of warnings that waiting until federal aid expired in 1921 would jeopardize their chances, most supporters of the commission favored such a delay. As a result, the sense of urgency about a national highway commission palpable in early 1919 was frittered away. [Seely, Bruce E., *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers*, Temple University Press, 1987, page 53]

True Principles

Advocates of the National Highway Commission understood that in the short session ending early in 1919, Congress had not had time to consider the idea. They had high hopes for the session that began December 1, 1919.

Victoria Faber Stevenson summarized the situation in her "American Highways" entry in the November 1919 issue of *Sinclair's Magazine*. At one time, she began, the main road problem was the "farmer trying to drive a balky mule over an impassable road!" Farmers were the main

road users; the average city man “felt justified in eliminating the subject from his worries.” That view had changed:

Today the question of good roads is everybody’s business. This change of attitude has come about because more than six million automobiles travel the roads, carrying their owners to work or about their business. Every motor-driven passenger car and truck has been a recruiting agent in assembling volunteers in the campaign for better highways. As a result the people of the United States have come to realize that the condition of the highways has a vital bearing upon the food supply, and also upon general industrial prosperity and national security in times of peril.

State and local governments understood the need:

Since the armistice was signed various state legislatures have voted such bond issues as fifty, sixty and seventy-five million dollars for road work. Counties, too, have voted many millions of dollars for like purposes, St. Louis County, Minn., alone obtaining seven and a half million dollars in this way. It has been calculated that in all a fund of more than a billion dollars has been appropriated by such methods.

As the funds become available, “road finances will permit highway officials of many states to plan for the future.” BPR reported that “practically every state is planning a continuous system of connecting roads.” Under the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 as supplemented by the Post Office Appropriation Act of 1919, the amount of funds available to BPR was “the largest ever established by any government for such internal improvements.” With \$125 million dollars now available, “the Bureau of Public Roads estimated that it has in September a working fund of about one hundred-sixty-nine million dollars and a surety of one hundred millions more next July.”

Although funds at all levels were abundant, more was wanted. The activity of Federal agencies, “efforts of state organizations and the energy which road and automobile associations have been persistently exerting for national road improvement, have had a marked influence on the Congress of the United States.” With the next session about to open, more than 40 highway bills had been introduced:

Senator Wesley Jones of Washington has presented a bill providing for the creation of a Department of Public Works which would have charge of the nation’s road building. Senator Morris Shepherd of Texas advocates the building of a military highway along the southwestern border. The idea of surveying and investigating the needs of military roads is embodied in several proposals to Congress as well as the actual construction of highways for military coast defense. Representative Robison of Kentucky [sic, John M. Robsion] has asked that Federal aid funds be increased a billion dollars, while Representative [Scott] Ferris of Oklahoma would add four hundred millions for Federal aid work. Several of the Rocky Mountain states favor national legislation allowing them to sell portions of their public lands to supply funds for highways.

Perhaps the most important highway bill now in Congress is the measure introduced by Senator Charles E. Townsend of Michigan. This proposed legislation has attracted nation wide attention because it provides for a national highway system of such type as will meet the demands of the future as well as the present. It would create a Federal Highway Commission of five members appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate. Upon this Commission would rest the scheduling of the national highway system and its management. It would, in addition, supervise the appropriation of four hundred twenty-five million dollars set aside for the project.

No highway bill has ever been considered more seriously than this one throughout the whole country, because of the enthusiasm for a national highway system

Stevenson pointed out that the Chamber of Commerce of the United States supported the Townsend Bill, while many State highway officials supported the bill through the efforts of Associated Highways of America. AAA was “doing much to arouse the interest of its branch organizations in this cause”:

Members of the American Association of State Highway Officials are strong in their endorsement of a highway system which would connect all states. Nevertheless many of these road officials believe it would be a serious mistake to discontinue Federal aid.

With the farmer in mind, the National Grange “has an especial interest in improving highways leading to city markets; and as no industry could continue prosperous without agricultural prosperity it is difficult to understand how anyone could remain indifferent.” In addition, the Federal Highway Council, “which has its headquarters in Washington, is represented throughout the United States by large organizations of national importance as well as by commercial clubs, rotary clubs, good road associations and others united in the interests of transportation and traveling in the various states. Many of the members are anxious to see Federal aid extended beyond 1921 when the appropriation ceases.”

Stevenson concluded:

American wealth is being applied to her highways as never before; American roads are being constructed more substantially, and public sentiment is demanding that further progress be made by adopting a national highway system. [Stevenson, Victoria Faber, “America’s Road Program,” *Sinclair’s Magazine*, November 1919, pages 38-42]

Senator Townsend revised his bill for 1920 and renamed it the National Highway Act, but its prospects were dim. As Professor Seely wrote:

Townsend reintroduced his bill in January 1920, only to have debates over the peace treaty and League of Nations delay committee hearings until May. Publicity efforts resumed with the Firestone Ship-by-Truck transcontinental caravan and an accompanying program of speakers, films, tours, advertising, and handbook. But with a presidential election upcoming, Townsend saw little prospect of pushing the bill to the floor in 1920.

[Seely, page 53]

(May 17-22, 1920, was National Ship by Truck-Good Roads Week. Initiated by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, the week featured promotional activities around the country, including parades of trucks, speeches, a motion picture titled “Ship by Truck,” and a student essay contest. [“To Hold National Good Roads Week,” *Better Roads and Streets*, May 1920, page 224; “Ship By Truck – Good Roads Week,” *The Motor Truck*, May 1920, pages 202, 203])

Judge Lowe continued to advocate for the Federal Highway Commission, as reflected in his bulletin of February 25, 1920:

It matters little who first suggested a system of National Highways, but it matters much whether the prevailing sentiment shall be translated into such system now, or whether it shall be permitted to fade out by inaction, as it did after winning in a National election in 1824 – and it matters much more whether or not this is the true solution of this question. May we not appropriate the following from Henry Ford’s page in the Dearborn Independent, as confirmatory of the propaganda and accomplishments of this association:

“What kills propaganda is the obvious purpose behind it. One little admixture of self-interest and your effort is wasted.”

That has been the foundation principle upon which this Association has stood from the beginning. It has no axe to grind, no selfish interest to serve, no salaried officers, no one trying to make this a stepping stone to political preferment or to “something better.” We make no appeal for support in order that some one may be personally benefited thereby; nor has this Association any selfish interest behind it to sustain it, nor has it received one dollar knowingly, from any selfish source, unless the contributions of those along its line be thus classified; and this can not be truthfully claimed, because our work has always included the general good of the whole country.

The man or Association bottomed on a great truth “need not worry about the indifference of the multitude; let them tie their fortunes to this fact. In due time it will find its place. Agreement does not make facts. But facts make agreement. People who don’t agree with the truth get bumped by it. It is not our place to do the bumping – the truth takes care of that.”

The only legitimate propaganda along all lines of material and spiritual endeavor is the ascertainment and establishment of true principles. A true solution of any worthwhile question is as permanent as the fixed stars. Winter, nor indifference, will not freeze it; Summer, nor heated opposition, will not melt it; apathetic Pessimism will not destroy it. It may be neglected for ages, and men may abuse and falsify it, indeed may smother it under mountains of error and misconception, but bye and bye truth, ever working unweariedly, will dig itself out, and rise to the top. No falsehood, however insignificant, did it rise Heaven-high and cover the earth, but truth, sooner or later, will sweep it down, for so it is written in the doombook of God. During the march of the Ages, the advocates

of Truth have been immolated, but this did not destroy Truth.

If this Association is founded upon **true principles** it will deserve to live in history. This principle was declared in 1806 when the Cumberland – (National Road) now a section of the National Old Trails Road – was established by Act of Congress, and was reaffirmed by repeated acts of Congress extending it to St. Louis, and finally, by the adoption of a bill in 1824 extending it to Santa Fe, a capital of a foreign State. Thus the National Old Trails Road is not only National in character, but it is the first and **only** road in the United States established by Act of Congress as a National Road throughout its length. No need for additional legislation is necessary to make it so. This can not be said of any other road sought to be promoted in the United States.

All that remains to be done is **to build the road**. We prepared a Bill to this effect, and had it introduced in Congress in 1913, but it was refused upon the ground that it applied to a single road, and not to any general system of roads. Whereupon, we drew up a Bill establishing a **general** system of National Highways, covering some 32,000 miles. This was the first measure of this character brought forward since 1824, but public sentiment was not yet ready for it. Four years ago Congress adopted what is known as the “Federal Aid Law,” the direct result of the agitation for National Roads, and which provides for the co-operation of the Federal Government with the States in building roads. This was recognition of the **authority** and **duty** of the General Government to apply Federal funds to road building. Its obvious defects are, that it mixes both money and management, neither of which are defensible.

And now we have the pending Townsend Bill, and other bills, recognizing the long established principle of a General system of National Highways, to be built and maintained by the General Government, and **this** is the principle to which we have always adhered. It took three generations to devise a plan to build the Panama Canal. We were wise enough finally to adopt it as **a National undertaking**, and placed the responsibility for its construction upon a single individual, and we shall finally come to some practicable, business-like plan in building roads.

Any National system adopted will serve as, and take the place of, State and County roads in all the States through which they run, thus relieving such States, Counties, etc., of the cost of their construction and maintenance; and will leave for construction more than any State or County is likely to build. The National road will serve as an object lesson in all the States; and the State roads, by a well defined system, can connect with such National System, and the County and Township roads with such State systems, all under separate supervision, thus establishing a United system of **Good Roads Everywhere**. By such system we can get “through roads,” roads that begin and go somewhere. By such system we will get “State” and “County seat roads,” and by such system we will get “Main Market roads,” “radial roads,” “roads from farm to the market,” etc., and we can bring this about **in no other way**. What kind of a system of Railways would we have if the “feeder roads” had been built before the trunk lines? J.M.L.

P.S – Since the above was written, this office has received the following special from Harrisburg, Pa.; “Only one large Pennsylvania highway is open to automobile traffic through its length, the State Highway Department announced today. That road is the National Pike, which passes through Washington, Pa., Brownsville and Uniontown.”

The leading editorial in the Ohio Motorist in last October number said: “Now try to cross Ohio on a continuous hard-surfaced road and see what you will find. There is but one, and that is the Old National Road.”

Also from the State Highway Board of Illinois: “Entire Old National Road across this State is under contract.” At a cost of about \$5,000,000. This alone is more than one-half the amount expended on any other road in the United States during 1919.

The Chicago Herald-Examiner of January 25, after mentioning all the trans-continental roads, says: “The best all-year route is the National Old Trails Road from Washington, D.C., and continued westerly through Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City and Pueblo, penetrating the desert of New Mexico and Arizona into Los Angeles. Practically the entire stretch from Terre Haute to St. Louis will be closed, however, during summer on account of road construction.”

J. M. Lowe, President
National Old Trails Road Association

Judge Lowe’s last paragraph citing Good Roads Everywhere was using terms Charles Henry Davis had been using throughout the 1910s in his crusade for national highways.

The Road in 1920

While Congress considered the future of Federal road activities, State and local officials continued to improve sections of the National Old Trails Road.

The Arizona State Highway Department had issued a call in January 1920 for bids for construction of the State Highway through Petrified Forest. The segment was known as Section 3, Holbrook-St. Johns Highway, and Arizona Federal Aid Project No. 3, part of the National Old Trails Road:

A project agreement had been executed about a year ago with the United States Bureau of Public Roads covering this section of highway, but before proceeding with the construction a change in the alignment was deemed advisable. This change results in a shorter and more direct road, at considerably less expense, and is entirely within the forest.

The State Highway Department is acting on the theory that there is not sufficient money available to go to any extra expense to reach any particular point in the forest. The highway, as now located, places within a very short distance of the highway practically the entire part of the forest that would be of interest to tourists, and will open up one of

the most wonderful natural phenomena to be found anywhere.

This highway is a link on the Old Trails Highway passing through the northern part of the State by way of Springerville, St. Johns, Holbrook, Winslow, Flagstaff, Ashfork and Kingman.

It is expected that work will start as soon as weather conditions will permit, and that the section will be completed by the beginning of Summer.

The grading and drainage work will be done by contract, but the surfacing will be done by the State Highway Department, using equipment recently acquired from the War Department. ["To Build Road in Petrified Forest," *Western Highways Builder*, February 14, 1920, page 10]

In February 1920, the Arizona State Highway Commission issued a call for bids for construction of a section of the National Old Trails Road between Oatman and Gold Roads. An article about the call stated, "The section of the highway to be constructed traverses a very difficult country and has taken considerable engineering investigation in order to reduce the cost as much as possible." The State was advancing the project under the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. "The State's share of the cost will be paid for out of Mohave County's 75 per cent portion of the State road tax fund, which is handled jointly by the Board of Supervisors and the State Engineer." ["To Start Work Soon on Oatman Highway," *Western Highways Builder*, February 14, 1920]

Work was underway to grade the National Old Trails Road in Illinois. An article about the work described the road, which ran parallel to the Vandalia railroad, in the State:

This trail was established in the early days and the founders sought the most likely route to St. Louis. At the time of the location of the trail the land had little value for any purpose and the country through which it runs was unsurveyed.

Consequently the trail runs without regard to section lines, in a zigzag fashion, seeking the natural high land in most cases, but generally at an angle of about 30 deg. from an east to west line. In some places the state highway engineers have changed the route slightly, substituting a curve for two sharp angles, and in other places have changed the route to avoid railroad grade crossings. In general, however, the Old Trails follows very closely the original route. It is about 165 mi. from the point of entrance in eastern Illinois to the outlet at East St. Louis, and in this distance there are five crossings on grade of the Vandalia and nine grade crossing of other lines of railroad.

Grading of the road was "much of interest":

Contracts were let last summer and, with a slight interruption due to cold weather, has been in progress ever since. The movement of earth varies from relatively slight, the amount required to establish the subgrade on the level stretches, to cuts varying from 3 to 15 ft., where the country becomes more broken.

Grading must precede all other forms of road work. Grades once established and a hard-surfaced road built, the grade will remain as long as the surface, and in all probability the road will not be touched with respect to grade for a number of years, if then. Some grades on the National Old Trails are as steep as 7% for a very short distance, but in general these extreme grades are the exception. The grade usually is not over 5% and that for short distances

The biggest feature of the work, however, is the distance required to be covered by the engineer who, ordinarily, is expected to be in at least two places at once and on occasions in many more places. Those who use this road in the future can have very little conception of the toil and sweat of the field engineer on the job.

Although concrete paving was underway, many gaps remained:

Through Marshall, a distance of about 1 mile, no provision has been made for paving, as Marshall is an incorporated town of 2500. From Marshall to near Vandalia the pavement is continuous. East of Vandalia there is about 1 mile of 9-ft. concrete pavement and about 2 miles which will require a fill of 6 to 7 ft. to bring it up to the grade required. A bridge of 6 spans of 50 ft. is required across the Kaskaskia river, just east of the city [to replace a bridge built about 30 years earlier]. A brick pavement has been constructed for about ½ mile through Vandalia, but about 1 mile remains to be paved. No steps have been taken as yet to provide this pavement.

A short distance west of Sec. P [of the 38 the road had been divided into] the route of the road has not been definitely settled and about 1 mile of paving is to be let. Through Greenville, about 1½ miles of pavement are included in the village corporate limits to be paved by the village.

At Collinsville about 3 miles of city streets are not included in the program. This carries the road onward to the corporate limits of East St. Louis where the Trail will cross the Mississippi river over the Free Bridge built by the city of St. Louis. [Christine, W. T., "Grading National Old Trail Road," *The Road-Maker, Excavator and Grader*, July 1920, pages 27-29; Christine, W. T., "Concrete Highway Construction on the Old Trails," *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, July 1920, pages 17-23]

Ben Blow, in his 1920 book, cited earlier, about California's State Highway system, commented on the State highways in California along the National Old Trails Road, without naming the road, including:

Route 9 – San Fernando in Los Angeles County to San Bernardino.

The "Foothill Boulevard," one the southern California's most attractive short tours at the foot of the mountains, passing through Pasadena and supplying a connection to at least two transcontinental roads. All paved in 1919. [Blow, pages 102-103]

Route 31 – San Bernardino to Barstow.

This route climbs over Cajon Pass from San Bernardino and reaches to Barstow in the midst of the Mojave Desert. It is paved, thanks to San Bernardino County, to the very top of Cajon Pass and is to be further improved by the State Highway Commission, connects with that important highway which sweeps to the west from Topoc, Arizona, across a wide arched bridge and then from Needles traverses the vast width of San Bernardino County and carries its full burden of transcontinental travel into California, the Cajon Pass over which the Salt Lake Railroad climbs being popularly known as . . . the “Gateway into California,” from which point an unpaved county road leads out into the mystery of the desert to Barstow where it forms a connection with the Barstow-Needles road. [Blow, pages 111, 211]

Route 58 – Needles to Mojave.

This route, two hundred fifty-five miles in length, extends entirely across San Bernardino County in a general eastwardly and westwardly direction, with an extension into Kern County, where connection is had with an existing State Highway route.

The eastern terminal is commonly regarded as Needles, California, but as a matter of fact is on the California Line opposite Topoc, Arizona, a few miles below Needles, at which point a wide span crosses the Colorado River.

For years one of [the county’s many] problems, the main one perhaps of the multitude which exist, has been the building of a road from Barstow to Needles to supply a comfortable entryway into California for a popularly traveled transcontinental highway over which, as road development takes place in the states enroute a constantly increasing volume of traffic comes to California each year. The distance between Barstow and Needles is 170 miles and it will be seen at once that the construction of this road would impose a burden upon San Bernardino County too great to bear. Realizing the need of this road not only to their own county but also to the state the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, when the matter of a new State Highway bond issue was proposed early in 1919, delegated one of its members, Mr. R. L. Riley, of Colton, to attend the meeting which was called to take place in San Francisco, and at this meeting the Barstow-Needles road was made part of the proposed state plan and one of the . . . burdens which San Bernardino County had borne for years was forever removed.

It will form one of the main entrances into California for transcontinental travel, will be principally a touring road, and is to be surfaced with local material. [Blow, pages 117, 214-215]

Charles Fuller Gates, an experienced traveler, described the National Old Trails Road from Los Angeles to Arizona as encountered during a drive in 1920. He had spent more than 20 years traveling throughout the area and was “more familiar with the evolution of highways west of the Rockies, perhaps, than any other man.” He had “seen bad roads develop into excellent highways

and good roads evolve from trackless wastes.”

He was traveling to Prescott, once the capital of the Arizona territory. In the first 500 miles of highway travel, “I found about every kind of road that exists anywhere. It is just a little over four years since I was over this same route, and great improvements in construction have taken place most of the way.” He reported that:

The greatest surprise came near Laviac, where I pulled for miles through the lava rock on low speed four years ago, and, of course, had been dreading this part of the desert road. On reaching the malapai section I found instead of deep ruts through beds of sharp and finely broken rock, a surface of pavement often as smooth as could be desired and for miles, too. In fact three times between Barstow and the Needles this paved road surface is encountered. This pavement, the first stretch beginning at Waters, California, formerly known as Newberry Station on the Santa Fe Railroad, where the railroad’s supply of water is obtained, is 33 miles long, while the next section is in excellent shape for a dozen miles. The road all the way from Los Angeles to the Colorado River, over 300 miles, is all good, though some of the desert travel has small arroyos close enough together to require a speed with automobile as slow as 10 or 15 miles an hour if one values comfort in riding. The slow stretches resembled the “chucky” roads in Southern California before the day of pavements.

From the number of touring parties I met on the road it looks as though half the country is on the way to California and many flivvers bore that old time slogan: “To California or Bust.”

Of course the transcontinental trail we know variously as the Old Santa Fe Trail, Old Trails Highway, the Southern Route, New York to Los Angeles, and the State Highway, is paved from the Pacific Ocean and Los Angeles to the summit of Cajon Pass on the edge of the desert, about 100 miles. But few know that there is 50 miles more of pavement on the desert before leaving California, though, of course, this latter is narrow and more or less covered with sand. Thus half of the way from the sea to the Colorado River we have paved road, with none of the remaining 150 miles very bad.

About 40 miles from the river, roads become quite good so that fast time can be made here, too. It is not going to be very long before transcontinental tourists will find excellent roads all the way after touching California soil. In the Bagdad country road builders have carved through some malapai hills a grade that has never been good and put a lot of climbing into the route here that is hard to understand as there is a fairly level desert right alongside where a better grade could have been built at much less cost giving more comfort to those who have to travel this section.

And let me say right here, California, particularly Southern California, should find a way each spring to drag part of the desert road between the Colorado River and Barstow, after the spring rains and the heavy westbound travel begins, so that the now bad part of the road would not exist to confront the Eastern tourists returning home and the newcomers

bound west. The work would not amount to much if done at the right time. Even, right now, a road crew with a week's work would neutralize all the bad stretches so that all would have a kindly feeling toward California from the moment the river is crossed at Topoc, some 17 miles beyond Needles. All through this bad section you can find discarded auto tires every mile, now and then a muffler, a fender or other discarded and ruined part of a motor car or motorcycle.

The 17 miles between Needles and Topoc, where the river is crossed on the free interstate and Federal bridge, has more climbing than some world famous mountain passes. Here is a field for engineer work, relocating the road to cut out much of the up and down over rugged hills, where the grades are now altogether too steep. This stretch gives the Eastern visitors a bad opinion of California and is a dangerous piece of road.

Between the river and Kingman, motorists had two choices. One was "a fairly level route through Yucca and is fair desert road at present where the sand does not bother as it did in years before this road was improved." Beyond Yucca, "the natural material similar to decomposed granite used in the fine Mohave County road work gives an excellent road."

However, at Needles and Kingman, motorists were advised of a second choice. They were urged "to take the hill route via Oatman":

This is about 30 miles over trails from Topoc to Old Trails and Oatman mining camps. Then there is 60 miles of improved road through the mining camp of Gold Roads and over the divide into the mesa and across the rolling plain to the junction with the Yucca route about five miles out of Kingman. Then there is the gradual climb up through the foothills to Kingman.

The Gold Roads grade is now a fine piece of highway both in surface and engineering and a pride to Mohave County highway builders. Across the mesa cement fords cross the arroyos, thus saving the cost of bridges, which would amount to a large sum, and be hard to keep up on account of cloud bursts that more than fill the arroyos. This road of 60 miles from Oatman via Gold Roads grade is what would be called a gravel turnpike, made with the natural road making material right at hand. Grades have been kept below 12 per cent and on the mountain section stone bridges have been put in of dry masonry.

At Topock, Gates had encountered a road engineer camp that was relocating the highway to Oatman, "preparatory to big improvements over the route as this now is part of the most used transcontinental motor route, over which hundreds of cars bound to and from California pass every day." He explained:

The present road from Topoc to Oatman is over a big mesa, a cattle range along the river, then up through hills with climbs that give you plenty of thrills, a wild road, hard on tires, tempers, brakes, nerves and motors. Some of the way, where there is clay, the trail has planks laid lengthwise like railroad tracks, for the motor car wheels to travel. Out of Kingman there is an excellent road all the way to Hackberry, parallel with the Santa Fe

Railway tracks and on ground leased from the railroad by Mohave County. There are many arroyo cement fords on this stretch, and the natural material wears well. The big railroad signs telling the traveling public that it is on ground owned by the corporation, though leased by the county, and can be taken possession of at any time by railroad loom up regularly and compete in attention with the religious signs painted on the big rocks.

An accompanying photograph showed one of the signs:

This is NOT a public road
The undersigned hereby gives notice that this road
is located upon its right of way pursuant to a license
from the undersigned to the county of Mohave
which may be revoked whenever its necessities may
require and that persons using this road do so at
their own risk. A. T. & S. F. Ry Co.

Gates reported that east of Hackberry, the road “gets worse for a while, then better as it has not had the same care as had been given the highway nearer Kingman.” Through the Peach Springs section, the road has been moved “to a more direct route than the old trail and is up to the Mohave County high standard, but soon after reaching Peach Springs comes Nelson and the county line with the end of good roads until one nears Seligman as Yavapai County has not yet begun real work on this route, though recently bonding itself for a million and half to be used for construction work.”

Four years earlier, Gates had followed the railroad through this section, “all in bad condition”:

The present road is through another canyon, to reach which the road doubles back a half mile at Nelson after crossing the railroad, requiring opening two ranch gates. This canyon road was graded and many corrugated iron culverts put in but a broken dam flooded the canyon last year and the present trail winds around these culverts and pitches through a thousand ruts and sinkholes. On the Red Mesa beyond are similar conditions.

U. R. Fishel, the engineer for the Yavapai County Highway Commission, informed me that his ratty canyon route would be abandoned and a new route much better from Nelson to the Red Mesa built under the new bond issue. In fact, much of the route to Seligman will be changed, possibly that is why this part of the Old Trails Highway has been neglected.

The remainder of the trip, about 85 miles from Seligman to Prescott, was off the line of the National Old Trails Road. [Gates, Charles Fuller, “On the Trail of the Western Road Builder,” *Western Highways Builder*, July 3, 1920, pages 10-11, 30]

In December, the Mohave County Board of Supervisors informed the Arizona State Highway Department that the county had awarded the contract on November 29 for construction of the

Oatman-Topock road to the department at cost plus \$10:

The road will cost \$200,000 for the 28 miles; half of the funds will be derived from the Mohave County bond issue, and the remainder from Federal Aid funds. The department having received notice from the Federal district engineer that plans and specifications have been approved, work will begin today [December 10] as in anticipation of favorable action by both the county and the Federal government the State has already shipped one contracting outfit to Topoc It is the intention of the highway department to send most of its men and equipment into Northern Arizona on this job, in order to get the work completed before hot weather. Surveys for this work were completed last summer, the plans worked up in the Phoenix office and sent in for Federal approval some weeks ago. ["Oatman-Topoc Road to be Built by State," *Western Highways Builder*, December 18, 1920, page 25]

D.A.R. Annual Congress, 1920

When the D.A.R. met in Washington in April 1920, Mrs. Van Brunt, chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee, could not be present, but submitted her annual report to be filed:

The National Old Trails Road Committee was first formed to preserve the National Old Trails Road as a trans-continental road; to promote and develop it; to crystallize its history by erecting monuments along its length, marking places having historical significance; and wherever practicable, reopening the old taverns and establishing museums.

Later the committee was instructed to take charge of all the old trails, traces and roads of our country; to record their history, note their historic points and map their routes.

The heart of this committee, however, is the National Old Trails Road, and whether it runs through your State or not, we hope you will take an interest in it, for our National Society has adopted this great six-thousand-mile road [sic] and pledged its support. Remember it is our road and let us always cherish it in our hearts.

The loyalty of the National Society made it possible to build the Memorial Continental Hall "as a Memorial to our forefathers, and I believe that that same loyalty, that same putting aside of self, is going to build our National Old Trails Road, our "Road of Loving Hearts":

We ask you who live beside the National Old Trails Road to conserve its history; restore its taverns; record the points where, due to present-day conditions, we have been compelled to leave the old path; emphasize its scenic as well as historical value; study its needs as a trans-continental highway; but, above all, work for its adoption as a National Road.

We ask you who are its neighbors to familiarize yourselves with its history; its scenic points; its relation to your roads; the part it took in the development of our country and its

humanitarian value, so that whether you live beside it or view it from afar, you will feel that it is your road. Work, too, for its adoption as a National Road

War work has become a thing of the past. Reconstruction problems have been solved and we turn to old work with job. Those who so loved the National Old Trails Road work that they carried on despite the insistent demands of other things have turned to it with fresh vigor, those to whom it is new, show keen interest.

(The D.A.R. built Memorial Continental Hall on 17th Street in 1905 as the National Society's headquarters. "Memorial Continental Hall houses one of the world's most important genealogical libraries, an extensive collection of antique home furnishings displayed in more than 30 period rooms and glamorous spaces available to the public for an array of different occasions." [<https://www.dar.org/museum/exhibitions/memorial-continental-hall-100-years-history>])

Maryland, the committee reported, had passed a law authorizing the Maryland State Road Commission to post the National Old Trails Road sign of the D.A.R. along the road at intervals of not over a mile. This move should inspire other States to take similar action:

I have always felt that the States themselves should sign post the section of the National Old Trails Road within their borders, that sign to be the one adopted by the National Society and known as the Daughters of the American Revolution National Old Trails Road sign I hope the day is not far distant when we will see the Daughters of the American Revolution National Old Trails Road from the Atlantic to the Pacific outlined with the Red, White and Blue (symbol of our flag) with the Daughters of the American Revolution insignia above it, but that should not interfere with the preservation of the individuality of the links of the National Old Trails Road.

Although the Maryland General Assembly had appropriated funds to install the D.A.R. signs along the State's National Old Trails Road, Chairman John N. Mackall of the State Roads Commission was not interested. *The Baltimore Sun* reported that the signs – a red, white, and blue sign topped with a picture of an old-fashioned spinning wheel, crossed with a distaff, may "be trampled down by a modern marking system":

Now it seems that Mr. Mackall has some very fixed ideas about road marking. Some time ago when he was chief engineer he explained his plans for a modern and uniform system. The spinning wheel and distaff sign submitted by the old trails road committee does not conform to Mr. Mackall's plans. His idea is to forget all of the old trails, which, he says, are almost obliterated, and adopt a system of rechristening the roads by colors for the convenience of automobilists.

"They want to name the road the Old Trails road, very well and good," said Mr. Mackall, "But I am certainly going to object to providing funds for any road marker that is out of harmony with the system I am going to propose.

Mr. Mackall says he hopes to get the necessary appropriation for his road-marking system during the fall. It will cost, he says, in the neighborhood of \$100,000. ["D.A.R. Sign for Old Trails Road Being Frowned on By Mackall," *The Baltimore Sun*, June 6, 1920]

Mrs. Van Brunt report referred to the brochure containing Representative Borland's speech and a map of the National Old Trails Road. "These pamphlets should be treasured, for I doubt if we will be able to secure any more."

She added:

When we reach our goal four names will be written high on our honor roll – Elizabeth Butler Gentry, who through her powers of organization placed our road in the leading ranks of national roads; the Hon. William P. Borland, who for so long guarded its standing before Congress; Mrs. Henry McCleary, who watched over and furthered our roads' interest through dark days; and Judge J. M. Lowe, the father of the National Old Trails Road.

Nine years ago the Hon. William P. Borland introduced our Daughters of the American Revolution National Old Trails Road bill in Congress and we have been knocking at those doors ever since, pleading that our road might be made the Nation's first trans-continental highway, not because it was the most practical route across our country, but because it interpreted the development of our Nation and was the path of our fathers. We owe the present standing of our bill to Mr. Borland's unflagging interest and by his death we lost our best and most loyal friend.

(Representative Borland died on February 20, 1919, of bronchial pneumonia in France, where he and other Members of Congress were visiting American commands and troops. He had served in the House since his election in 1908, representing the Kansas City area, but had been defeated in the primary election in 1918.)

If we can bring to the Daughters of the American Revolution a realizing sense of the part these old trails and roads, composing the National Old Trails Road, have taken in the development of our Nation and how they have welded our country together, we will win our goal.

She addressed one criticism of the Borland bill:

No one could call our House Bill 8011, a park bill. It does not improve any backwoods stream or local cross-roads. The people could not spend the people's money for anything of much more use to the people in general.

She encouraged everyone to read a series of articles by Dr. Emerson Hough, a prolific writer of western fiction and nonfiction, in the *Saturday Evening Post* under the general title "Traveling the Old Trails." Reading them provides "a fuller knowledge of those paths, those days, the

motives under them, and a deeper understanding of the great need of preserving them.”

(The articles are: “When Calico Was King” (July 5, 1919); “Once Upon a Time” (August 2, 1919); “The Road to Oregon” (August 23, 1919); “The Long Trail of the Cow Country” (September 13, 1919); and “Out of Doors” (February 14, 1920.))

She thought it “particularly fitting that such an article should come out in that paper, which was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1828, and all through its one hundred and ninety-two years of existence has stood for everything that was beneficial for our country. That paper itself typifies the tying of the past to the present!”

She concluded her report by stating:

I am told a bill will be passed by the next Congress to build at least one great trans-continental road. Is this road to be our road – the road hewed out of the wilderness by our forefathers? It is the most historical. It is the most practical.

Build roads, build a network of roads across our country, but first of all, build the National Old Trails Road, and build it as a memorial to those men and women who handed down to us the courage which made possible the sacrifices of today – as a memorial to those sons of our Nation who sleep forever in foreign lands under the “low green tents.” [*Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 1920, pages 334-339*]

Testifying before the Senate Committee

In a statement on April 15, 1920, Chairman Townsend of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads made clear that he would not urge Congress to consider national highway legislation during the current session. *Better Roads and Streets* explained:

This committee was called together during the week of April 19th to consider proposals to create a national commission which would take over the powers now exercised by the Secretary of Agriculture in connection with highway appropriations and road construction and maintenance by the federal government. The commission would also be asked to prepare a map of the country showing proposals for a system of national highways. A bill for the purpose of creating a federal highway commission and providing appropriations for the construction of a system of national highways was introduced early in the present session as S. 3572 by the chairman of the committee. [Untitled, *Better Roads and Streets*, May 1920, page 224]

Senator Townsend’s Committee began hearings on May 4, 1920, on S. 3572. *American Motorist* pointed out:

Hearings started May 4 and continued for more than a fortnight before the Senate Post Office and Post Roads Committee on the need for additional Federal highways

legislation. There are before the committee a number of important bills. One introduced by Senator Charles E. Townsend of Michigan provides for a Federal highway commission and a Federal system of roads constructed and maintained by the Government. Senator Lawrence C. Phipps of Colorado, Senator George E. Chamberlain of Oregon, and Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas, have measures calling for additional appropriations and amendments to the present Federal Aid Road Act.

These hearings were held at this time in order to ascertain the sentiment of the country as to the need for additional legislation and appropriations and to develop through expert testimony the character of the legislation desired.

Witnesses testifying before the committee were divided into two main groups: one consisting of those who favor the Federal highway commission and a Federal system of roads, as outlined in the Townsend bill; the others consisting of those opposed to this bill and who would have the present Federal Aid activities substantially continued. Their idea is that ultimately the various Federal Aid projects will naturally connect up into a system of interstate roads.

Both sides believe that the existing Federal Aid law should be so amended as to permit those States in the West containing large areas of Government-owned land to so apportion their unexpanded Federal Aid allotments in their own States as to permit the Government to contribute to the cost of construction somewhat in proportion to the area of patented lands in those States as provided for in the Phipps and Chamberlain bills.

The result would be that the public-lands States would pay a smaller percentage than the 50-50 State-Federal share in the other States for Federal-aid highway projects.

Many supporters of the Townsend bill favored continuation of the Federal-aid program to give it a fair test. These supporters favored restricting Federal-aid funds to "definite, limited State systems and that the types of construction should be of a more durable and substantial character than those to which the funds are now being applied on the majority of the projects heretofore approved." Nothing in the Townsend bill precluded continuation of the Federal-aid program, but both programs probably could not continue indefinitely. "The best system would ultimately prevail."

The reality was that the Federal-aid highway program was funded through FY 1921, reducing pressure to focus on the subject in the current session:

At these hearings Senator Townsend has repeatedly indicated that there is no possibility of securing an appropriation at this time either for additional Federal Aid or for the construction of a national system of roads. He does believe, however, that legislation ought to be passed which would provide for a Federal highway commission with ample powers and a sufficient appropriation to permit it to study the whole situation in its broadest aspect, to lay out the Federal system of roads, and to prepare a report to Congress in order that definite appropriations might be provided later on. [Eldridge,

M.O, "Senate Committee Hears Roads Men," *American Motorist*, June 1920, pages 14, 58]

(M. O. Eldridge, known as "MO," had been the third employee of the U.S. Office of Road Inquiries in 1893. For many years, he had been in charge of BPR's economic, statistical, and extension work. He was a prolific writer and a popular speaker on good roads subjects, probably delivering more speeches on the subject than anyone else. He resigned in 1919 to join AAA as an editor of *American Motorist* and Director of Roads. ["Eldridge Quits Gov't Service to Join A.A.A.," *American Motorist*, August 1919, page 42])

While the hearings were underway, Vice President Thomas R. Marshall – known today primarily for his 1914 quip that "What this country needs is a really good five-cent cigar" – approved release of a statement based on his remarks to the convention of the United States Good Roads Association in Hot Springs, Arkansas, which ended on April 17. The Vice President, an attorney and former Democratic Governor of Indiana, stated:

While I feel that the general government, by its benefactions to the several states, is usurping the functions and killing the initiative of the individual states, I am quite convinced that the one good thing which it is doing in this way is the building of good roads. The federal government has the cleanest, finest, ablest, and most disinterested road engineers in the world. It has, in my opinion, constitutional authority to improve the post roads of the country. But the aid heretofore given has been generously used in piecemeal by rich counties matching their dollars against the general government's dollars.

I am quite convinced that the congressional sentiment is that the several states of the Union may as well make up their minds that if there is to be further federal appropriation on the fifty-fifty plan, it must be upon one of two bases; either that the general government shall have exclusive control of all the funds or that the general government will adopt a great trunk system and will construct that system in a state only when the state has contracted to construct an equal mileage of laterals of like character. ["Vice-President Marshall for National Highways," *Better Roads and Streets*, May 1920, page 216]

On May 11, Chairman Townsend welcomed S. M. Williams to testify before the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads as chairman of the Federal Highway Council. After he explained the membership in the council and supporting organizations, he explained what his organization represented:

I would say, briefly speaking, placing the highway administration of this country on the highest possible level, so that we will get, in so far as we can, greater economy from the expenditure of our money, and development of highways so they will better meet the transportation needs of the country. By that I mean the development along the lines of national, State, and county systems. Our work not only relates to national policies, including the national system as provided for in your bill, but we are cooperating very

closely with the States in the direction of their campaigns, with a view of aiding in so far as possible the laying out of proper plans for the expenditure of the money.

We go farther than that – into county campaigns and cooperate with counties – so that we are not simply an institution here in the interest of national development, but we are vitally interested in this all development plan. [sic]

Asked if he was aware of any organized opposition to the plan, Williams replied:

The organized opposition, in so far as we have seen, has come from some of the State highway departments that seem to fear that the Townsend bill is going to interfere with their prerogatives. In other words, that it is going to take away some of the authority that they now have in the States. I am glad to say that that does not exist in the majority of the States where actual work has been accomplished, whereas the men engaged in the development of the large amount of work realize, first, the handicap that they have to overcome in the development of systems through the local political influences which surround and always have surrounded highway development, and also the practicability of working along definite plans rather than a hit-and-miss plan, as we frequently call it. [*Good Roads*, Hearing before the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, United States Senate, 66th Congress, 2d Session, on S. 3572, Part 1, 1920, pages 101-106]

The committee heard from Roy Chapin on May 13. He described his background, including his leadership of the Hudson Motor Car Company and Federal service during the war. He explained, however, that “16 years ago I took up this question of highways more or less as a hobby, outside of my business.” He said:

As a result of my experience I wish to give you some idea of how the automobile industry and the users view the future of the highway problem in this country. I want to go back 20 years in the past, as I want to go, a little later on, about 20 years into the future in our study of this problem. Twenty years ago, we rarely traveled over 20 miles in a day – I presume that the average trip that a man made over the highways then was not over 4 or 5 miles. The coming of the motor vehicle has, of course, changed that condition entirely. You have given an individual a radius of action, of say 150 to 200 miles a day in a passenger car, and there are trucks operating to-day along regular routes, covering from 100 to 125 miles in a day. Thus you have changed the situation entirely so far as our American roads are concerned. Previously they were strictly rural roads, and used almost entirely by the rural population. To-day they have become interstate or interurban routes of travel, and now as a result largely of the war development they have become a true transportation system – one of the three great units in the transportation system of this country.

Now, the point I want to make is this; that whereas 20 years ago the highways of this country were rural roads, and were used largely by the farmer, to-day they have come to be used by practically every citizen of the United States. We have a railroad system in this country, which has a total mileage of about 250,000; we have a highway system with a total

mileage of two and half million. If, as I believe, and I think we will all agree, the entire mileage of the highway system is to be used for transportation purposes more and more, it becomes just as necessary that we treat the question of highways and highway transportation from as broad a standpoint as we treat the problem of railroad transportation. Future traffic over the highways is going to be tremendous. I estimate you see a total daily of 30,000,000 people riding on American highways.

He explained that the country had “about 8,000,000 motor cars in use in the country. In addition, he estimated 20 million horses and mules were in use, “so that you have a very heavy proportion of our population that use our roads daily, and that condition, of course, has been changed radically from what it was 20 years ago. Now, if that change has taken place in 20 years, naturally it is the duty of all of us to predict the change that will take place in the next 20 years”:

If we look ahead for 20 years, we see a condition where we shall have, as we all know, a very considerable proportion of highways improved so they can be used practically every day of the year. The ideal condition, naturally, is one where your road pays a dividend, as it were, by being useful for every day of the year, because a road was never built for any purpose except to be used, and its value to the country is in proportion to its use

Now, what I am aiming to bring out to you is that the question of highway development has now become an economic problem; it is no longer a problem only of the agricultural interests, or a problem of the manufacturing interests, or a problem of the city man; it is an economic problem of the whole country, a transportation problem, and the interest of the automobile industry is not confined to any one particular solution. The interest of the industry naturally is this: We are furnishing transportation, individual and freight. We want to secure the maximum efficiency, very naturally, and we would like to see the money that is spent by the Government on the highways of the country secure the maximum of result, not only now, but with a true vision of the transportation problem that we will have 5, 10, 15, 20 years later over our American roads.

For that to happen, “we must reorganize our present methods, so far as highways are concerned.” A national highway commission “would give you the best results”:

It would furnish nonpartisan administration, would give proper geographic representation to meet the diverse needs of each section of the country, and would give a truly representative national administration of the highways which could not possibly obtain under the present law, where you administer the highways as a subordinate division of one of our governmental departments.

The commission could construct the roads for a national system or rely on State highway departments “that are efficient” to build the roads. “But the Government should have the money put on its own system of roads, and under governmental supervision so that we get back a dollar for every dollar that we put in.” The point of the commission would be this:

I think that before we do anything in the way of building national highways that we have got

to set our administration straight, to do the thing from a national, economic, and efficient standpoint. [*Good Roads*, pages 171-175]

S. M. Williams returned on May 14 to introduce several speakers, including Judge Lowe. With Senator Townsend unavoidably detained, Senator Charles B. Henderson of Nevada was chairman for the day's hearing.

Judge Lowe's appearance began with questions from Senator Henderson:

The CHAIRMAN. Judge Lowe, will you state your full name to the reporter, and your place of residence and occupation?

Judge LOWE. J. M. Lowe, Kansas City, Mo.

The CHAIRMAN. What business are you engaged in, Judge Lowe?

Judge LOWE. Why, it would be difficult to tell, unless I would just say, "in the road business."

The CHAIRMAN. And will you state, for the sake of the record, the associations or organizations that you are connected with having in view the interests of the roads of the country?

Judge LOWE. Yes, sir; the National Old Trails Road Association.

Beginning his prepared testimony, Judge Lowe promised not to "make a road speech":

I would not do that if you had your entire committee here; that would be putting it in the past to do that; but I only desire to dwell very briefly upon some of the points that I think are material to be passed upon by your committee, and in looking over them I have indulged in some references to the historical features of the road question.

The lamp of experience ought to teach us much on the subject before us for consideration. National highways, to be built and maintained by the General Government, is far from being a new or startling position. It is as old as the Government itself. The Constitutional Convention of 1783 had just adjourned, and the Government organized thereunder was still in a formative condition when this question arose, and a measure was passed and approved by Mr. Jefferson in 1806 establishing the Old National or Cumberland Road, beginning at Cumberland Md., and extending to the Ohio River at Wheeling and by various acts of Congress afterwards extended westward, until it reached the Mississippi River opposite St. Louis. This road was built and maintained by the General Government until 1837.

He discussed several of his usual historical landmarks, including the 1824 election, with the main candidates being John Quincy Adams, who favored internal improvements, and Andrew Jackson, who questioned their constitutionality; Senator Benton's meeting with former President Jefferson

about the Santa Fe Trail; and the long-running question about whether internal improvements by the central government met the constitutional standard.

He continued that “every politician can mention without hesitancy, the post roads provision of the Constitution; but nearly all of them seemed to be oblivious of the commerce clause of the Constitution.” He explained:

In the case of *Stockton versus Baltimore A. T. Z Railroad*, 32 Federal Reporter, page 9, Justice Brewer, in rendering the decision of the court, said:

Nor have we any doubt that under the same power the means of commercial communication by land as well as water may be opened up by Congress between different States whenever it shall see fit to do so, either on the failure of the States to provide such communication or whenever in the opinion of Congress the increased facilities of communication ought to exist. Hitherto, it is true, the means of commercial communication have been supplied either by nature in the navigable waters of the country or by the States in the construction of roads, canals and railroads. So that the functions of Congress have not been largely called into play, under this branch of its jurisdiction and power, excepting in the improvement of rivers and harbors and the licensing of bridges across navigable streams; but this is not proof that its power does not extend to the whole subject in all possible requirements. Indeed, it has been put forth in several notable instances which stand as strong arguments of practical construction given to the Constitution by the legislative department of the Government. The Cumberland or National Road is one instance of a grand thoroughfare project by Congress, extending from the Potomac to the Mississippi.

(This paragraph appears in *Stockton v. Baltimore & N.Y.R.*, 32 F. 9 (1887), an opinion by Supreme Court Justice Joseph B. Bradley dated August 1, 1887. The paragraph that includes the quoted language began:

The power to regulate commerce among the several states is given by the constitution in the most general and absolute terms. The “power to regulate,” as applied to a government, has a most extensive application. With regard to commerce, it has been expressly held that it is not confined to commercial transactions, but extends to seamen, ships, navigation, and the appliances and facilities of commerce. And it must extend to these, or it cannot embrace the whole subject. Under this power, the navigation of rivers and harbors has been opened and improved, and we have no doubt that canals and water-ways may be opened to connect navigable bays, harbors, and rivers with each other, or with the interior of the country. Nor have we any doubt”

(Judge Lowe may have confused Justice Bradley with “Justice Brewer” because Supreme Court Justice David Brewer wrote two notable opinions supporting the Federal Government’s constitutional authority to undertake internal improvements, including highway projects: *Monongahela Navigation Company v. United States*, 148 U.S. 312 (1893), and *Wilson v. Shaw*,

204 U.S. 24 (1907).)

Judge Lowe continued:

I have quoted the above decision because I have recently seen a letter from one high authority who readily quotes the post-roads clause of the Constitution, but seems to have entirely forgotten or to have overlooked the commerce clause of that instrument.

He came to his main point:

Now, one word as to the practicability of the proposed measure. We have had about five years of experience in attempting to build roads under what is called "the Federal Aid Act," with the result that only \$12,000,000 of the \$275,000,000 appropriated, has been actually expended under the provisions of that measure, and this money went into a scattered, detached, unconnected system of roads, or rather no system at all, resulting in the building of short sections, so scattered over the country as to be of no general benefit.

This \$12,000,000, if it had been applied upon a continuous road, would have at least built one road, if the cost of construction should be \$30,000 per mile, 400 miles in length, and this would not have reached entirely across many of the States – your State, for instance. If it had been supplemented by an equal amount of money raised by the State, county, or smaller legal subdivisions thereof, it would have built 800 miles of road. And this would have been of some general benefit to the country.

And these funds were applied to scattered sections, wholly unconnected, of different types, much of it dirt, sand, clay, gravel, waterbound macadam, and other cheap roads, which are practically no roads at all, and it is scarcely too much to charge this very largely to absolute waste.

Study this question in the light of experience, analyze it any way you may, and there is but one possible conclusion that can solve the road problem in a sensible, practical, business-like way, and that is for the General Government to build a system of national highways under the supervision and control of national authority, preferably its execution placed in the hands of some one individual like a Goethals [General George Washington Goethals, Chief Engineer of the Panama Canal] or a Hoover – I am not going to talk about politics, but I would vastly prefer, personally, to see Mr. Hoover at the head of a commission like this than to see him President, because he has been tried in the one instance, and I do not know how he would operate in the other; but he has made good as far as we have tried him. I say, preferably, its execution placed in the hands of some one individual like a Goethals or a Hoover or a Charles Henry Davis, of Massachusetts, with responsibility fully fixed, clothed with all needful authority, and fully financed by the Government.

This national system can then be supplemented by a State system, under absolute authority and direction of the State, county, and other legal subdivisions can then

build their own system, all connected with a State and national system, and thus ultimately resulting in a splendid system of all-the-year-round roads, reaching every nook and corner of the entire country.

All attempts to develop roads by first building local roads, “radial” roads, or roads reaching out from the railroad station and ending on Possum Ridge or in Raccoon Hollow have failed. Not until trunk lines are built will there be any material advance in road building. These trunk lines will be educational in their effects and will bring about a desire for building local lines. Otherwise, there will be no desire or reason for the existence of such local feeders. Branch railroad lines were built after the trunk lines were established, otherwise they could not have existed.

While discrimination, as between districts is neither wise nor fair, nevertheless if any preference should be favored, the farming and rural districts are considered to first consideration, for the reason that they need roads more than the urban centers do; and, what is more, they need help to build them. In most districts they can not of themselves furnish the funds necessary with which to build, either by undertaking the job at their own expense, or by matching dollars with the General Government.

In many of the western States they simply can not build under the Federal aid act. They can not raise the necessary funds. Now, I speak from practical personal knowledge. I have campaigned clear across the Continent, and I know that in many of the western States they can not raise the funds necessary; some of them are prohibited by constitutional provisions which do not enable them to raise the required amount of money, and others are too poor.

A national system of highways built and maintained by the National Government will serve national purposes and likewise be the heavy traffic main trunk lines within the several States. Such a system will relieve the States of any cost of their construction and maintenance.

Thus relieved, the States can build more miles than now State highways, thereby reaching more remote farming districts than are now reached.

Such a system of State highways will likewise be the heavy traffic lines within the several counties. They will be connected with the national system. Such system of national and State roads will thus relieve the counties of any expense for their construction and such counties can then build more miles of other or secondary roads, thereby still further reaching out into the more remote farming districts.

Such system of county roads will likewise be the traffic roads within their respective counties and therefore, finally, the township or districts can build more miles than now of their lighter traffic roads and thereby reach those farming districts farthest from the market towns and railroads.

By this fourfold system of roads there will be an impetus as yet unthought of given to road building throughout the United States. Authority and responsibility will be logically and economically fixed without complications arising. Uniformity and efficiency will be established. Rivalry in construction and maintenance will exist between the different systems. This will give us good roads everywhere by a well-balanced, connected system of national, State, county, and township highways. The moneys thus raised and appropriated will get into roads where it belongs and not into politics, where it does not belong. The cost will be equitably distributed upon those communities best able to bear the burden.

Judge Lowe turned to a common problem of interstate motor travel:

By the present system, if system it may be called, we are placed in the anomalous condition that the tourist or citizen, starting from the Atlantic, is liable to arrest the moment he crosses a State line, and remains under such embarrassment at every State line he may cross between the Atlantic and the Pacific. He must pay a license tax in many States through which he may travel. As some indication of the enormous expense attending such transportation it may be stated that as early as 1912 there were 35,000 "foreign automobiles" who took out licenses and toured California, leaving \$17,500,000 in that State. It is a safe calculation to multiply that sum now five or six times. In the same year of 1912 there were 6,000 "foreign cars" in Colorado, leaving \$2,700,000 in that States. This, too, may be multiplied five or six times.

The average tourist is one of the most liberal spenders of money, and without any such charges as the above being made against him, he ought to be encouraged because he will put in circulation vast volumes of money in every State through which he may travel. Why should a citizen of the United States be treated like a foreigner when he crosses a State line?

Suppose the navigable rivers of the country were made subject to different navigation laws in every State through which such rivers may flow, such complications would arise that it would put an effectual embargo or quietus on such traffic, and yet it is just as practicable and sensible to subject the navigable rivers of the country to State and local supervision and control as it is to subject the national roads of the country.

He concluded his opening statement:

The fourfold system is the solution and the only solution of the whole vast problem of building a system of dependable roads throughout the country, and when it is done we will only marvel at our long delay and wonder why we postponed the accomplishment of the greatest purpose ever conceived in the mind of man.

Senator Henderson asked Judge Lowe why he preferred the Townsend bill to the present

Federal-aid highway program. Judge Lowe explained:

Because I believe it would be the beginning of the construction of roads beginning somewhere and going somewhere; that it would mean the construction of continuous roads instead of undertaking to build them by piecemeal, by patchwork, as we are building to-day under the Federal aid act. Now, for instance, I have joined in many campaigns where we would undertake to carry a township-bond election, or a petition – in some of the States you do it by petition, and in some by election; and possibly after much laborious effort we would succeed in that township or road district, or even county. I have engaged in all of those kinds of campaign; and then we would probably skip half a dozen counties before we would find another live community ready to take action. That would mean, if we would go ahead and construct a section already provided for, then when we get to the end of that we plunge into the mud, and have no road clear across the State. That little patch of good road stands out there and will be allowed to go to decay, because there is no incentive to keep up a road that goes nowhere.

That is one objection to it; and another is that if men were all alike we might be able to build some one of those roads continuously; but they are not. They differ, and we find a world of men who say, “My grandfather lived here, and traveled over this road, and what was good enough for him is good enough for me.” And another serious objection to it is – I have no doubt the intention of Congress was, under that bill, to make the State the sole unit; but it has been so interpreted that instead of that practically they make the smallest local subdivision in a county the unit. For instance, we carried, in Kansas, a campaign in one county – it was a county-wide proposition – and we carried the bond elections or petitions, and then the next step was to get the State highway board to certify and approve our actions, which they did promptly, and sent it down to the roads division of the Agricultural Department here, and they approved it, certified it back – all the legal steps had been taken up to that point, and when it reached that county again, those who had the initiative, and must take the initiative under that bill if any roads were built at all – they then sat back and refused to sell the bonds and let the contract, and one of the commissioners stated publicly that he did not have any assurance that Uncle Sam would keep his promise, that his money would be forthcoming, and they would like to see the color of his money first. That pig-headed commissioner sat himself up superior to the State or nation so far as the building of that road was concerned, and it stands there to-day in that condition.

The CHAIRMAN. You believe, then, that it is better to have our national highway systems under one head than 48 different heads?

Judge LOWE. Just exactly. You have stated it better than I could have stated it, possibly. I do not believe in divided authority and responsibility anywhere. It ought to be fixed and definite, and then if we have got hold of the wrong fellow we can get rid of him. But where you scatter it out, and have to consult 48 different highway

boards and get them to cooperate with the Federal board – and under the application of this Federal aid system it comes down to where the smallest legal subdivision in the county controls the whole situation, because he can sit back and refuse, after you have gone through all this effort to raise the funds, and say, “Materials are too high,” or “It costs too much,” or any other reason.

Senator Henderson summarized that under the Townsend bill, the country would have one Federal Highway Commission while each State could have its State highway commission. He asked, “The States could then connect up with the national highway system?” Judge Lowe agreed. Senator Henderson continued, “And the counties, in turn, connect up with the State and National systems?” Judge Lowe agreed:

The CHAIRMAN. You would have a coordinating body there that would give to the people of the country the best roads possible?

Judge LOWE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. To-day do you find that there is lack of cooperation between the States in the construction of State highway systems?

Judge LOWE. Absolutely. I think that if that is to remain the settled policy of the Government, then the States ought to be absolutely required, as a precedent to obtaining Federal aid, that they would coordinate their systems, connected with the systems adopted by the adjoining States, so as to make roads continuous. Otherwise, one State can lay out a system that connects with no place in an adjoining State.

The CHAIRMAN. How does the Federal aid act operate in Missouri?

Judge LOWE. I think, in the main, satisfactorily. We have got a very high class board of commissioners there, and they are building some roads – not much – I do not think Missouri has ever drawn down more than \$9,000,000 under the Federal aid act. The Government does not pay until the job is completed. Now, they have put more money than that into roads, but I speak of completed roads now, and Kansas is practically about the same. Now, it will take all eternity, it seems to me, to build a system of roads that would be worth while under that system, and I believe you could spend billions upon billions of money in that slipshod, scattered way and still have no system of roads worth while.

The CHAIRMAN. How long have you been interested in the good-roads movement, Judge?

Judge LOWE. Oh, I don't remember the first record; the first that I recall is 1910. Since that time I have given every hour of my time to it absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. In the construction of highways in the State of Missouri under

the Federal aid act, does the State make provision for a fund to carry on maintenance?

Judge LOWE: No; that is another thing that I would do if I were drafting an amendment to the Federal aid bill, or proposing to carry out the Federal aid act. I would make it an absolute precedent that a State asking for Federal aid should put up the money, or take steps to secure the funds, with which they could cooperate with the Government. They have not done it; only five or six States – Oregon, California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and perhaps one or two others.

The CHAIRMAN. In order to have good roads it is just as necessary to have a fund to keep them up as it is to build them.

Judge LOWE: Absolutely so. Now, we have a State bond issue pending in Missouri, but unfortunately we can only vote on that kind of a proposition at a regular election. Now, it comes along next fall when we are electing everything from President down to constable – and especially constable – and everybody will get excited over that and neglect more important matters; but I think we will carry it anyway.

S. M. Williams interrupted:

I wanted to suggest one or two things. In the first place, the Judge is rather modest when you question him as to his experience and affiliations in road work. In 1910, when he took part in this work, he practically retired from his personal activities, and since then has not only devoted his own time but his own money to this cause; so we feel that as he has traveled practically against the doctor's orders in coming here that he is entitled to some appreciation for it, in working for the cause, to come here.

Now, there is just one more thing, and that is in regard to the impracticability of the Federal aid law, and the fact that the Federal aid law, as we see it, was never designed to build a system of Federal highways. As he said a moment ago, it distributes the money in such a wide manner, so that to concentrate that on a few roads would get away from the original principle of the law. It was made broader in the last session of Congress by changing the word "shall" to "may," and the other fact is one that was brought here day before yesterday, by some of the highway officials, that the Federal Government, under the present law, has the right to absolutely dictate where the money shall be spent. As we see it – I would like to have the Judge's opinion on that. We believe that if they can show that mail can be carried over any route, that it would be up [to] the Federal Government to agree to the building of that road.

(Williams was referring to the post road restriction in the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, as amended in 1919. Within the network of eligible roads, the States determined which projects to

build.)

Senator Henderson said, "I am glad, Mr. Williams, that you spoke of the Judge's modesty. In reading the record one does not always get the enthusiasm and interest shown by the witness who appears in person to give the testimony or make the statement, and the interest of this witness in the good roads of the country is so apparent that I asked him how long he had been interested in good roads for the country, because I wanted the record to show that he had given it his personal attention for some period of time."

Judge Lowe replied, "If you will pardon me, I will say I have no selfish interest – no material interest in this question. I do not even own an automobile, and would not know what the dickens to do with it if I had one."

A discussion ensued to close out the day's testimony:

The CHAIRMAN. Now, your question, Mr. Williams –

Mr. WILLIAMS. The first was in regard to the impracticability of building a national system by reason of the general distribution under the Federal-aid law, and to the fact that that was made broader in the change of the word "shall" to "may." It was done for the purpose of giving a wider distribution.

Judge LOWE. Absolutely so. We are endeavoring to be generous rather than just; to scatter the Federal funds – you will pardon me for saying it – we are scattering the Federal funds where they will do the most political good.

The CHAIRMAN. In other words, the money under the Federal-aid act, was turned over to the States, and they used it upon such roads as they cared to use it on?

Judge LOWE. That is right, exactly.

The CHAIRMAN. In every instance it is not designed to construct a national highway that will be of use and service to the people outside of that particular State. In other words, more interest is given to the confines of the State than to the national interest, in many instances, I believe.

Judge LOWE. In the majority of instances. Now, I have heard right recently, a well-informed gentleman said to me on my way down here to Washington – he said, "Why a national system of roads, anyway? Why a transcontinental system? Is there any special reason for it?" My answer was, "Why the transcontinental railway?" Well, "But," he says, "this transcontinental road is designed chiefly for joy riders, tourists, who want to go over the country." And I asked: "Are the railroads used for that purpose at all? Do joy riders go on them as well? And why should they not? What is the object and purpose of government unless it is to make the country generally more desirable and easier to live in?"

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to state for the benefit of those present that the consideration given these measures by the committee is not for pleasure-seekers, but for the commerce of the country, and the development of that commerce, and the quick and ready marketing of the products that are raised in the country.

Judge LOWE. Absolutely so.

The CHAIRMAN. So that they will reach the market at the earliest possible date; it is the commercial side and development –

Judge LOWE. Oh, yes, yes. But if a gentleman of leisure wanted to get in an automobile and ride around over the country, I do not think any serious criticism ought to be made of him for that; you are altogether right about the transportation of commerce.

With that comment, the hearing adjourned. [*Good Roads*, pages 193-201]

On June 18, 1920, the National Old Trails Road Association printed a synopsis of Judge Lowe's statement to the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads on the Townsend Bill. At the end of the synopsis, Judge Lowe added a statement:

To the Members of Our Organization:

To this great purpose I have freely given the best years of my life, and now propose, in the near future, turning it over to younger and better hands, confidently assured of the early success of all our labors.

J. M. Lowe

As in the past, Judge Lowe stayed on. [National Old Trail [sic] Road Association, June 18, 1920, Vertical File, FHWA Research Library, page 6]

Charting the Road

In mid-1920, the Automobile Club of Southern California dispatched two men to chart complete strip maps of the National Old Trails Road and the Lincoln Highway from the Pacific Coast to the Eastern seaboard. When “Doug” Rhodes and O. W. “Ollie” Lewis “cut the switch on their dusty roadster in front of the Automobile Club on July 12th, they had completed the arduous task of charting two complete transcontinental highways, “the biggest job ever undertaken by a single motoring organization.” After a month of marshalling the data, “the map making department of the club started on the task of turning out the strip maps which will show every turn in the road from the Atlantic to the Pacific.” Rhodes and Lewis also checked the north-south connection between the two routes in Colorado and checked the signs the club had erected.

Overall, from May 17 to July 14, they traveled 8,881 miles which, leaving out rest days, gave an average of 217 miles a day. Their best day had been on July 4 when they “succeeded in reeling

off 422 miles on the fine dirt roads of Colorado.” They reported:

Road conditions, as a general thing, they found to be better than ever before all along the route, particularly in the West. Much new road has been built and the old road has been improved. Extensive improvements on both the National Old Trails and the Lincoln Highway are now in progress in the middle west. On the former route, from East St. Louis to the Illinois state line and about 100 miles in Indiana are being paved so that detours prevail in this region.

All the work was expected to be completed in time for the 1921 spring touring rush:

The National Old Trails through Kansas may also be paved as all the counties in the state have been signed up for concrete roads but the high cost of material and labor and the condition of the bond market has forced the postponement of the improvements. From all indications, according to Rhodes and Lewis, the transcontinental highways in the spring of 1921 will be better than ever before and, assisted by the complete strip maps and the Automobile Club of Southern California road signs which extend from Kansas City and Omaha to Los Angeles the motorist, like the wayfaring man of scriptural reference, will have real difficulty in losing way.

(The Lincoln Highway terminus was in San Francisco, but the Arrowhead Trail provided a link between the highway at Salt Lake City and the National Old Trails Road at Barstow.)

The crew found that signposting methods “in the East and Middle West are certainly not up to the standard of the Pacific Coast, most of the various highways being identified by varicolored strips on the telegraph poles which line the way”:

When you come to a cross road where two or three highways meet the telegraph poles look like a cross between a barber pole and a stick of cheap peppermint candy and a motorist who is color-blind is absolutely out of luck. Ouija boards would come in mighty handy when trying to get in and out of many Eastern cities also, Pittsburg [sic] and Jersey City being two high powered examples of puzzling problems for the visiting motorists.

One feature that is bothersome and sometimes very painful to transcontinental tourists is the fact that every one of the ‘steen thousand towns and villages along the route has a different speed law and a different “No parking” ordinance. As a general rule, however, the police are extremely courteous to travelers and cause them as little trouble as possible. There are however some exceptions which make it advisable to take things very easy in passing through all towns en route.

The log compiled by the two-man crew “affords an example of the time that can be made and gives all the very latest information on the road conditions on both the Lincoln Highway and the National Old Trails”:

The first day out of Los Angeles found the travelers burning the Eastward trail over the

smooth boulevards of Southern California, up the long grade over Cajon pass to the summit where they left behind them the concrete and asphalt of California for the dirt roads of the desert. An early start and good consistent driving found them at Goff's [west of Needles], 293 miles from Los Angeles, that night.

The second day, May 18th, was one of rougher going although the roads were uniformly good dirt. The only stretch of bad road was found in Nelson's Canyon where there was some five miles of pretty rough sledding even for hardened drivers like these. A comparatively short run of 191 miles by way of Topock brought them into Seligman that night.

At Seligman, Rhodes and Lewis split up temporarily and saved themselves four days. It was necessary to go up to the Grand Canyon and then to signpost the two optional roads between Holbrook and Albuquerque, one of which goes via Gallup and the other by Springerville. To avoid retracing their tire tracks, Rhodes took the machine on the Grand Canyon and Gallup route while Lewis went over the Springerville road in another machine provided by a member of the club.

Rhodes went from Seligman to the Grand Canyon and back to Flagstaff, then to Winslow, Holbrook and then north via Gallup to Albuquerque. The Gallup route follows the railroad across the desert through some most interesting Indian country. Lewis went directly from Seligman via Flagstaff, Winslow and Holbrook and then south over the Springerville road which traverses the timber country and the Continental Divide, taking in the Petrified Forest en route. Despite some rain the roads were found to be pretty good except for some rocky going between Flagstaff and Winslow. The rain, however, had put the Rio Grande on a rampage and two bridges were temporarily condemned for traffic but are now alright.

May 24th found the traveling twins reunited at Albuquerque and once more started on their round trip across the country.

They departed the National Old Trails Road for the North and South Highway to the Lincoln Highway by way of Colorado. On May 29, they left Denver and connected again with the National Old Trails Road at La Junta:

Starting out in Denver in the early morning the car rolled into La Junta, back along the road to Trinidad and then to La Junta once more, a total of 359 miles, all along excellent gravel roads which made the big mileage seem easy.

May 30th took the scout car from La Junta to Kinsley, Kansas, a 265 mile jaunt along roads mostly in fair condition which as a general rule followed the section lines of the region. Between Offerle and Spearville the roads were very bad due to their use by automobiles while still wet from the recent rains.

The last day of May was spent entirely in the state of Kansas, the club car traveling from

Kinsley to McPherson and then making a side trip from McPherson to Lindsborg and Herrington and return to McPherson, the side trip being over a road which may possibly be added to the National Old Trails highway in the future.

The first day of June was one that Rhodes and Lewis will not forget for a long time. They pulled out of McPherson early in the morning and set sail eastward with full speed ahead. They hoped to keep in front of a rainstorm which they had spotted coming out of the west but one of those rapid Kansas breezes blew the storm up on them faster than their eight cylinders could push them along and after bucking mud for several sticky miles they stopped off at Admire, Kansas, a metropolis of the great western plains where the entire population, all three of 'em, helped stow the car away in a barn. The mileage for the day was 116 and some of them were very long miles.

The remaining miles between Admire and Kansas City were covered through good old gumbo mud on June 2nd and there the travelers laid over a week to complete their notes on the trip and get the mass of information in shape for use later.

The second leg of the eastward journey was taken up on June 10th with a 262-mile run from Kansas City to Wright City, Missouri. The roads were found to be in splendid shape most of the way, a four mile stretch near Mineola being the chief exception. The 30 miles immediately east of Kansas City were a boulevard and from that point on good dirt, gravel and rock roads led to the point where the Missouri River is crossed by ferry at Booneville. That barge is a great convenience and operates between 7 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. The charge is \$1.08 per trip.

The brief hop from Wright City to St. Louis, 84 miles, was covered on June 11th and on June 12th the encounter with the detours began with the leg from St. Louis east, 215 miles to Terre Haute, Indiana. The National Old Trails across Illinois is being paved and is all closed. All travel going east crosses the Mississippi River over Eads Bridge and then goes via Collinsville, and Edwardsville, following the Big Four route through Livingston to Staunton. Then it goes via Mount Olive, Hillsboro, Pana, Ashmore and Paris to Terre Haute. All of this paving work should be finished by next spring so that the 1921 tourist should have better going.

Across Indiana and part of Ohio from Terre Haute to Dayton was the 194 mile jaunt made on June 13th. The rock and gravel roads amount practically to boulevards and the going is splendid. The same thing holds true for the following day's run from Dayton to Wheeling, W. Va., a jaunt of 199 miles. The gravel was occasionally relieved by a stretch of Ohio's characteristic brick pavement and frequent detours because of road construction were encountered.

June 15th and its 177 miles from Wheeling to Hancock, Maryland gave the travelers groves of trees extremely reminiscent of California. The National Old Trails all the way east from Columbus may practically be classified as boulevard. Long stretches of pavement and brick road prevail and are extremely good. The 100 miles from Hancock

to Baltimore was run off in a few hours on the next day and the touring twins spent a day and a half in the metropolis of Maryland recuperating from their long trip.

June 18th was a busy day for the travelers with a trip from Baltimore to Washington, D.C., the official terminus of the National Old Trails, back to Baltimore via Frederick and then on to Philadelphia.

From there, they crossed the country on the Lincoln Highway. [“Strip Maps from the Atlantic to the Pacific,” *Touring Topics*, August 1920, pages 12-16, 31, 34]

The Platforms

In June, the country’s two main parties chose their presidential and vice presidential nominees.

In Chicago, the Republican Party chose Senator Warren G. Harding, a newspaper editor and former State official from Blooming Grove, Ohio, as the nominee. Governor Calvin Coolidge of Massachusetts was Senator Harding’s running mate.

The party’s platform covered many topics, but Senator Townsend could not have been happy about its good roads plank endorsing the Federal-aid concept:

Public Roads and Highways

We favor liberal appropriations in co-operation with the States for the construction of highways, which will bring about a reduction in transportation costs, better marketing of farm products, improvement in rural postal delivery, as well as meet the needs of military defense.

In determining the proportion of Federal aid for road construction among the States, the sums lost in taxation to the respective States by the setting apart of large portions of their area as forest reservations should be considered as a controlling factor.

The Democrats, meeting in San Francisco, chose Ohio Governor Cox as their presidential nominee. He was a newspaper publisher and one-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives. His running mate was Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, a cousin of former President Theodore Roosevelt.

The party’s platform included a plank on “Improved Highways” that endorsed the Federal-aid highway program. In part, it read:

The Federal Road Act of 1916, enacted by a Democratic Congress, represented the first systematic effort of the government to insure the building of an adequate system of roads in this country. The act, as amended, has resulted in placing the movement for improved highways on a progressive and substantial basis in every State in the Union and in bringing under actual construction more than 13,000 miles of roads suited to the traffic needs of the communities in which they are located.

We favor a continuance of the present Federal aid plan under existing Federal and State agencies, amended so as to include as one of the elements in determining the ratio in which the several states shall be entitled to share in the fund, the area of any public lands therein.

Federal-Aid Road Work, FY 1920

The Federal-aid highway program was funded only through FY 1921. The final apportionment of \$100 million became available on July 1, 1920. BPR retained 3 percent of the funds for administration of the program. BPR Chief MacDonald explained:

Under the law the states are required to enter into formal agreements with the Secretary of Agriculture for the construction upon which this is to be used before July 1, 1922. Any money which is not taken up before that time will be reapportioned among all the states in the same manner in which the original apportionments are made. All previous apportionments have been taken up in the time allotted, and it is not likely that the states will fail to absorb this last apportionment. To do so, however, will mean that the states must survey, plan, and let contracts for at least \$200,000,000 worth of Federal aid road construction in the next two years.

The States generally paid more than 50 percent of the cost; thus if that practice continued, “this last apportionment may reach \$250,000,000.”

MacDonald added that the State highway departments had been expanded and more efficient since 1915 and were “undoubtedly” able to handle the greater amount of funding:

The states have had four years in which to prepare for the expenditure of the large funds which now become available. They expect to be able to handle them. What is of greater concern to them at this time is the condition which may result if federal appropriations are permitted to lapse. The highway departments should know at least a year in advance what funds are to be available in order that plans may be made for future construction. Unless, therefore, further federal action is taken in the coming year, the states will be left in doubt as to the future policy of the government, and the amount of money they must be prepared to expend. Such a contingency would involve a serious setback to the progress of road construction, and should be avoided by early congressional action. [MacDonald, Thomas H., “\$100,000,000 Fund Available to Aid State Road Building; Big Federal Appropriations,” *Better Roads and Streets*, September-October 1920, page 297]

On October 15, 1920, BPR Chief MacDonald released his annual report covering the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 1920. Although the war had ended in November 1919, the disruptions to roadbuilding during the war years had not ended, as MacDonald made clear on the first page:

During the fiscal year 1920 the execution of all classes of construction work has been greatly delayed by the most disadvantageous economic conditions which this country has faced in many decades.

Railroad congestion, strikes, and labor and material shortages, resulting in high prices of these essentials of construction, have combined throughout the country to delay work which had been undertaken, and to discourage the country to delay work which had been undertaken, and to discourage the undertaking of any but the most important new projects. The high prices of labor and material have sent construction costs skyward, and the work which has been launched in spite of conditions has necessarily been curtailed to the limit of the funds available.

Highway construction has perhaps been more adversely affected than any other class of work. After the war there was a great public demand for the improvement of roads, which had been seriously damaged in many instances by the augmented traffic incident to the prosecution of the war. It appeared that the release of labor from war activities and the return of men from the military service would provide an abundance of labor. Indeed, it was thought, for a time, that highway work should be increased to provide employment for returned soldiers, if for no other reason. Highway programs were accordingly greatly expanded, and in accomplishing this result the appropriation by Congress of the additional sum of \$200,000,000 for Federal aid in February, 1919, played an important part.

The army of laborers which was expected to apply for the work did not materialize. On the contrary, there has been at all times a distinct shortage of labor to carry out the work planned, and wages during the past fiscal year have reached the highest levels attained in the history of the country. Whereas, in 1917, competent labor could be secured in various parts of the country for from \$1.50 to \$3 per day, the corresponding wages this fiscal year were from \$3 to \$5 for a shorter day's work.

In proportion to the demand there was also a pronounced scarcity of the materials of construction. Sand, gravel, stone, and cement, materials commonly used in road work, increased in price between 1917 and 1920 by from 50 to 100 per cent. Naturally, these increases in the costs of the essentials of construction have been reflected in the prices paid to contractors for road work

In view of the fact that the funds available for road construction are largely limited by statute or by the returns from taxation, and on account of the high prices prevailing, a majority of the States this year have deliberately withheld work, the plans for which have been completed, until such time as they could obtain a greater return upon the expenditure.

No small part of the reason for the high contract prices is attributable to the uncertainty of rail deliveries of material. Contractors who have been induced to enter the highway field in larger numbers than ever before, and who have invested large capital in plant and equipment designed to expedite construction, have lost heavily by reason of the failure of the railroads to make deliveries of material in accordance with anticipated schedules; and they have advanced their prices on subsequent contracts in the attempt to recoup their previous losses and to provide against similar contingencies in the future.

Despite these and other “untoward economic conditions,” the number of Federal-aid projects was about 25 percent greater than in any year since enactment of the 1916 Act, “attributable in no small degree to the improvements in methods of administration effected during the year.” He reported:

During the year a total of 1,670 project statements submitted by the States were approved by the bureau, as compared with 1,316 projects approved from 1916 up to the beginning of the year. The projects approved involved 16,673 miles of road as compared with 12,720 miles which had been previously approved; and the Federal aid requested on these roads amounted to \$109,830,366, which was more than twice as great as the total amount of \$54,714,219 requested during the three years 1917, 1918, and 1919.

Agreements with State highway departments were executed during the fiscal year to cover 1,286 projects, almost three times the largest number executed in any one fiscal year, and nearly twice the total number executed prior to the beginning of the year. The estimated cost of the projects covered by these agreements amounted to \$197,571,626, of which amount there was set aside in the Treasury \$85,906,556 as Federal aid. At the close of the fiscal year 1919 there had been executed 677 of such agreements, involving an estimated cost of \$56,418,763 and an allowance of Federal aid amounting to \$23,931,618. Thus, at the close of the fiscal year 1920 a total of 1,963 had been executed to cover projects involving 15,178 miles, at a total estimated cost of \$253,990,389, including \$109,838,174 of Federal aid. Of the funds apportioned, therefore, there remained at the end of the fiscal year an unallotted balance of \$59,911,826.

MacDonald also reported on the impact of the change in the definition of “rural post road” contained in the February 1919 appropriation act. Federal-aid funds could now be used, as he described, on “any public road a major portion of which is now used, or can be used, or forms a connecting link, not to exceed 10 miles in length of any road or roads now or hereafter used for the transportation of the United States mails.” He explained:

In addition to seeing that the roads for which aid has been requested by the States comply with this statutory requirement, the bureau has also made an investigation in connection with each project submitted to ascertain that the road in question is of sufficient general importance to warrant the expenditure of Federal-aid funds in its construction.

The Federal-aid funds will not be expended entirely for so-called national roads. A large part of the money will be expended in improving the roads which radiate from market and shipping points into the surrounding agricultural country, the class of roads which in the last analysis are most closely identified with the development of the country.

In many of the States, particularly those of the East which have highway departments of long standing, the majority of the trunkline roads have already been improved. In these States Federal aid is given to assist in filling the gaps which remain in the trunk systems, and for the construction of the more important lateral roads. On the other hand, there is a decided tendency in the younger States of the West to utilize their apportionments of

Federal aid on trunk-line highways of national importance. As an indication of the extent to which this policy governs, there was at the end of the fiscal year a total of 8,620 miles of Federal-aid road which had been approved, and which constituted parts of the several transcontinental trails, such as the Lincoln Highway, the Bankhead Highway, the Dixie Highway, the Jackson Highway, and others. This mileage represented 30 per cent of the aggregate length of all Federal-aid roads approved, and \$58,745,359, or 36 per cent, of all Federal aid approved. Eighty per cent of the mileage in Indiana is included in one of these marked roads, 86 per cent in Nevada, 54 per cent in Arizona, 50 per cent in Washington, while in Pennsylvania and New York, which have already constructed most of the roads of this category, the mileage represents 15 and 17 per cent, respectively, of the whole mileage of Federal-aid roads. In thus referring to the mileage of our roads which is included in these selected routes, it is not intended to convey the impression that such routes constitute a desirable or complete system of national roads. Indeed, it is safe to say that no one of such roads is laid down at all points in the most suitable location. In many instances we believe that sections of our roads which do not fall on the lines of these routes, will better serve the transcontinental traveller than the selected routes, but in the main these widely advertised roads do follow the natural lines of travel.

In order to provide a more rational basis for coordinated work on the part of the States, the bureau, in conference with the advisory committee of State highway officials, has initiated plans for a Nation-wide survey of the roads of the country, and a classification of all highways in respect to their importance and character of service. The survey when completed will doubtless furnish the necessary data for the establishment of a classified system of highways similar to the French system. [MacDonald, Thomas H., Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, *Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture*, for the Year Ended June 30, 1920, pages 491-497]

In these and other comments, Chief MacDonald made clear he was in favor of the Federal-aid highway program, not Federal construction of a national road system. As 1921 began, with a new President to take office on March 4, the battle between Federal-aid advocates and national road supporters was about to come to a conclusion. Both sides agreed they wanted a bill approved by June 30, 1921, when current authorizations for the Federal-aid highway program came to an end.

The New President

In the November 1920 presidential election, Senator Harding prevailed and would take office on March 4, 1921.

When the 66th Congress returned to Washington for a final short session on December 6, with Republicans now in charge of both Houses, a priority was continuation of funding for roads that was to end on June 30, 1921. The House passed an extension on February 7, 1921, and sent the bill to the Senate, which assigned it to the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. Chairman Townsend refused to send the bill to the floor for consideration. Attempts to add the House bill to the Senate Post Office or Agriculture appropriation bills failed. Similarly, a bill to establish a

sliding scale for the State share under the Federal-aid highway program for States with large amounts of Federal public land failed.

Congress adjourned the 66th Congress on March 4 without resolving the question of Federal-aid versus Federal construction or extending the Federal-aid program.

With a new President awaiting inauguration, the American Road Builders' Association (ARBA) asked about his views on roads. President-elect Harding, who had campaigned on a "return to normalcy," replied by a letter that was read to ARBA's annual convention, held at the Coliseum in Chicago, Illinois, on February 9 through 12:

Our civilization depends on communication and transportation, and as it becomes increasingly complex, that dependence increases. Every great community is held together by its means of transportation and so vast a country as ours is the more in need of ample facilities. Our country roads we have not kept pace with. The development of other transportation – railroads, waterways, our new merchant marine – cannot be of fullest utility unless good roads supplement them. The country road bears the same relation to these that the capillary circulation does to the system of veins and arteries in the human organism.

In recent years there has been nation-wide realization of the road problem. We need to devise and adapt means, financial and engineering, to solve it. I believe we shall progress greatly, in the years of peace and prosperity which I am confident lie ahead of us, toward this solution, and such organizations as your own will contribute much to that end. ["The Eighteenth Annual Convention of the American Road Builders' Association, *Good Roads*, February 16, 1921, page 95]

Although positive, the message did not address the debate between advocates of Federal-aid and national roads.

Five weeks after the inauguration of President Harding, *The New York Times* reported on April 9 that he "has been for some time making a quiet, but thorough investigation of the highway improvement situation, particularly of various road projects which have been allotted money from the Treasury of the United States":

The President, it can be stated, is thoroughly alive to the seriousness of this road problem and he will deal with it in the message which he will read to Congress next Tuesday. In his inquiry into the situation the President has considered the matter purely as a national affair in which all the people of the country who use roads or pay taxes have an interest.

In his study of the highway problem the disclosure which impressed the President more than any other phase of the question was the fact that enormous sums of money have been expended on roads without any thought of the permanency of those roads. If the

President has his way not one dollar of Federal money will be applied in the future to any road, the proper and economical maintenance of which has not been provided for.

The President considers it nothing less than folly for the Government to contribute money toward road projects, which in numerous instances go to pieces in two or three years, leaving to the people a tax inheritance that involves large bond issues.

On April 8, President Harding “was in conference for some time today with Senator Townsend of Michigan, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Postoffices [sic] and Post Roads, which committee will draft the road bill which will be introduced in the next Congress, and which is expected to eliminate serious defects in the present law.” The article pointed out that in the last Congress, Senator Townsend, not yet chairman, had “led the successful fight” against the \$100 million appropriation approved in the House:

In his message to Congress the President will make known what he considers should be the highway policy of this Government, and that will be a policy in which the cheap road built with the proceeds of high taxes and without any provision being made for its maintenance cannot be allotted money from the Federal Treasury.

The President is an enthusiastic advocate of good roads that are really good roads, properly constructed and properly maintained.

It is the view of the President that the Federal Government should not be saddled with the maintenance cost of highways, but that this should be borne by the several States benefited by the roads. In many States the license fees for motor vehicle owners are alone sufficient, the President has been informed, to pay the maintenance cost of the highways

In conversation with visitors today the President was quoted by one of the visitors as having said that some of the roads to which he has given careful consideration have cost more than \$25,000 per mile, which, he explained, is higher than the cost of the finest railroad.

The referenced speech was to be delivered in a special session of the 67th Congress that President Harding had called for shortly after his inauguration on March 4, 1921. The purpose was to address the post-war depression that had lingered during the rough transition from war to peace. Shortly before the speech, auto industry advocates of a Federal Highway Commission met with the President. They pointed out that BPR’s budget far exceeded the budget for the rest of the Department of Agriculture. Roy Chapin, who headed the delegation, said that the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce opposed continuance of the Federal-aid highway program in its present form because he believed the public interest was not fully served by the large expenditures for the program.

The President was understood to be concerned about highway maintenance, and would insist on

a strong provision on the subject in future highway legislation. In his view, the entire proceeds from vehicle license fees should be devoted to maintenance.

Chapin and his committee also met with Chief MacDonald, Secretary of Agriculture Henry C. Wallace, and Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon. The meeting prompted MacDonald to outline his position:

The task today is to provide highway service; we cannot afford to wait for the construction of new and modern types of highways. The maintenance should be carried forward now on roads improved and unimproved. The returns will more than compensate the cost. If there is one problem which the road builders of the United States as a whole must learn it is that of highway maintenance. The continuity and long radius of operation of the motor vehicle require a development of maintenance organizations and maintenance expenditures not heretofore required; but in the same fact lies, because of the service rendered, the justification for the expense involved. We cannot neglect the simple methods of maintenance which have demonstrated their utility. The harrow, the road drag, the blade grader, have a high degree of utility in combination with the motor truck and gas tractor. One state engineer remarked that the widespread use of these simpler maintenance tools in his state saved his whole program of higher cost construction because of the better highway service provided over a large mileage. ["Want Federal Highway Commission Created," *Engineering News-Record*, April 14, 1921, page 656]

On April 12, the new President addressed a joint session of Congress. Biographer Francis Russell stated that, "The President looked vigorous, assured. His voice was not as precise as Wilson's, but it was warmer . . ."

President Harding's address to the joint session began:

Mr. Speaker, Vice President, and Members of the Congress, you have been called in extraordinary session to give your consideration to national problems far too pressing to be long neglected. We face our tasks of legislation and administration amid conditions as difficult as our Government has ever contemplated. Under our political system the people of the United States have charged the new Congress and the new administration with the solution – the readjustments, reconstruction, and restoration which must follow in the wake of war.

It may be regretted that we were so illy prepared for war's aftermath, so little made ready to return to the ways of peace, but we are not to be discouraged. Indeed, we must be the more firmly resolved to undertake our work with high hope, and invite every factor in our citizenship to join in the effort to find our normal, onward way again.

Turning to specifics, he began with "our problems at home, even though some phases of them are inseparably linked with our foreign relations." Russell summarized the domestic goals for

the session:

As a message it was the expected declaration of Republican administration policy, containing no surprises. Harding called for a cutting of government expenditures, lowering of taxes, and the repeal of the excess-profits tax, "mature consideration" of permanent tariff legislation, a lowering of railroad rates and promotion of agriculture interests. One of his most important requests – several times rejected by earlier congressmen – was for the national budget system [i.e., to coordinate financial activities]. His most cherished projects were a "great merchant marine" and a Department of Public Welfare. There was applause, then silence when he told the legislators that "Congress ought to wipe out the stain of barbaric lynching." [Russell, Francis, *The Shadow of Blooming Grove: Warren G. Harding and His Times*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968, page 456]

The President also discussed several transportation issues, which he said were of "great interest to both the producer and consumer – indeed, all our industrial and commercial life, from agriculture to finance." After discussing problems related to the railroads, he turned to the highways:

Transportation over the highways is little less important [than rail transportation], but the problems relate to construction and development, and deserve your most earnest attention, because we are laying a foundation for a long time to come, and the creation is very difficult to visualize in its great possibility.

The highways are not only feeders for the railroads and afford relief from their local burdens, they are actually lines of motor traffic in interstate commerce. They are the smaller arteries of the larger portion of our commerce, and the motor car has become an indispensable instrument in our political, social, and industrial life.

There is begun a new era in highway construction, the outlay for which runs far into the hundreds of millions of dollars. Bond issues by road districts, counties, and States mount to enormous figures, and the country is facing such an outlay that it is vital that every effort be directed against wasted effort and unjustifiable expenditures.

The Federal Government can place no inhibition on the expenditure in the several States; but, since Congress has embarked upon a policy of assisting the States in highway improvement, wisely, I believe, it can assert a wholly becoming [sic] influence in shaping the road policy.

With the principle of Federal participation acceptably established, probably never to be abandoned, it is important to exert Federal influence in developing comprehensive plans looking to the promotion of commerce and apply our expenditures in the surest way to guarantee a public return for money expended.

Large Federal outlay demands a Federal voice in the program of expenditure. Congress can not justify a mere gift from the Federal purse to the several States, to be prorated among counties for road betterment. Such a course will invite abuses which it were better to guard against in the beginning.

The laws governing Federal aid should be amended and strengthened. The Federal agency of administration should be elevated to the importance and vested with authority comparable to the work before it. And Congress ought to prescribe conditions to Federal appropriations which will necessitate a consistent program of uniformity which will justify the Federal outlay.

I know of nothing more shocking than the millions of public funds wasted in improved highways, wasted because there is no policy of maintenance. The neglect is not universal, but it is very near it. There is nothing the Congress can do more effectively to end this shocking waste than condition all Federal aid on provisions for maintenance. [Applause.] Highways, no matter how generous the outlay for construction, can not be maintained without patrol and constant repair. Such conditions insisted upon in the grant of Federal aid will safeguard the public which pays and guard the Federal Government against political abuses which tend to defeat the very purposes for which we authorize Federal expenditure. [Address of the President, *Congressional Record – House*, April 12, 1921, page 169-173]

Long-distance road advocates were initially encouraged by the message. The headline of an article in the May 1921 issue of *American Motorist* summed up the view: "President's Message to Congress Brings Cheer to Roads Advocates." The article began:

For the first time in many administrations, reaching back to the days of the Old Cumberland road, the subject of highways received real attention in a message to Congress, when President Harding, April 12, in person addressed the Sixty-seventh session.

Quoting extensively from the message, the article summarized:

It should be reasonable to assume that President Harding favors a Federal commission or board; a requirement that the State itself should function as such in roads [sic] building; and that no money from the national treasury should be expended upon any road for which upkeep is not definitely provided.

Since Senator Charles E. Townsend, chairman of the Senate Committee on Post-offices [sic] and Post Roads, has discussed good roads on various occasions with President Harding, who called him to the White House on the day before the delivery of the message, it is not difficult to understand why the highways section of the message accords in great degree with the opinions that have been expressed by the senior Senator

from Michigan. ["President's Message to Congress Brings Cheer to Roads Advocates," *American Motorist*, May 1921, page 36]

Engineering News-Record was impressed that the President had devoted more space to highways "than was ever before devoted to the subject in a Presidential address" and thought his statements were "sound wherever his meaning is not open to debate." As for the key issue, the magazine said:

It is difficult to know, however, just what the President's position is on a federal aid versus a "national" system of highways. We take it that he is satisfied to allow the present federal aid method of appropriation to stand. Yet there is enough indefiniteness about his words to wonder whether he has leanings in the other direction.

The ambiguity was in such phrases as "the laws governing federal aid should be amended and strengthened" and "the federal agency of administration should be elevated to the importance and vested with authority comparable to the work before it." The magazine asked:

The automobile interests have discussed with him the creation of a federal highway commission. Was that in his mind or has he some scheme of putting in more prominent place the present Bureau of Public Roads?

The magazine summarized the "considerable difference of opinion among highway officials" on this point:

Some think that this means that the Secretary of Agriculture should be given broader powers, some are of the opinion that the President had in mind the creation of a Department of Public Works, to which the Bureau of Roads would be transferred, while some admitted that it looks like an endorsement of a federal highway commission.

For now, all the magazine could say with certainty was that having the President express interest in the highway situation was "worth while." A later, clearer expression of his views was desirable. ["President Harding on Highways" and "State Officials Confer on Highway Policies," *Engineering News-Record*, April 21, pages 687, 696]

An editorial in *Good Roads* stated that President Harding's discussion of road work "augurs well for the administration of federal aid during the next four years":

The country is committed to a gigantic road program, including federal participation, which, as President Harding expresses it, is "acceptably established, probably never to be abandoned." If federal aid works out as state aid has – and there is every reason to expect that it will – this means that Congress will be asked for larger and larger appropriations, which will be made if Congress is convinced that public sentiment is unmistakably behind the demand.

In that case, “there hardly could be any honest difference of opinion as to the necessity of adequate administrative machinery within the Federal Government.” In short, current law should be strengthened and, as the President put it, “The Federal agency of administration should be elevated to the importance and vested with authority comparable to the work before it.” To avoid the potential for abuse, the revised Federal law “must be drawn most carefully, every possible safeguard being thrown around the allotment of funds.” Otherwise, the reputation of Federal-aid highway funding would sink “to the pork barrel level of rivers and harbors and public buildings legislation.” [“Roads Discussed in President’s Message,” *Good Roads*, April 20, 1921, pages 219-220]

On April 14, AASHO’s executive committee joined with Secretary Wallace and Chief MacDonald to meet with President Harding. *The Baltimore Sun* reported that the committee assured the President of their support for strong assurances on maintenance. They “told him of the gratification of the organization that he had taken so firm a stand and pledged him their support”:

The committee advised the President that a bill now is being framed, designed to tighten the requirements upon the States as to maintenance, and will be offered in Congress shortly. Mr. Harding said he appreciated the support of his views and the steps taken by the State roads officials’ organization and would be glad to co-operate in favor of a sound measure

After the interview, some of the State officials expressed the view that Congress should make another substantial appropriation for Federal-aid roads in the present session. The allotments made under the \$75,000,000 appropriation of 1916 and the \$200,000,000 appropriation of 1919 both expire with the close of the current fiscal year on June 30; although any State is permitted two years, after the end of any fiscal year, in which to use the sum allotted it for that year.

Some of the States claim that they have used their money and will be halted in their work unless another appropriation is made shortly. [“Highway Officials O.K. Harding’s Road Policy,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 15, 1921, page 2]

Fred R. White, in the speech mentioned earlier, recalled the meeting:

By the spring of 1921 something of a test had been given to the Federal-aid Road Act. As would be expected in an initial measure of this nature, it had many faults of detail although the basic principle was sound. It was evident that this measure should be largely re-written to iron out rough places and provide a smooth-working administrative machine.

In April 1921 the Legislative Committee met with Mr. Markham [AASHO’s legislative representative in Washington] and drew up a new Federal-aid road bill The committee then met with the Secretary of Agriculture and secured his concurrence in the proposed bill. At the suggestion of the Secretary, the committee met with the President

of the United States and presented its suggestions and programs to him. To their delight the committee members found that the President's views were very largely in harmony with the measure which they had prepared. [White, page 150]

William C. Markham, who was on leave from his job as Secretary-Director of the new Kansas State Highway Department, recalled the meeting in his autobiography:

When in April of 1921 our Committee met to draw up and seek passage of a new and enlarged Federal-aid road bill, we found President Harding to be very much road-minded. He encouraged us to go ahead with our plans but very earnestly warned us that unless we placed a section in the law which required (with teeth) that the States must properly maintain the roads when once constructed with Federal aid, that he would veto the bill. We placed in the bill a section which takes away from any State which does not properly maintain roads built with a Federal fund assistance, any additional Federal aid, and that section (set up by the States themselves) is law to this day. [Markham, William Colfax, *Autobiography*, Randell Inc., 1946, page 150]

The problem was that President Harding's comments were ambiguous, as *The New York Times* pointed out in an article that began, "The attitude of the Harding Administration toward national highway improvement is expected to raise it to one of the leading issues of the day." Although "extension of the system of national highways" was a need of the first order," his biggest focus was on highway maintenance. He was silent on whether he supported a National Highway Commission to build a national highway system, or simply favored bolstering the Federal-aid highway program.

The *Times* expected that Congress would undertake a "thorough investigation . . . of the whole subject of highway improvement in the United States," especially on appropriate maintenance issues:

In any legislation enacted there will probably be vital changes in the governmental machine that deals with good roads. President Harding has informed Congress that "the Federal agency of administration should be elevated to the importance and vested with the authority comparable to the work before it." The present Federal agency dealing with highway improvement is the Bureau of Public Roads of the Department of Agriculture. The funds spent by it for road development are greater than the rest of expenditures for the entire Department of Agriculture. President Harding has not disclosed whether he favors the separation of the bureau from the Department of Agriculture and making it an independent branch of the Government, or whether he will favor the creation of a Federal Highway Commission independent of any branch of the Government, but under the control of the Executive.

Senator Townsend, the article mentioned, planned to reintroduce his bill soon, with a Federal Highway Commission at its center. The article quoted the Senator's recent statement:

The question of good roads is of supreme importance, perhaps second in importance to

the problem of the transportation facilities of the country, and is growing larger every day.

The man is very blind who cannot see somewhat of the future of the motor truck. Highway improvement has been given a new interest since the almost general use of the auto truck. Hundreds of millions of dollars are now expended every year by States and their sub-divisions on road improvement. Many of the States have no system of roadbuilding, however, with a result that much of the money invested has been wasted.

The Federal Government already had embarked on a program of construction and maintenance of roads:

The matter for Congress now to decide is how Federal money should be invested in highway improvements. It is clear in my mind that this money should be spent only on interstate roads. These roads are the most important in every State, and to the extent of Federal money invested they relieve the State of a part of its heaviest burden.

He objected to the current “pork-barrel” system of Federal-aid that benefited no one but politicians.

After pointing out that BPR controlled two-thirds of all expenditures by the Department of Agriculture, Senator Townsend said:

It is clear to me that the subject of highways is too big a matter to be handled by a bureau of any department. It will soon be as large a subject as that of the railroads, which is handled by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

It is none too early to establish a Federal Highway Commission and invest it with the power to lay out through lines across the States and to say how and where roads shall be built and maintained. I am hopeful that Congress will be willing to pass a law to accomplish these ends.

Better system of maintenance is absolutely essential and every State which receives Federal money should put up an equal amount for the Federal-aid roads and should not be permitted to pro-rate this money among its counties.

The country needed a system of primary roads but “no real headway can be made until such system has been established.” He “heartily” favored a Federal role, and believed that public money should not “be invested which would be of greater benefit to the public than in this enterprise if it is properly invested with safeguards.” His statement concluded:

The question is whether the Federal Government will proceed in a broad-gauged, enlightened and scientific way, or whether we can justify a “pork-barrel” measure which will not result in permanent good roads that serve the public

One of the chief shortcomings of the Congressional attitude toward federal aid for highway improvement has been the fact that most members of Congress, particularly in the House, have taken their own "locality" view of the situation rather than a national one. The overwhelming desire among the so-called "pork-barrel" members has been to have Federal money spent on good roads pro-rated on county projects from which the member expected to derive political influence or advantage. Under the existing Federal act, Government funds spent on the fifty-fifty basis for State road construction have been pro-rated so as to provide for much county road construction. Opponents of this policy have contended that it has resulted, in numerous instances, in the construction of a patch-work and unconnected system of country roads. ["Harding's Roads Issue," *The New York Times*, April 17, 1921, page 87]

D.A.R.'s 1921 Congress

When the D.A.R. met in Washington in April 1921, Mrs. William H. Talbott, chair of the National Old Trails Road Committee, reported on the committee's very active year. She began by calling attention to the roads linked in the National Old Trails Road: Braddock's Road, the Old Cumberland Road, a Boone's Lick Road, the Santa Fe Trail, the Kearney Trail:

These old trails, in their order, marked the progress of American civilization from East to West, from Atlantic to Pacific; and they form one continuous system which is now known as the National Old Trails Road.

This is the only clearly defined, well-established ocean to ocean highway, recognized and approved by the Congress of the United States, which for years made appropriations for its establishment as a highway, and it is this system of highways which the National Old Trails Road Committee of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the old National Old Trails Road Association stand pledged to see built and signed through its entire length.

We cannot think of rebuilding and signing this old road without being overcome by the memory of other days; those far-off days when there were few comforts, and the bare fact of living brought our ancestors face to face with almost insurmountable difficulties, tragedies on every side; yet the pioneer, nothing daunted, never faltered until every obstacle had been conquered, the country explored, its beauties revealed and civilization was planted throughout its full length and breadth.

While we acknowledge the necessity of the modern touch, we must, and do, recognize the value to the individual, to future generations and to the country at large this work will be. The very comforts and conveniences of living today go far toward making one forget; more than all else will the preservation of the landmarks and their history give to passing generations a proper understanding of what the past has been to others, and what it now means to them.

We will guard the old trails by which men followed the lure of the unknown until it

became well known, and we will build a permanent monument to the men and women who had seen the vision and whose sacrifices established our country.

She referred to the bill that the late Representative Borland had introduced and that Representative Zihlman of Maryland had introduced on April 11, 1921, in the new Congress as H.R. 2412, the Daughters of the American Revolution Act, to provide a national ocean-to-ocean highway over the pioneer trails of the Nation. The bill was referred to the Committee on Roads.

The National Old Trails Road Committee had urged D.A.R.'s local committees to send petitions to their Members of Congress urging passage of the bill, "and even now hundreds of letters and resolutions are in the mails in answer to that appeal." She had sent 1,000 letters, bulletins, and cards to State chairmen and regents, including copies of the bill, many with a map of "our road" in support of the bill.

Mrs. Talbott told the convention, "There is good prospect that the bill may be passed at this session, but I desire to emphasize the importance of acting promptly and simultaneously, as only by united effort can we hope to succeed." She urged all members to "join in the united and successful effort to have our National Old Trails Road bill passed at this session of Congress and to raise in one year the funds necessary to sign our ocean to ocean highway."

As important as the work to complete the National Old Trails Road was, she believed that the D.A.R. would one day have an "Old Trails Committee, that would take up the study of other historic trails around the country. "In fact, investigation of ancient records is bringing to light so much of value that it is hard at times to keep our faces resolutely turned toward the West – to the end of the trail." She promised that if the local chapters helped pass H.R. 2412, "I will give you one year on your local work." She had access to the first maps of all the States, "upon which the first roads of your State are shown. Help our committee to complete our national highway this year and you may call on your chairman for such assistance in your local roads as it is possible to furnish."

She described the road:

The National Old Trails Road is 3,050 miles in length; the road we adopted was first mapped out by the Association and from it we learn of the present very gratifying condition of the road The 3,050-mile road is now built, or re-built, entirely from Washington within a few miles of St. Louis, and the balance through Illinois is under contract. Something over one-third of it is built in Missouri and all of it financed across the balance of the State, and about 800 per cent [sic] of the road is financed across Kansas, all under contract in Colorado, and active progress being made in New Mexico and Arizona; all built or under contract in California.

She reported on progress along the National Old Trails Road:

There are sixteen miles of the National Old Trails Road in West Virginia, and the Wheeling Chapter has placed bronze tablets, 15 x 22 inches, along the route; all being

appropriately inscribed.

Ohio, Mrs. Paul E. Nollen, Chairman, says the State Highway Department is re-building the road bed of the Old National Road. Much of the old highway is in good shape and ultimately the whole will be restored. The Highway Department assures the Chairman of Ohio that "the fate of the old land-marks, the Milestones along the road, is watched with jealous care; and that each stone will be reclaimed and placed in position as the work of road building goes on." Two hundred and thirty-miles run through Ohio.

Illinois, Mrs. William T. Pace, Chairman, reports splendid work on the National Old Trails Road. The entire road, 172 miles, is complete except a small stretch of sixteen miles, which, according to the State Highway Commission, will be entirely finished inside of this year.

Colorado, Mrs. Georgia M. Ewing, State Chairman, has sent a splendid description of the Old Trails Road through Colorado. The glory of this road is heightened by some of the most magnificent mountain scenery in the world . . . Colorado has 195 miles of the National Old Trails Road.

Mrs. Talbott introduced a resolution for consideration:

Whereas, There has been introduced and is now pending in the House of Representatives, a bill introduced by Mr. Zihlman of Maryland (H. R. No. 2412) known as the "Daughters of the American Revolution Old Trails Act"; and

Whereas, By the provisions of said bill the highway known as the National Old Trails Road is to be rebuilt as an Ocean to Ocean Highway by the respective States through which it passes, and of the uniform width of sixty feet; and

Whereas, Said bill also provides that when that portion of said highway lying within any State has been completed according to the approved specifications, the United States Government guarantees to reimburse to such State one-half of the cost of construction within that State; and

Whereas, The construction of such a roadway over the historic trails which compose it appear to be a military and postal necessity; and

Whereas, Said road when constructed will stand as the noblest monument which could be erected to the memory of those of our ancestors who as pioneers used those old Trails as the gateway from the East to the West, and who by their daring and suffering gained and retained the great Northwest for our country; and

Whereas, It is believed that if the Daughters of the American Revolution will stand united in the effort to foster and increase the strong sentiment for the construction of this road which already exists, said bill may be passed at the present session of the United States Congress; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Continental Congress assembled earnestly urge upon the Congress of the United States the passage of H. R. 2412, known as the D.A.R. Old Trails Act at the present session of Congress;

Resolved further, That the members of the Continental Congress now present be requested to see or communicate with their Senators and Representatives in Congress during the present week and personally urge upon them the passage of said bill.

Resolved further, That copies of this preamble and Resolution be at once forwarded to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The convention adopted the resolution on April 21. [*Proceedings of the Thirtieth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution*," April 1921, pages 80-88]

Senator Townsend Goes to Work

While the Townsend Bill received had generated considerable attention, Chief MacDonald was orchestrating support for the Federal-aid highway program. State highway officials, seeing the increased activity under the current program, did not want to lose access to Federal funds.

Even *Engineering News-Record*, an original backer of the Highway Industries Association, came out in favor of the Federal-aid highway program in early 1921. An editorial explained that while the amounts of Federal-aid now being considered might be cut back due to economic conditions, the reduction was less serious than it might be because unexpended Federal-aid funds would still be available. "The essential feature is to get Congress to recognize by a substantial appropriation the necessity for continuity in the federal-aid scheme," leaving open the possibility of increased funds when conditions allowed them.

With so many options for the Federal role, "those interested in roads must present a united front." More likely, "there will be a confusion of counsel":

There are those who contend for a national system, built and maintained exclusively with federal funds. There are the federal-aid advocates, who believe in the present plan. Another group – composed of farmers – wants federal aid to extend to the county as well as to the state systems. Still another group would like to see federal appropriations for road work entirely abandoned, which would be nothing short of a calamity. State highway department organization, generally, has [sic] not yet reached the stage where it can proceed without the backing of federal money. Should confusion of counsel reach Congress it may be eagerly welcomed by those who want an excuse for making no appropriation. Under the circumstances the reasonable ground for compromise is on the federal-aid plan as now operated. It is established. It has won general confidence. It has the backing of state highway departments in every part of the country. It stands midway between the "national" plans and no appropriation whatever.

Although operation of the Federal-aid highway program had not disclosed any major defects, the one major change needed was a requirement "that the sum equivalent to the federal grant be appropriated by the *states themselves* and not by the counties":

In some sixteen or seventeen states the counties, not the states, match the government's

funds. The result is that all the county money, as a rule, is spent on the primary system, which is essential of state-wide importance, leaving no money for the important secondary system, which should be the county's main – if not sole – responsibility. Another serious result of this practice is that cities escape from paying for the road system in fair proportion to the wealth that they gain from an improved state-wide highway system. From both standpoints the practice of shifting the financial load to the counties results in unsound highway policy. This the federal government should not countenance or encourage. A provision should therefore be introduced in the next appropriation bill making the states themselves appropriate the local quota to match the federal funds. In some states constitutional amendments will be needed. But, as shown repeatedly when highway issues have been at stake, such amendments can be secured. [“Federal Highway Appropriations,” *Engineering News-Record*, January 13, 1921, pages 50-51]

As expected, Senator Townsend introduced a revised bill, known as the Federal Highway Act | (S. 1355), on April 28. It called for a Post Roads and National Highway Commission to replace BPR. The President would appoint five commissioners reflecting “a fair representation of the geographical divisions of the United States.” The initial commissioners would serve staggered terms of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 years, but after the initial terms, but all their successors would serve 5-year terms with an annual salary of \$10,000. The commissioners, who would choose a chairman each year, were prohibited to engage “in any other business, vocation, or employment, or be interested directly or indirectly in any business enterprise connected with the production or sale of highway materials, or with the construction, maintenance, or operation of other highways, or with any form of organized highway transport.”

The commission was to designate and build an Interstate System:

That the commission shall establish an interstate system of highways, composed of primary interstate roads which shall, by the most practicable routes and with due consideration for the agricultural, commercial, postal and military needs of the Nation afford ingress into and egress from each State and the District of Columbia. Such interstate system may include highways to and from important water ports, and highways connecting at the border with the main highways in countries adjoining the United States; but shall not include any highway in a municipality having a population, as shown by the latest available Federal census, of five thousand or more, except that portion of any such highway along which, within a distance of one mile, the houses average more than two hundred feet apart. *Provided:* That all highways constructed or reconstructed under the provisions of this Act shall be free from tolls of all kinds; *Provided further:* That in any State where such interstate highways or parts thereof have been constructed in accordance with a standard deemed adequate for prevailing traffic by the commission and are maintained as elsewhere provided for in this measure, the commission is authorized and directed to join with the State in the establishment and construction or reconstruction of other highways connecting or correlating with the interstate system.

All highway construction, including plans, specifications, and estimates “shall be undertaken by

the State highway departments subject to the approval of the commission.” The commission must approve the project statements, after which the State highway department “shall furnish to it surveys, plans, specifications, and estimates therefor as it may require.” When the commission found that a project had been completed in compliance with the plans and specifications, “it shall cause to be paid to the proper authorities of said State the amount set aside for said project.” However, the commission “may in its discretion from time to time make payments on such construction or reconstruction as the same progresses.”

S. 1355 also addressed the standards for the interstate system:

That only such durable types of surface and kinds of material shall be adopted for the construction and reconstruction of any highway which is a part of the interstate or coordinating system as will adequately meet the existing and probable future traffic needs and conditions thereof. The commission shall approve the types of construction and reconstruction and the character of improvement, repair, and maintenance in each case, consideration being given to the type and character which be best suited for each locality and to the probable character and extent of the future traffic.

Roads in the proposed interstate system were to “have a right of way of [sic] width of not less than sixty-six feet and a wearing surface of an adequate width, which shall not be less than twenty feet,” unless the commissioners conclude that “it is impracticable by physical conditions, excessive cost, prevailing or probable traffic requirements, or legal obstacles.”

All powers, duties, and obligations that the Federal Aid Road Act had conferred on the Secretary of Agriculture were to be transferred to the commission within 30 days after the commission was organized, including “the equipment, material, supplies, papers, maps, and documents” collected under the 1916 Act. In addition, the “commission is hereby authorized to take over any of the employees of the Agriculture Department engaged on public-road work.” The appropriations now available to the Secretary of Agriculture for highway and forest projects “shall continue in force and effect under the control of the commission in the same manner as they were in force and effect under the control of the Secretary of Agriculture prior to the passage of this Act.”

The bill appropriated \$200 million, divided equally for FYs 1922 and 1923 for carrying out the provisions of this Act. Minus funds set for the commission’s administrative expenses, the funds were to be apportioned to the States on the basis one one-third based on total area, one-third on population, and one-third on mileage of rural delivery and star routes in each State compared with the national total. The Federal share of eligible project costs was no more than 50 percent, with the State providing the balance. However, the States had to provide the match; they could not pass the Federal apportionment on to counties or other political subdivisions as many had under the 1916 Act. This distinction meant the Federal-State matching funds would be used on main market highways, with the funds that counties had been using to help with the State match freed for use on county roads. For States with large amounts of Federal public land (over 5 percent of total area of land in the State), the Federal share of project costs would be 50 percent “plus a percentage of such total estimated cost equal to one-half of the percent which the area of the unappropriated public lands in such State bears to the total area of such State.”

In States where the constitution prohibited the use of State funds for internal improvements, its Federal funds would be withheld. Each such State would have 2 years to pass the constitutional amendments or alterations “necessary to the enjoyment of the sum so withdrawn.” When the necessary changes “have been approved and ratified by the State, the Secretary of the Treasury . . . shall immediately make available to such State, for the purpose set forth in this Act, the sum withdrawn as hereinbefore provided.”

The bill reflected President Harding’s views on maintenance. It provided that, “no project shall be approved by the commission in any State until the State has made adequate provision for the maintenance of all highways selected by the commission in that State.” If a State, upon notice of a maintenance deficiency, does not place the road in “proper condition of maintenance” within 100 days of the notice, the commission would make the repairs and charge the State by reductions in its apportionment of Federal-aid funds.

The National Forest roads program under the 1916 Act would continue, with the commission handling the work in the forests under the Agriculture Department’s jurisdiction, as well as similar work in cooperation with the Department of the Interior within Indian reservations.

Because Senator Townsend had President Harding’s message in hand while drafting the bill, S. 1355 was considered an Administration measure.

In an interview with *American Motorist*, Senator Townsend said, “Concentration of Federal aid money upon the most important State roads which have an interstate character is the next logical step in cooperation with the several States in highways improvement.” He was certain that Congress would consider President Harding’s view that “the Federal agency of administration should be elevated to the importance and vested with authority comparable to the work before it.” Senator Townsend said, “This is a proposition which is certain to meet with general approval from those who have truly at heart consistent good roads progress.”

He also discussed the proposed commission:

Highways now concern five branches of our Government, and there should be a distinct authority which can deal with all departments and possess an independence of procedure. No longer can this work be accomplished effectively through the bureau of a single department. Transportation is the life of the nation, and travelable highways facilitate the daily activities of millions of American families. [“\$200,000,000 for Roads,” *The New York Times*, May 1, 1921, page 19; “New Townsend Bill Contains President’s Views on Roads,” *Motor Age*, May 5, 1921, page 223; Eldridge, M.O., “Townsend Measure Designed to Meet Needs of the Day,” *American Motorist*, June 1921, page 22]

The New York Times, on its Automobile page, also examined the situation in June. Its article began:

Motorists in the United States who have given even a moderate study to the good roads

needs of our country are looking to Washington this month to see if any broad-minded policy will be adopted for the development of our national highways. The question being asked by many motorists who have given time to the study of road problems is whether the legislators who have had before them for several Congressional sessions important matters regarding the national road policy, will make a definite decision. If anything more were needed as a spur to constructive action in highway management and development, that was given by President Harding in his clear statement to Congress on the necessity of proper authority and supervisions.

After quoting President Harding, the article discussed Senator Townsend's 1921 bill:

The essential difference between this bill and those previously introduced by Senator Townsend, lies in the fact that the Federal appropriations are expended through the State Highway Departments on the system laid out by the Federal Highway Commission, rather than being expended directly by the Federal Commission on rights of way belonging to the Federal Government. The appropriation made in the pending bill is much less than suggested in previous measures, this being possible because of the fact that the States must participate, in most instances, to the extent of 50 per cent of the cost, in the construction of the interstate system, whereas in the previous measures the Federal Government paid 100 per cent of the cost of both construction and maintenance.

Roy Chapin told the *Times* that no single issue before Congress had greater potential affecting people profoundly than this bill:

In the light of our past experience, we have come to a realization that we can no longer treat this question as a bureaucratic detail. The condition of our highways affects agriculture, commerce, our military and postal needs, the whole economic and sociological fabric of the nation. The problem is too intricate for any one man. Inter-relationships as broad even as those of the railway cannot be left solely to the States. Continuity of policy, direct responsibility, a control which, while it takes into account the needs of the State, never forgets the greater need of the nation, must be had or waste is inevitable.

In the days to come an awakened public will make available vast sums for highway construction, maintenance, transportation. Unless those sums are administered with clear vision, a reaction is inevitable. Clearly this is a public trust of first magnitude, which should be met now by legislation such as the President has called for. ["National Motor Roads – Look for Definite Decision by Congress on Government Policy this Month," *The New York Times*, June 19, 1921, page 80]

Transcontinental Travel in Mid-1921

In May 1921, the head of AAA's Touring Bureau, A. G. Seiler, urged motorists to consider crossing the continent by motor:

Planning a transcontinental automobile tour, such as will afford the maximum amount of

comfortable travel, it is necessary to consider carefully many factors which have to do with general road conditions, and thus, in some measure, provide for uninterrupted travel.

Before starting on an extended journey, it is well to decide first the exact time of the year in which the trip is to be made and then outline a course through the latitude which, according to climatic conditions, will offer most agreeable travel.

It is reasonable to assume that a course through the southern States might well be followed from October 1 to May 1, after which period snows in the mountains further north, followed by spring thaws, make it impossible to drive through the mountain passes and over sections of dirt and sand that are always affected by such extreme conditions.

After May 1 and until the 15th of June, when the hot summer temperature makes extreme southerly travel disagreeable, it is advisable to direct one's trip through the more central latitude, preferable over such routes as Pike's Peak, the National Old Trails Road, Lincoln and Roosevelt highways, or a combination of parts of these routes which pass through Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, Salt Lake City and other important cities.

All of the routes offered trips on side roads. "Regardless of the fact that some of the trails present difficulties in unseasonable weather, the majority of automobilists seldom hesitate in planning their circuitous tours to include every State and well-known resort to assure themselves of one grand, delightful outing." [Seiler, A. G., "Motoring Across the Continent," *American Motorist*, May 1921, page 32]

The Automobile Club of Southern California announced that it was embarking on "the greatest road-mapping undertaken ever assumed by any motoring organization." The 5-month trip would cover 25,000 miles through the United States and Canada. "It will be an international road marking trip, the first of its kind ever undertaken by any automobile club in the world." The tour would avoid one route:

The National Old Trails route has already been charted, sign-posted and mapped by the club, so it will not be necessary to repeat inspection here. ["Greatest Road Charting Tour in History Is Undertaken by Automobile Club's Busy Crew," *Touring Topics*, June 1921, pages 24, 31]

The Battle Continues in Congress

By mid-1921, Congress had several road bills to consider. They reflected the wide range of views on national roads versus Federal-aid, but as reflected in Senator Townsend's new bill, a middle view between the extremes seemed to be gaining strength.

Several factors were at play. Chief MacDonald had stabilized the Federal-aid highway program and established positive relations among State highway officials and other good roads interests. Further, many of the problems that had hindered the Federal-aid highway program had been

resolved. The war had reduced personnel, construction workers, supplies, and railroad shipments of road building material. An extra layer of Washington bureaucracy and, therefore, uncertainty, had been added to Federal-aid project development during the war. Following the armistice, these problems gradually were resolved amidst post-war economic disruption.

Moreover, as reflected in Director Logan Page's defensive 1-year summary of activities since enactment of the 1916 Act, cited earlier, BPR and the States had not had time before the war to identify, and correct, problems the 1916 Act had unintentionally created for the program. Testifying in May 1921 before Chairman Townsend's Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, Chief MacDonald explained some of the problems:

The year 1916-17, that followed the enactment of the first Federal-aid law, was largely taken up in preliminaries, such as the passage of necessary laws by the several States, etc. Immediately thereafter we were in the war and highways were, as you recall, placed on the list of luxuries or nonessentials. With the close of the war, when we expected to go forward with a large program, we found ourselves limited by lack of labor, high prices of labor and material, and inadequate rail transportation. Last year we were tremendously handicapped by lack of transportation and by priority orders issued by the Interstate Commerce Commission

There are two congressional acts which provided Federal aid for roads, the act of 1916 and the act of 1919. I shall not burden the committee with a statement of the provisions of these acts except to say that in the Federal act of 1916 there was a provision which limited the expenditure of funds to the improvement of post roads. That provision was given a legal interpretation which made cooperation with the States difficult, and there was considerable hesitancy, or, at least, there was slow progress in getting under way projects which the States particularly needed first of all.

He explained that long-distance roads, many of which paralleled a railroad, often could not meet the post road requirement:

No doubt you know that the routes as they [the post roads] are laid out dodge sections of highway so that you might have a mile of post road following a general line of highway then there is left out 2 or 3 miles, and finally it comes back and follows the road for another mile. The result is a zigzag system and, needless to say, we could not build highways that way. I believe that as the highways are improved the postal routes will be rearranged to follow the improved roads.

He described several new principles based on experience:

First, the necessity for classification of roads into systems of equal or like importance.
Second, that State funds be provided for construction.
Third, that State funds be provided for maintenance.

Those, in my judgment, are the outstanding principles that have been shown by the

experience of the past to be desirable in future Federal aid legislation

In 1916 there were only 17 States that had highway departments within the meaning of the Federal aid road act, which required all States to have a State highway department to function with the Federal department, so that the remainder of the United States were required to pass new legislation, which they did.

In 1916 there were only nine States which had State funds for highway construction. In 1921 there are 28 States which have State funds for highway construction. The remainder of the States, the 20 of them, either meet Federal aid with county funds or with county and State funds combined.

I have not included in that list of 28 States the States which meet the Federal funds partially through county and partially through State funds, of which there are about 10. Wisconsin, for instance, has a State fund, but requires the counties to put up one-third of the cost, so that the State bears one-third, the Federal Government bears one-third, and the counties bear one-third. The States of Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, and North Dakota have only a very small amount of State funds that go into the construction. They act more as the agents of the counties. Idaho is in much the same position. There are 10 States in which no State funds are used.

Practically all of the other States put in more or less State funds. But we may say that there are 20 States, approximately, that depend to a greater or less extent upon the counties and districts to meet Federal funds, and 28 States which are not dependent in that way, although some of them may use some county funds.

We have no authority to deal either with a county or with a road district. We deal directly with the State highway department and do not question the source of the State funds, but do require a certificate always showing that the funds are available for any project that is approved. And if the State department is securing the funds to meet the Federal apportionment through the counties or districts, we require legal evidence that the county or district funds are available to meet their obligations to the State.

The 1919 legislation had addressed some of the problems, such as the zigzag pattern resulting from the original definition of post roads:

I wish to bring out again that all Federal projects are confined in each State to a system of roads which has been established by State and county. These road systems may have been established by the State department or by the legislature of the State. Each project which is submitted by the State must lie on the program map which has been submitted.

BPR was working with the States "to bring the systems of adjoining States into correlation, and for that purpose have, in cooperation with the Geological Survey, been preparing a system of State maps for all of the States on the same scale so that we can correlate these roads at the border lines of the States. [*Interstate Highway System*, Hearings Before the Committee on Post

Office and Post Roads, United States Senate, Sixty-Seventh Congress, First Session, Part 2, pages 262-273. Quoted material rearranged for presentation here.]

Professor Seely summed up the impact that MacDonald had on the debate in and out of Congress. MacDonald had established communications with those in favor of a commission and national roads, including Chapin. He had refreshed relations with AASHO, including establishment of a Federal-Aid Advisory Committee of State highway officials:

Opening such avenues of communication not only kept the fight over the shape of federal involvement in highways from degenerating into name-calling, but also increased the entire road-building community's respect for MacDonald. By establishing cordial relations with such leading opposition figures as Chapin, MacDonald was demonstrating the cooperative style of leadership that had convinced state highway departments to change their position and support the federal-aid system. MacDonald also seemed to be saying that he was not concerned with politics and that he was a technical expert concerned only with building better roads. He would and could work with anyone sharing this general goal. By early 1921, this attitude had made MacDonald, along with the BPR, the clearly recognized leader of the road-building community. He had largely eliminated the red tape and other delays in the existing system and had worked to resolve the problems underlying the construction delays of 1919 and 1920. Moreover, he was constantly consulted by Congress, another sign of the BPR's return to a position of respect.

After this point, the battle between supporters of a national highway commission and advocates of federal aid was largely anticlimactic. [Seely, pages 60-61]

Even so, Congress was not able to complete legislation by July 1, the start of a new fiscal year. As a result, new funding was not authorized.

Several bills were under consideration. Senator Townsend's bill, with its appropriation of \$100 million a year for 2 years, was one alternative. Senator Lawrence C. Phipps of Colorado introduced a bill in May providing for an increased Federal share in the public lands States. The bill also contained a provision extending the time in which existing appropriations could be used in road construction – to prevent funds from lapsing at the start of the next fiscal year on July 1, 1921. It quickly passed the Senate, and was sent to the House, where the Committee on Roads struck out everything but the enacting clause and substituted a bill known as the Dowell bill, after Representative Cassius C. Dowell of Iowa. The bill was essentially the bill drafted by the executive committee of AASHO. [“Current Highway Legislation – VI,” *Good Roads*, May 4, 1921, page 239]

Representative Robsion introduced the combined Dowell-Phipps bill. A contemporary account in *American Motorist* explained the bill's provisions:

That State funds shall be used in the construction and maintenance of interstate or intercounty roads selected by the State highway departments, subject to the approval,

modification, or revision of the Secretary of Agriculture;
That the funds be maintained by the States with State money under Federal inspection and supervision;
That all Federal aid be confined to 7 per cent of the highways in each State, preference being given to an interstate system comprising not over 3/7 of the 7 per cent;
That the Federal Government pay 50 per cent of the cost of projects except in public-land States, where it may pay a greater percentage;
That the administration of the act remain with the Bureau of Public Roads of the Department of Agriculture.

The Dowell bill carries no appropriation. There are doubtless many members of Congress who voted for it who would not have done so had it carried an appropriation. Other members voted for it because they had gone on record as being favorable to good roads appropriations by Congress and the Dowell bill was to them the only thing in sight.

Thus the Dowell bill amends the present law and ostensibly provides for many of the needed changes embraced in the Townsend bill. By one provision or another, however, these needed changes are rendered inoperative for periods of from four to five years A careful analysis of the Dowell bill indicates that it is defective in many particulars. Its mediocrity is doubtless due to the fact that so little consideration was given to it by the House of Representatives and its Committee on Roads. [Eldridge, M. O., "Federal Highways Legislation Now Needed – Which Kind?" *American Motorist*, August 1921, pages 21-22, 44]

The House passed the bill in June after a 40-minute debate that *Engineering News-Record* summarized. The debate revealed that the principles behind the Dowell bill, including the maintenance provision, had "overwhelming majority" support. Representative Robsion suggested that Senator Townsend's plan called for "just a few interstate roads" to be laid out by a Federal Highway Commission. In Representative Robsion's view, the commission would disregard the State systems already laid out. "To cut down this system and destroy it after we have spent five years and millions of dollars in building it up would be next to a crime."

Chairman Dunn of the Committee on Roads was the biggest obstacle to the Dowell bill in the House. He said, "This is not a proper time to pass this bill. I have been against it from the start. I never thought the existing law was a square deal. The Middle states and the Eastern states pay from two to four times as much as do other states It seems singular to me that this bill should be taken up at this extra session, when we should be so busy with other matters." Given the amount of funds still available from previous bills, "the states have about as much as they can do to maintain the roads they already have built."

Representative Sam Rayburn of Texas was another critic. "I am getting sick and tired of the federal government's everlastingly sticking its hands into the affairs of my state. I am against building up of more bureaus in Washington to reach out into the states and tell the people what they shall and what they shall not do."

The House sent the amended Phipps bill back to the Senate for consideration. The initial question was whether to refer the bill to committee, consider it on the House floor, or call for a conference committee to resolve differences between the Senate and House versions of the Phipps bill. During debate, many Senators took the opportunity to comment on the contending bills rather than the resolutions at issue:

When the bill was presented to Senate [on] June 30, Senator Townsend, chairman of the committee on post-offices and post roads, immediately moved that the bill and the amendment made by the House be referred to his committee. Senator [Kenneth D.] McKellar, of Tennessee, a member of the committee who is in favor of the House bill, moved that the Senate concur in the House amendment. The House had attached its bill – the Dowell measure – to the Phipps bill which already had passed the Senate.

The discussion following the motions of Senator Townsend and of Senator McKellar went beyond the motions to the underlying bills. Clearly, the Senate would not allow this legislation to go on the statute books without having had an opportunity to discuss and amend it. In fact, a filibuster was openly threatened. There was every evidence that the great majority of senators were anxious to consider both the Dowell and the Townsend measures. In view of this sentiment, Senator McKellar withdrew his motion and the Senate, without a roll call, sent the House bill to the Senate committee. Senator Townsend made it clear that there would be no effort to pigeonhole the House bill in his committee.

Many Senators favored the current program as modified in 1919:

It is evident that the Senate will insist upon material changes in each of the bills. Strong objection was voiced to any proposition which requires a state to modify its constitution and its laws so as to participate in the benefits of a federal appropriation. It was said that the constitutions of 17 states contain a provision which forbids the issuing of interest-bearing evidences of indebtedness for the purpose of making internal improvements. It was pointed out, however, that this condition would merely prohibit the states from raising the money by bond issues but would in no way preclude the securing of the fund by taxation, which would require no change in the constitutions of those states. It was argued, nevertheless, that the latter plan would not be practicable, since to raise the necessary amount by taxation would call for such a large levy that the people would not vote the tax.

It was declared that the existing law had worked out fairly well and that it would be better to let well enough alone than to embark upon a revolutionary system. The question also was raised as to whether it would be constitutional for the federal government to lay out a post road and then order the state to maintain it. The federal government, it was pointed out, does not build post-offices and then attempt to order the states to keep them in repair. [“Phipps Highway Bill Goes to Senate Committee,” *Engineering News-Record*, July 7, 1921, pages 35, 38; “Construction of the term ‘Rural Post Roads,’” *Congressional Record – Senate*, pages 3229-3237, June 30, 1921]

ENR Sees the Faultline

With the Dowell and Townsend bills in hand, *Engineering News-Record* was able to compare the two options.

The Dowell Bill, which had been drafted by AASHO and reviewed by the President and the Secretary, "has been referred to as a golden mean between inadvisable extremes." The bill addressed many of the problems that had been cited in criticisms of the Federal-aid highway program and placed "the future program upon a sounder basis":

The bill deserves unqualified support. It represents the best thought of an organization which recognizes that the great roadbuilding program of the future must be carried out on a sound economic basis The new bill, giving increased control to the federal authorities, puts teeth in the original act and will insure the selection and construction and later the adequate maintenance of a system defensible upon economic lines.

The editorial added, "we do not wish to belittle the efforts of those who" sponsored the 1916 Act. "Imperfections were to be expected. There has been written into the new bill the lessons of experience." ["The New Federal-Aid Bill," *Engineering News-Record*, May 5, 1921, pages 748-749]

After Senator Townsend released the new version of his bill in late April, the magazine called it a "very material step forward in composing the differences which exist regarding a proper federal highway policy." The first important change was that, "It accepts the federal-aid principle, in lieu of the policy the Senator has previously fathered of the construction of a national highway system at the exclusive cost of the federal government."

When a Federal Highway Commission had been proposed 3 years earlier "there was widespread dissatisfaction" with the existing program:

In the last two years, however, there has been a material change for the better, and highway officials throughout the country are thoroughly satisfied with the way the government highway activities have been administered.

As a result, the main reason the commission had been proposed "is now removed."

Another factor affected the magazine's assessment:

Moreover, there is growing up today in governmental circles a strong opposition to all of the "independent establishments," except those having judicial functions. In many quarters in Washington there is strong conviction that all of these independent establishments should be thrown into appropriate departments wherever administrative functions are involved.

Advocacy of the formation of a Federal Highway Commission at the present time, therefore, not only lacks the backing which circumstances gave to the proposal originally, but must meet with the strongly developed opposition to commissions and other establishments outside of the departments and reporting directly to the President.

Senator Reed Smoot of Utah, Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Reorganization of the Administrative Branch of the Government, would soon hold hearings on reorganization of the government:

It will then become plain, we believe, that it is hopeless now to expect Congress to authorize any new independent establishments, such as the Federal Highway Commission would be.

Although the editor of the magazine had previously supported the commission, the editorial on Senator Townsend's new bill concluded:

With the situation as it is, we have high hopes that Senator Townsend will abandon this feature of his proposed law. Should he do that there will then be entire agreement between the former opposing federal-aid and national-highway camps, and that in turn would assure an uninterrupted continuance of liberal federal support for highway development. ["Getting Together on Federal Highway Policy," *Engineering News-Record*, May 12, 1921, page 797]

Senate Action

In the September 1921 issue of *American Motorist*, M. O. Eldridge explained the Senate's action:

The Phipps-Dowell-Robsion bill passed the House of Representatives in June. When the bill reached the Senate it was referred to the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. A compromise was reached in the committee by combining with the House measure many of the features contained in the Townsend bill then before the Senate. As a result of this compromise a new bill was reported to the Senate about the middle of August. This bill was revised on the floor of the Senate, passed, and sent to conference, and the conferees on the part of both Houses were appointed just before Congress adjourned for the recess.

The Senate committee bill included Senator Townsend's proposed National Highway Commission to administer the act, but during debate the Senate eliminated the commission. Administration of the program would be left with BPR. Senator Townsend explained:

Neither Senator [Charles] Curtis [of Kansas] nor any other single Senator could have defeated the commission plan under ordinary circumstances. The fact is, however, that I was practically hopeless of success some time ago, when such a revulsion of feeling set in against commissions generally. Senator [George WE.] Norris [of Nebraska] had

proposed a commission in his agricultural bill to look after farmers' credits, and especially relative to foreign markets. The decision against that commission was overwhelming. The Shipping Board has been under condemnation for a long time, and it in fact is a commission. I have seen the sentiment grow in the Senate against commissions for some time, and for that reason I repeat I was rather hopeless of success. I know that our plan is the right one for efficiency and economy, but we have made distinct progress. I feel confident of success. We will have taken some great forward steps, and I think our provisions will result in a more efficient service by the public roads bureau.

The approved Senate bill restricted Federal-aid expenditures to a system of 7 percent of the highways in each State, with primary or interstate roads equal to no more than three-sevenths of the 7 percent. Up to 60 percent of the Federal-aid funds available to each State could be applied to this interstate system. By contrast, the House bill had provided that not less than 60 percent must be used on the interstate highways. *American Motorist* continued:

Confining all Federal-aid money to a limited system of highways in each State has long been contended for by the American Automobile Association and other organizations of individuals whose vision has been broad enough to view the road situation from a national standpoint. As early as 1912 – four years before the original Federal Aid Road Act was adopted – a resolution was passed by the American Automobile Association which indicated the need of confining Federal highway activities to a definite and limited system in each State

The great bulk of organized motorists have been convinced for some time that the ultimate solution of the road problem in this country involves the building and maintenance of a national system of highways entirely at Federal expense, such system to be properly correlated with State and county roads built and maintained at State and local expense. Although the Phipps-Dowell-Townsend compromise recently adopted by Congress does not provide for a national system of roads, it must be admitted that this compromise measure marks a distinct step in the right direction. If these measures are properly amalgamated in conference they will constitute an organic act which is undoubtedly a great improvement over the existing Federal-aid law

The Senate bill required that State matching funds had to be provided by the State instead of by "State or civil subdivisions thereof." The State must have absolute control of the funds. "The provision will prevent the States from passing their Federal obligations on to the counties and will have the effect of centralizing the control of the construction and maintenance of Federal-aid roads in the hands of competent State authorities. If a State's constitution prohibited this arrangement, the Senate bill allowed 2 years for an amendment to comply with the new law. "In the meantime, projects may be approved as heretofore by the Secretary of Agriculture, provided he is satisfied that such projects will in all probability become a part of the system provided for in the bill."

Kansas, one of the States along the National Old Trails Road that had been a longstanding

trouble spot for the association, was one of the States that would be affected by this provision:

However, in Kansas the State may now engage in road construction to the extent of paying 25 per cent of the cost thereof. It would appear, therefore, that Kansas and the other States mentioned will have to change their constitutions so as to permit them fully to meet their Federal-aid obligations without calling upon the counties or other civil subdivisions to do so The new Federal-aid measure should offer a sufficient inducement to these States to so change their constitutions as to permit the States to function as States instead of functioning through counties.

The bill also provided “that only such durable types of surface and kinds of material shall be adopted for the construction and reconstruction of any highway which is a part of the proposed system as will adequately meet existing, and probable future, traffic needs and conditions thereof”:

If this provision is finally enacted into law it will, if properly administered, have the effect of raising the standard of road construction in the South and middle West, where much of the Federal-aid money has heretofore been expended in the construction of roads which are not well suited to all-the-year-round traffic. In other words, this provision should prevent further use of Federal money in the construction of earth roads composed of clay or alluvial soils in the humid regions of the United States unless the contract for each project fully provides for surfacing of the road as soon as practicable after the grades have settled.

As requested by President Harding, the House and Senate bills contained strong State maintenance requirements for Federal-aid projects:

If such roads are not adequately maintained, the Federal Government may, after due notice, have the roads maintained and charge the cost thereof to the State. This provision marks a distinct advance over the existing law, which permits civil subdivisions to maintain the roads.

The article concluded:

With the modifications granted by this measure, the responsibility now rests squarely with the chief of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads to see that its provisions are efficiently carried out. The results will be watched with close interest by all who are concerned in sound highway development. [Eldridge, M. O., “Improvement of Federal Aid Act Seen in New Legislation,” *American Motorist*, October 1921, page 18, 24]

Congress would return to Washington on September 21, 1921, with many matters to be concluded, including the highway bill.

The 1921 Convention

The final shape of the Federal road bill was unclear, but what was clear was that it would not include a Federal Highway Commission to build and maintain national interstate roads – a goal that Judge Lowe and the National Old Trails Road Association had favored for years.

On September 15, 1921, the National Old Trails Road Association met in the Hotel Baltimore in Kansas City for its ninth annual convention. Judge Lowe welcomed the members to the meeting:

I can tell you now, while we may not be so great in numbers, yet it will be great in the future history of this country, this convention will be, because we are going to deal on questions of vital concern, of National concern, as well as local concern, in a way as has never been dealt with, to my knowledge in this country . . .

The programs for the convention had not arrived, but he said, that they probably would have been treated “the way we have been in the habit of treating the constitution. Some fellow said to another: “What is the constitution between friends, anyway?”

He told the story of his gavel:

That was taken out of an old plank buried in a mud hole, just outside of Indianapolis, Indiana, and dug up when they were grading the road, and found it as solid as it was when placed there, more than seventy-five years ago, and it was taken and made into a gavel, and presented to me at Indianapolis when the National Old Trails Road convention was held there in 1913.

Judge Lowe had prepared a speech, but said, “I am not going to continue apologizing to this convention why I cannot address you as I should like to. It is unnecessary. I have simply worn my old voice out.” He asked Fred H. Chambers of Higginsville, Missouri, to read the speech. Chambers agreed, adding that Judge Lowe’s “doctors absolutely forbid him attempting anything in the way of a speech.”

The speech began with a quote from the French novelist and playwright, Honoré de Balzac:

“There exists in all human sentiments a primitive flower, engendered by a noble enthusiasm which grows constantly weaker and weaker, until happiness ceases to be more than a memory and glory more than a lie.”

This may be true upon the large scale, because human life has been so perverted, so contaminated, and overwhelmed by the baser elements which are inherent in all life, and are slovenly and freely permitted to dominate and control human activities to the degree that the “primitive flower which engenders a noble enthusiasm” loses its power and purpose, and thus indeed becomes only a memory. But, the movement in which we have participated has been more than justified if we shall have added a little to the betterment of human life, if we have contributed to the culture of that “primitive” flower, adding strength, beauty and immortality, which perpetuates and ennobles memory, and makes glory more than an ephemeral lie.

Civilization has advanced only in proportion as the world has been made habitable, and more enduring. The Creator intended that this “primitive flower of a noble enthusiasm” should grow strong and stronger, rather than weaker and weaker, and that happiness shall be more than a memory, and glory the crowning result of worthy achievement, or else man would not have been created at all.

He recalled that in April 1912, few of those who founded the association “had the faintest conception of the mighty wheels of progress we were setting in motion.” Less than a month later, he had announced the principle of setting apart the automobile tax for building State systems of highways. “This was soon adopted in many of the states, Missouri being the last to adopt this method.” Yet another month later, a bill had been introduced in Congress “establishing, mapping and defining a National system of roads, connecting every state capital with the national capital, and covering some thirty-two thousand miles of roads.”

The pending Federal Highway Act was “a compromise measure which had passed the Senate and will pass the House, as it has been unanimously approved by the joint committee of each chamber and is now in the hands of a committee of conference, the full fruition of all our dreams.” He explained that Federal-aid highway funds would be limited to up to 7 percent of the roads in each State, divided into two groups. Primary or interstate highways “shall not exceed three-sevenths of the total mileage which may receive Federal-aid,” while the remainder would consist of secondary or intercounty highways. Not more than 60 percent of each State’s Federal-aid apportionment “shall be expended upon the primary or interstate highways until provision has been made for the improvement of the entire system of such highways,” with a higher percent possible if approved by the Secretary of Agriculture. The bill added that, “in approving projects to receive Federal aid under the provisions of this act the Secretary of Agriculture shall give preference to such projects as will expedite the completion of an adequate and connected system of highways interstate in character,” with at least 20 feet hard surfaced:

The bill is a compromise measure, it is true, retaining some of the best features of the Townsend, Dowell and Phipps bills. It is true, that out of regard for the sensitive nerves of such men as [Senator] Tom Watson of Georgia, and others, many of them from the Western states, including many State Highway Boards, so-called “**practical men,**” who have sought excuses for delay, and reasons against all forms of internal improvements, and who spring the old ghost of “state rights” on every possible occasion, and who saw, or thought they saw, a subtle purpose to blot out state lines, opposed it so bitterly it was decided to eliminate the obnoxious words “National Roads,” and substitute “Interstate Highways.” Well, “a rose will smell as sweet by any other name.”

He estimated that 7 percent of the 2.5 million miles of rural roads in the United States amounted to 175,000 miles of national roads, while 3 percent this total amounted to an interstate system of 75,000 miles on which “not more than” 60 percent of Federal-Aid funds were to be used:

Now, one hundred and fifty thousand miles of national roads were the most that our friend Charles Henry Davis [of the National Highways Association] . . . has ever suggested, and they “**laughed him out of court.**” It is his turn to laugh and rejoice at the great

triumph which has come, if not in name, substantially in fact.

For example, Judge Lowe' calculated that Missouri had 102,700 miles of roads. "Seven per cent of these will be 7,189 miles, and three-sevenths of these or 3,081 miles, are primary or 'interstate roads,' upon which sixty per cent of Missouri's share of the appropriations must be applied." Some "of our friends were thrown into fits when we stood for 6,000 miles of state roads. Now the general government pledges us one-half the cost of 7,189 miles of Federal Aid Roads." A similar calculation

for Kansas resulted in 3,360 miles of interstate highways:

These are some of the things this Association has always favored. It is certainly permissible, on occasions like this, to repeat that this Association first suggested the application of the automobile taxes to the building of a connected state system in all the states, but, when the state bonds of Missouri carried, other large and, no doubt, well meaning road organizations immediately appealed to the legislature in favor of an insignificant mileage of high priced, largely experimental roads, to be built out of this bond issue, while we declared in favor of keeping absolute faith with the people, and provide for the largest possible road mileage. The legislature of Missouri, after much ill-natured criticism and abuse, has written into the statutes the finest road law in the United States, bar none. We most sincerely rejoice with this epoch-making legislature on the splendid results of its action.

If this were a proposition to scatter the State and Federal funds promiscuously "in spots about," or upon some ill-considered and wasteful project, we might well hesitate. But all this has been well considered and provided against in both the State and Federal Acts.

(On June 20, 1948, U.S. Representative Abraham Lincoln, during his single term in the House, had used the phrase "in spots about" in a speech about the value of internal improvements. He explained that public projects inevitably benefited the State or States where they were built, but also could have general benefits. The national capital, for example, obviously benefited local land owners, but if that were a disqualifying problem, "where shall we set it down, and be free from the difficulty? To make sure of our object, shall we locate it nowhere, and have Congress hereafter to hold its sessions, as the loafer lodged, 'in spots about?'" Judge Lowe reprinted the speech in his compilations titled *National Old Trails Road: The Great Historic Highway of America*, as in the March 1925 edition on pages 173-183.)

Will it pay? This is always the first question to be considered. The best authorities put the saving in transportation alone, on a good road, over a bad road, at twenty cents per ton mile. On the National Old Trails Road a traffic census was taken by the State Highway Board of Colorado in 1919, from the Kansas State line to Pueblo, 162 miles, and the state engineer wrote that a saving of twenty cents per ton mile would pay the cost of construction in one year, at \$25,000.00 per mile, **and it parallels the Santa Fe Railroad, from end to end.**

Will it pay?

President Harding says it will. Congress says it will. The Missouri Legislative, except two

votes, say it will.

When? NOW.

(As noted earlier, the Missouri State Highway Department dates to 1913, but was limited to helping counties that requested help improving public roads. The Centennial Road Law of 1921, which Governor Arthur M. Hyde signed on August 4, 1921, gave the Missouri State Highway Commission authority to locate, design, construct, and maintain a system of State highways consisting of 1,500 miles of primary roads and 6,000 miles of secondary roads. The commission was authorized to construct, improve, and maintain highways and bridges with State funds and to use State funds to match Federal-aid highway funds. Governor Hyde appointed the commission members on December 1, 1921. [*Serving Missouri's Transportation Needs for 75 Years*, Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission, 1996, pages 4-6]

Judge Lowe quoted Henry Ford, “the greatest constructive genius in the world,” as saying about the railroad problem: “keep the wheels moving.” That was the key in all fields of human endeavor:

There are six million idle men in the United States! And 35,000 in Kansas City are crying for work. Herbert Hoover, the greatest all-round intellect in public life says: “The building of a great system of roads will solve the labor and financial ills of this country.” Oh, that it had come sooner! And it would, had it not been for a few backward-looking, so-called “financial” experts, “practical” men, “with their feet always on the ground.”

Work building highways would not drain the Treasury; it would pay dividends beyond initial expenditures. “Can these idle men be so employed as to increase instead of drain the National Treasury? Undoubtedly they can.”

He continued:

These backward looking men, or their descendants, when the Arch-Angel Gabriel shall stand with one foot upon the sea, and one upon the land, and shall declare that time shall be no more, will declare that “this is entirely too sudden, the country is not prepared,” and demand a postponement to a better and more opportune time. But they shall be swept away into that oblivion to which they are so well entitled. And why not? This brood of spineless charlatans [sic] who have ever posed as “practical” and not idealists, have always sought to block the march of Christian civilization from the beginning. They are the blood clot on humanities’ brain. May I repeat here substantially what I said to the Highway Industries Congress at their Chicago convention, December 12, 1918, when paying my respects to the slackers, laggards and drones ever hanging on the outskirts of the march of civilization? These men have never won a victory on any of life’s great battlefields. They never gave birth to a great purpose, nor added anything worth while to the general good. They never offered cool water to parched lips, nor planted hope in the heart of the dying. They never cut the brambles and thorns nor smoothed the rough places in life’s pathways. They have neither inventive genius nor constructive imagination. They never inspired a line worth remembering, nor added anything of value to the world’s literature. If the principle which directs them had been the only

principle to escape Pandora's box, if optimism, hope, faith, imagination, had not opposed them from the beginning, the world would have indeed, and in fact, been nothing but a mad-house. All the joys of life, all the hopes of the future, would have been destroyed. Man, now, "but little lower than the angels," would then have been but little higher than the brute. Let him go "with his head in the clouds," hugging to his heart the "primitive flower engendered by a noble ambition," if you will; it is infinitely better than burrowing in the earth. I would, had I the power, drive it out of all hearts and back to its native hell, its congenial habitat. Keep your eyes toward the sunrise, and your "wagon hitched to a star" is the only **safe and sane rule of life**. A man without ideals is dead. He had as well never have lived.

He repeated his comments stemming from Victor Hugo's motto, "Always forward!" Judge Lowe then concluded:

The great achievements along all lines of human endeavor are but the results of the fruition of the primitive flower planted in the human soul, and but dimly seen by Balzac, and more gloriously glimpsed by Hugo, Shakespeare and Milton, and by all the great seers and prophets of the world. But we stand upon the threshold of mighty achievements of the near future. Winter nor indifference will not freeze or destroy it, for so it is written in the doom book of God.

Happy are we to have been humble workers in the ranks of this great army which has contributed to these great and immortal achievements.

After Chambers finished reading Judge Lowe's speech, the following dialogue took place:

Judge Lowe: That was a good speech (laughter)! The only criticism I feel like making on it is, Mr. Chambers stuck a little bit too close to his manuscript.

Mr. Chambers: I could do nothing else.

Judge Lowe: I have heard him make good speeches.

Judge Lowe, despite his failing voice and doctor's orders, said the reason the country did not already have "the greatest wagon road system" mapped out and funded "is just two words":

The bill as mapped out and as it passed the House (of Congress) provided that "not less" than sixty per cent or three-sevenths, or seven per cent of all the roads in this country should be applied to the interstate system. They chose the word "interstate" as being less objectionable, and didn't so drastically get on the nerves of a certain class of people in Congress, and had that substituted for "National."

After going through the mileage in Kansas and Missouri, he continued:

Our resolutions provide, and we want to get them to Washington as soon as possible after this convention adjourns, that the bill as passed in the House, providing that "not less" than sixty per

cent of the money allotted to Missouri and Kansas, and all the other states (I mention those states because we are more familiar with the figures), that “not less” than sixty per cent shall be applied to the National and Interstate system.

Judge Lowe recalled the bill he had created in 1913 to provide for construction of 32,000 miles of roads and they ‘laughed me out of court.’” And yet within the next few weeks, Congress would approve an interstate system far larger.

“Where is the money to come from,” he asked, to build these interstate roads? He had an idea:

There has been a great deal of talk on the Allied debt of the Allied nations to this country. Some people, in a gush of liberality and sentimentality seem to think we should give that \$10,000,000,000 to the Allies. We gave them our boys, and we gave them a lot of our money, and our boys laid down their lives, that civilization might live. I don’t know why we are called upon to cancel this debt. I think it is a manly thing, and they ought to be held to their obligation, given all the time they want, forty or fifty years if they want, and we should turn the interest over to the building of roads. That will build this system of roads, and by the way, when the war was over, it left them with a great and most wonderful system of highways. If we disarm, and we ought to if the other nations do, it ought to be absolute; that will leave us eleven billions of dollars to devote to road building.

(Depending on how the total is calculated, the European allies owed the United States approximately \$10 billion for supplies and war materials before United States entry in April 1917 as well as cash loans and other goods before and after entry. The allies urged the United States to forgive the debt and some in the United States supported the idea. However, the Harding Administration opposed forgiveness of the debt. In February 1922, Congress approved a World War Foreign Debt Commission that concluded agreements with 15 countries to repay the debt, plus interest, over 62 years, with help from reparations from Germany totaling \$33 billion. Germany defaulted on payments in less than a year, and most of the allies would eventually default on their loan agreements.)

The key, Judge Lowe explained, was to remember that unlike countries such as France, the United States was just getting started in road building:

They have their system of roads and we have no system, and no roads worth talking about
....

Sam Jones told a story (he always told good stories), he said that one time a train had stopped at the station and was slow to start again, when the conductor ran up and asked the engineer why the train didn’t go on. The engineer said he didn’t have steam enough. The conductor said, “have you steam enough to start,” and the engineer said “yes.” He started and by the time they got to the turn of the road she was going thirty miles an hour. That’s it, start, and make steam as you go

The importance of this meeting is, we are right at the turning point at Washington, where we have looked so long for assistance in building roads, and we are going to get it. They

reconvene the twenty-first of September, and I believe by the first of October, we will have it.

Colonel E. W. Stephens, a publisher from Columbia, Missouri, and president of the association's Missouri Division, was one of the speakers. He began by noting that outside the Hotel Baltimore, a building was under construction on one side, with a street car on the other:

In the first place, I can't speak against that thing going on on the outside, and I didn't know I was to speak this afternoon. In the next place, I am afraid unless we hurry up, we old men of the Old Trails Association will be walking the golden streets before the Old Trails, and I think the time has about arrived when we ought to be doing something towards putting the Old Trails over.

I believe I am down on the programme to talk about "Progress in Missouri." There is only one man I know of that has made progress in Missouri, and that is Judge Lowe. I think we ought to erect a monument one hundred feet high, right here in Kansas City, to Judge Lowe. He is the greatest pioneer of good roads on the American continent. He has kept this great movement alive. We owe that honor to him. If we don't build the road before he dies, we ought to.

After discussing the historic old trail and progress in Missouri, Colonel Stephens concluded:

What we want is the sympathy and co-operation of the Old Trails Association from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It will bring benefit not only to Missouri, but to all the states on the east, and on the west of us. Missouri is the only mud-hole on the whole road. Someone said, we are going to make mud a thing of the past, just as we made whiskey a thing of the past; but I hope we will make it more of a thing of the past than we have made whiskey

If we have the energy and pluck and enterprise and courage that our ancestors had, those noble men who came out from the east and laid the foundations of prosperity we enjoy, if we have what they had, we will build this road. We not only have the country we need, we have the opportunity, we have the money, and we have the people. I don't hesitate to say this, that no better and nobler people on the face of God's earth ever settled any country, than those products of the Revolution, those people that came out in the early days, and saw what this country was. No nobler people ever lived than those people.

I hope all of us will live to see the Old Trail, and new trails running all over Missouri. We have been handicapped long enough. Let us hope we have gotten to the time when Missouri will be lifted out of the mud. Let us have good roads all over the state, and then indeed, will we see the salvation of the world.

Judge Lowe told the convention:

I appreciate more than I can tell, the compliment paid me by Colonel Stephens, and in answer, I want to say when you go to erecting monuments, there is but one that will make me sleep a little sounder and a little sweeter, that you could erect to my name, and that would be to finish building the National Old Trails Road.

The proceedings note after his comment: Applause.

One of the association's main concerns was the condition of the western half of the route. Kansas was a particular problem, as usual. Mr. C. E. Edlin of Kansas addressed the convention:

The best thing I can promise is brevity. We had a report outlined to give you across the state by counties. You know what our troubles are in Kansas. We cannot come to you with such an offering as Missouri does. We have a very good beginning. We will have, I think, four strips of paved road, and thirty or forty miles of oiled road on the Old Trail, in the state, and it is a beginning. We have about four hundred miles left.

In Kansas we have laws that are peculiar to Kansas. The powers in control are the county commissioners. We are working, and planning, and hoping, for a state system plan; planned, I think, after the plan of Missouri. In contemplating this system, the plan seems to be among those in control of politics, that we have three classes of roads in Kansas. The first, the hard surface roads and graduated down to macadam and gravel roads. We hope the Old Trails road will be a first-class road. Under the present system, we have undertaken to build roads in short strips in counties, and connect up as we can. We have come to recognize there is a Trinity in Heaven, and a Trinity on earth. The Trinity on earth is against us. We want to begin a new form of thinking. If we have any influence with our representatives, we must begin on them now. We should not be satisfied until we have a complete set road program.

The condition of the road in New Mexico and Arizona also was a continuing problem. The chairman of the auditing committee, Mr. George L. L. Gann of Pueblo, Colorado, after summarizing the condition of the association's books ["in perfect shape, and the balance of cash is \$3,067.67"], described activities in the two States:

From Durango to Gallup is through a reservation. There are no personal interests down there, and we have to depend almost altogether on the Interior Department to sneak off a little money from the Indians to keep the roads in shape. That puts us to Gallup. We have not been able – with all the forces we can muster – to induce Arizona to do any road work on the road between Gallup to Holbrook. It is a bad road. A friend of mine came through there a few days ago – he had a Cadillac car – and the best he could make was about fifteen miles an hour. We are up against it with the Arizona people. I understand that Mr. Becker is here from Springfield [sic], Arizona. I met the old gentleman three years ago at the convention, and tried to persuade him to put some money on that road. I would like to have Mr. Becker tell us why he cannot get some action on that piece of road. It is about the only piece of road I have to make any apologies for, between the Kansas state line and Los Angeles.

A few moments later, the "old gentleman" addressed the convention:

I have never been up before an audience before in my life. We are very anxious for good roads in Arizona. I think the gentleman from Colorado asked why we were not

doing anything toward building a road between Holbrook and Gallup. This portion of the road is about equal distance to one that passes through the petrified forest. Eighty-five per cent of the people in Apache county live on this other highway, and that's one reason why the highway is being built there first, and we haven't any more money than we need. The road from Holbrook to the Arizona-New Mexico line is all graded. We are preparing to spend about three hundred thousand dollars more on that road. From the Arizona to New Mexico line at Springerville to Magdalena, is a distance of about one hundred fifty-nine miles. With the exception of thirty-eight miles, that road is all graded, and half of it is graveled and being graveled. There is never any difficulty in getting over that road. From Sorocco (sic) north, the road is in good shape. I think that answers your questions.

Later, Colonel Stephens asked to address the convention again without telling Judge Lowe why:

I want to move that the thanks of this National Old Trails Road Association are hereby extended to our honored president, Judge J. M. Lowe, for his unselfish, devoted service to this body, and to express our high esteem for his character, and our respect for him, and wish for him a long successful and happy life. I think I may be pardoned in adding to this if I say something of her who has stood so faithfully by his side, and we convey to her, his daughter, and all members of his family, our appreciation. I offer that resolution, and ask those who favor it, will make it known by rising. [Unanimously carried.]

The convention adopted a series of resolutions, including:

- The National Old Trails Road “is now completely and splendidly hard-surfaced from Washington, D.C., to the Missouri River at St. Louis. It is more than one-half built, in different sections, across the state of Missouri; fully seventy-five per cent of it financed across Kansas; all of it either built or under contract across Colorado; graded and a large percentage of it under contract across both New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Funds have now been provided in all of these states by which it can easily be finished at a very early date.” The bill pending in Congress calls for a State-Federal partnership in construction of national interstate roads. The association called “upon the states, most earnestly and seriously, that they shall provide revenue sufficient to meet the amount pledged by the Government as Federal Aid.”
 - That Kansas and Missouri respond to the Federal action in building interstate and State systems of road.
 - The association gives “our most hearty appreciation to the Congress of the United States in having proposed to furnish funds sufficient to equalize the building of roads in the western states, where, because the ownership of such large percentages of land is still in the Government, as to make it almost, if not impossible, to build large systems of highways.”
 - That the conference committee adopt the House language that “not less” than 60 percent of the Federal-aid funds shall be expended on interstate or primary roads instead of the
-

Senate's "not more" provision.

- "That these roads, whether Interstate or State roads, are being built by taxation of all the people for the benefit of all the people; therefore, we protest most seriously against the use of these improved hard roads by common carriers for hire, by using heavy automobile trucks, and by other heavy vehicles, such as tractors, etc.; the use by private interests, and which would result in the speedy disrepair, deterioration and complete destruction of said highways without any compensation from such private enterprises so using and abusing them. We protest the use of such vehicles, unless the tonnage be not to exceed three tons or less, for each vehicle. We are neither building "Peacock Lanes for joy riders," nor massive roads to be taken over and destroyed by private interests for selfish purposes."
- At least six million men and women were unemployed. "Nothing would contribute more to the relief of these people, and to the general relief of the whole country in speedily bringing about prosperity and happiness, than for the Government and the states to commence at once the construction of a vast system of dependable highways; and we call upon the authorities that, if they would prevent the greatest financial and commercial depression this country has ever known, they should take immediate steps to go forward in building roads as the only way that will bring relief. Mark you, these funds are not to be expended recklessly, or charitably, but both government and state will receive benefits of at least ten dollars worth of value to every dollar expended upon this great project – the greatest and wisest now contemplated anywhere in the world."
- "That the transportation question is one of the greatest, if not the very greatest question now facing our country. The railroad systems have largely broken down, and many of them are failing to function. We should do all in our power, not to destroy, but to help build up, and make this means of transportation successful at all points; and to this end we do not know of anything which will add more in solving this problem than the building of the system of highways above indicated."
- Resolved, that in view of the deplorable condition of the highways of the United compared with the highways of the Allied Nations, "we respectfully memorialize Congress to set aside the whole of the war loans to the Allies as a National Highway fund, to be used in part as follows: Not less than sixty per cent of all allotments to the states to be applied to the construction of the primary or Interstate system of highways, until their completion, and the remainder to the construction of the other four-sevenths of the highways provided for in the pending Phipp-Dowell Bill [sic]."
- The original alignment of the road from Herington to Marion, Kansas, be changed to "the line extending directly west from Herington, via Hope, to Gypsum, and thence in a westerly direction to a connection with the Meridian Highway north of Lindsborg, and thence in a southerly direction via Lindsborg, to a connection with the original alignment of the road at McPherson, be adopted, and that the original alignment as adopted in our first convention, across Morris County, Kansas, be and the same is hereby confirmed."
- The association extended "our heartiest and sincerest congratulations to the Governor of Missouri, and the Legislature at its recent session, for having enacted the wisest, most liberal and best road law of any state in the Union."
- That the National Old Trails Road in Missouri "adopt as an additional route, to-wit: That part of the state highway system extending from St. Charles in an easterly direction to the

Mississippi River, to West Alton.”

- That the association “extend our thanks and appreciation to the people and to the Highway Board of Illinois, for having completed in such splendid form the National Old Trails Road across that state, the first state in the Central West to complete the road in its entirety.”

An addenda to the proceedings contained letters from highway officials in the States of the National Old Trails Road.

- Maryland State Roads Commission: “From Baltimore westward through Cumberland to the Pennsylvania line, the entire stretch is waterbound macadam, surface treated, with the possible exception of a few isolated spots of concrete through incorporated towns.
- Pennsylvania State Highway Department: “The Section of the National Pike lying in the state of Pennsylvania is entirely of macadam. Surface treatments of bituminous material have been given the road and it is in excellent condition.”
- West Virginia State Road Commission: “The following are types of road on the National Old Trails Road across West Virginia: 10 miles of brick, 2 miles of bitulithic, 1 mile of Warrenite, 1 mile of concrete and 3 miles of bituminous macadam.”
- Ohio State highway Department: Exclusive of mileage in incorporated cities and villages, the mileage was as follows:

Concrete (cement)	31.18 miles
Bituminous Concrete	19.39 miles
Brick	55.18 miles
Bituminous Macadam	27.30 miles
Waterbound Macadam	25.09 miles
Asphalt	0.84 miles
Gravel	<u>38.00 miles</u>
Total	196.98 miles

“Included in the above are 6.22 miles of concrete and 10.0 miles of Bituminous Concrete now under construction.”

- Indiana State Highway Commission: “The National Highway across the state of Indiana is 86 miles concrete, already completed, or contract let to be completed this fall; 66 miles of gravel and macadam road, contracts to be let this fall.”
- Illinois Division of Highways: Officials were out of the office in time for the response, but a reply noted that, “The uncompleted sections approximate nine miles, all of which it is hoped will be completed by the close of the present construction season.
- Missouri State Highway Department:

Boone County – 2.8 miles, 16 ft. bituminous macadam, Columbia west.
 Callaway County – 7.66 miles, 9 ft. gravel, Millersburg special road district.
 Callaway County – 15.7 miles, 9 ft. gravel, Fulton District to Montgomery County line.
 Cooper County – 5.57 miles, 16 ft. bituminous macadam from Boonville east.
 Cooper County – 7.83 miles, 16 ft. bituminous macadam from Boonville to Lamine River.
 Jackson County – Finished. Bituminous macadam.
 Montgomery County – 8.24 miles, 9 ft. macadam, New Florence to Danville.
 Montgomery County – 8 miles, 9 ft. gravel, Mineola Special Road District.
 St. Charles – 1.66 miles, 16 ft. bituminous macadam, St. Charles to Harvester.
 Saline – 9.26 miles, 16 ft. bituminous macadam, Malta Bend Special Road District.
 Saline County – 8 miles, 16 ft. asphalt macadam, east and west out of Marshall.

These are all Federal or State aid projects, some have been constructed, some are under construction and some are yet to advertise.

A p.s. noted, “Total in Missouri hard surfaced, 164 miles.”\

- The letter from the Kansas State Highway Engineer M. W. Watson reported little activity on the National Old Trails Road compared with named trails to the north and south of it:

You can easily see that there is much more progress in the eastern part of the state on the roads north and south of the National Old Trails. This is going to lead the traveling public to take the routes where they are the best developed, and as these routes become more firmly established it will be a difficult matter to get them back on the Old Trails Highway. I just call this to your attention, as it would appear to us that something ought to be done to stimulate building along the Old Trails.

- State of Colorado – “Colorado is completed or under contract.”
- State of New Mexico – “I wish to say that we are doing fine work on the National Old Trails between Los Lumas and the state line, and will shortly have a Federal aid Class A road for the entire distance (162 miles). The appropriations are made and it is only a matter of time for construction.”
- State of Arizona – “I am at the head of highway building in this [Mohave] county and we have a number of contracts under way. We have just finished a contract in the amount of \$200,000 on the National Old Trails between Oatman and Topock, and while the surfacing is not yet finished, we have a good road. Another section of this road diverts west of Seligman and ends at Peach Springs. This cut out one of the worst pieces of road

on the route across Arizona. We are having what is known as Crozier Canyon surveyed, and will build over a bad piece of road there. About 5 miles of road west of Kingman is to be built this fall, which will give us the best stretch of road in the state – 106 miles. San Bernardino County is to meet our good road with a hard surfaced road east of Barstow to the Arizona line, and Arizona counties east of us are making an effort to get good roads. With all this building the Old Trails in Arizona and California will be in fine shape within another 12 months.

- State of California – “We are advised by the local division of the State Highway Commission that that portion of the National Old Trails road lying between the summit of the Cajon Pass and Victorville will be advertised for bids in the very near future, and placed under construction this season. The definite location of the road between Victorville and Barstow will be decided this season and placed under construction early in 1922. However, between Barstow and Needles there is no work planned for the immediate future. I might say, however, that the road from Barstow to Needles is probably the best piece of desert road in existence, with the possible exception of that stretch of it between Ludlow and Amboy, a distance of 15 or 17 miles, which is uniformly rough; with the exception of this piece just mentioned there is really no cause for anyone to complain regarding the present condition.

The association elected Judge Lowe to continue as president and George Gann as secretary. Judge Lowe said:

May I say in response to your action of electing me again as your president, that so far as I now know, the remainder of my life will be devoted to this cause, and this alone. I don't know how long it will last, but before it ends I think we shall ride down the long, long trail, together, over a finished road.

As the convention came to an end, Judge Lowe assured the members of one thing:

The next time we hold a meeting here, I am going to insist on getting a room back somewhere in the building. We don't want to hold it on this corner, with a street car on one side and a building under construction of the other side.

[*Proceedings*, Ninth Regular Convention, National Old Trails Road Association, September 15, 1921]

The Federal Highway Act of 1921

As expected, the House-Senate conferees did not need much time to complete their work. The Conference Committee completed a unified bill after extended sessions on October 6, 7, and 8. Although restoration of \$100 million was considered, the committee retained the \$75 million single-year appropriation in the Senate bill, with \$25 million to become available immediately, and the remainder to be available on January 1, 1922. (For forest roads, the bill appropriated

\$5 million for FY 1922 and \$10 million for FY 1923.) The Federal-State matching ratio remained 50-50, but the Secretary could increase the Federal share in public lands States.

The committee bill clarified that each State must "make provisions for State funds required . . . for construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of Federal-aid highways within the States, which funds shall be under the direct control of the State highway department." The committee also addressed the concern that the bill would override State constitutions. The States were given 3 years after passage of the Act to bring State laws into compliance.

Federal-aid highway funds would now be restricted to roads contained in a designated system of Federal-aid highways. The system would comprise up to 7 percent of all rural public roads in each State, but three-sevenths of the system must consist of roads that were "interstate in character." The roads that were "interstate in character" would have a right-of-way "of ample width and a wearing surface of an adequate width which shall not be less than eighteen feet, unless, in the opinion of the Secretary of Agriculture, it is rendered impracticable by physical conditions, excessive costs, probably traffic requirements, or legal obstacles."

As noted, much debate had centered on whether to require the State highway agencies to use up to 60 percent or at least 60 percent of the Federal-aid highway funds on these interstate roads. The conferees settled on "not more than" 60 percent.

The legislation, like all previous versions, also addressed the President's concern by strengthening the maintenance provision of the 1916 Act. Section 2 of the new legislation redefined "maintenance" to mean "the constant making of needed repairs to preserve a smooth surfaced highway." Under Section 14, a State highway agency would receive a 90-day notice of a failure to maintain a Federal-aid highway. If the road was not "placed in proper condition of maintenance" during that period, the Secretary "shall proceed immediately to have such highway placed in a proper condition of maintenance and charge the cost thereof against the Federal funds allotted to such State, and shall refuse to approve any other project in such State" until the State reimbursed the Federal highway fund for the amount expended.

The legislation also redefined the term "State highway department" to be any department, commission, board, or official "having adequate powers and suitably equipped and organized to discharge to the satisfaction of the Secretary of Agriculture the duties herein required."

The House approved the final bill on November 1, with the Senate acting on November 3. President Harding signed the Federal Highway Act of 1921 on November 9.

Engineering News-Record pointed out that the signing "was accompanied by more than the usual ceremony, so that a motion picture could be made of the event which marks the establishment of an important precedent in the government's highway policy." The article described the ceremony:

There was a preliminary statement by W. C. Markham, of the Kansas Highway Commission, who has been acting as the legislative representative of the American

Association of State Highway Officials throughout the consideration of the bill. His remarks were followed by a statement from the Secretary of Agriculture, who pointed out that the bill contains provisions for road maintenance, which should meet the full requirements specified by the President in his message to Congress. Senator Townsend then handed a specially wrought pen to the President who signed the engrossed bill. Others who participated in the exercises incident to the filming of the ceremony were John M. Parker, Governor of Louisiana; Thomas H. MacDonald, chief of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads; the senators and representatives making up the conference committee which perfected the bill and Paul Wooton, Washington correspondent of *Engineering News-Record*.

An editorial in the same issue referred to the proposal to establish a commission to build national roads:

Perhaps the bitterest fight on any single feature of the new measure centered on the proposal of a federal highway commission to administer the work in place of the Secretary of Agriculture, through the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads. The commission plan was defeated and control will rest with the bureau which, during recent years, has demonstrated its ability to administer the work.

The passage of the bill, too, probably marks the end of the propaganda for a federal-built and maintained "national highway system." The federal-aid plan has come off victorious. ["Constructive Progress in New Highway Act" (page 799), and "President Signs \$75,000,000 Federal-Aid Road Bill" (pages 831-832) *Engineering News-Record*, November 17, 1921]

Senator Townsend accepted the compromise established by the legislation. He called the legislation "the most progressive step ever taken by Congress in aid of good roads":

That continued and increased activity in road construction is of the highest importance to the people ought to be accepted as a self-evident proposition. It will give employment to the unemployed. It will contribute largely to restored industrial and commercial prosperity. It will reduce the cost of transportation at a time when such reduction is essential to the very life of production. It will lessen the danger from possible railroad paralysis. It will encourage agriculture and add to the attractions and benefits of rural life. It will indeed be one of the wisest internal improvements which can be made . . .

In the bill which has just passed the Congress, I did not obtain all that I hoped for. I was, perhaps, asking too much, considering the organized forces against a proposition which had so little of selfish interests to serve.

After describing the 7-percent Federal-aid system, with its 60-percent share of interstate highways, he commented that, "Thus for the first time do we have a recognition by the Federal Government of the principle that it is the first duty of the Government to assist in building its

primary or inter-State roads.” The key, now, was “proper administration of the act . . . to secure approximately the objects which the friends of good roads have constantly in mind. Much will depend upon the administration, and I am confident that we are not going to be disappointed.” [Eldridge, M. O., “Many National Benefits Included in Passage of Federal Highway Act,” *American Motorist*, December 1921, page 24]

Roy Chapin of the NACC issued a statement:

While the new highway act is not all that students of the question would like to see, the law as it now stands marks a distinct step forward in the evolution of our highway policy [The] educational campaign waged by Senator Townsend to bring about a clearer appreciation of the importance of the highway problem, has been a successful one. [Chapin, Roy, “Chapin on the New Federal Aid Law,” *Good Roads*, November 23, 1921, page 239]

The western States were happy, as reflected in an article in *Western Highways Builder* that began:

A new era in the history of the West, as historians of the future will see it, was ushered in on November 9, when President Harding signed the Phipps-Dowell Federal Highway Act. From our present perspective, the tangible effect of the act will be merely to provide another Federal appropriation, \$75,000,000, for road construction with certain concessions to the Western States in the amount of cooperation required on account of the vast extent of the public domain situated therein. But those of us who look ahead sufficiently can see the whole attitude of the Federal government toward the empire west of the Rockies changed in the next two or three decades.

The adoption of the graduated scale as a part of the Phipps-Dowell Bill constitutes nothing more or less than a tacit recognition of the Federal government's moral and financial obligations to the Public Land States. We cannot under estimate the immediate effect of the application of the graduated scale, but, beneficial as this may be, it is infinitesimal when considered in relation to its effect as a precedent by which the Federal government will be guided in other development work. [Calcitrosus, "Western States Triumph in New Federal Highway Act," *Western Highways Builder*, December 1921, page 14]

The Department of Agriculture issued a statement summarizing the features of the 1921 Act. Regarding the 7-percent interstate system, the statement said:

The roads to be paid for by this money, if placed end to end, would encircle the earth and extend from New York to San Francisco on the second lap ["All States Will Receive Federal Aid for Highways," *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, December 1921, page 27]

AASHO held its 7th annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, on December 5-8, 1921. Chief MacDonald began his remarks to AASHO:

Again we meet in conference to measure critically our efforts of the year, and to plan more thoroughly, more understandingly, I trust, our future work together. With the deepest conviction I record my faith in the principles set forth in the Federal highway legislation founded on the certainty of the progress that is being made, and that will, in a larger way result from the new legislation.

He commented on designation of the interstate system:

The Act itself is remarkably comprehensive in defining and demanding a systematic plan, national in its extent, for future highway development. None of us has had, or is ever likely to have a more serious responsibility than the one imposed of selecting the Federal-aid system to be composed of the most important highways, articulating not only within the States, but with the systems of the contiguous States. Here is an opportunity to do a big, basic work, such as comes to few in the course of a life-time. The individual who fails to vision the importance of the task has no moral right to hold a position of authority in its performance.

He also put the bill in historical context:

From a conception of highways as a purely local institution, a viewpoint we held for over a half century of our national life, we progressed to an acceptance of their importance to the State. This attitude persisted for another quarter of a century, until through the universal use of the motor vehicle, the transportation crises of a great war, the repeated threats of extensive railroad tie-ups, and the results already secured with Federal aid, we have, in the short period of five years, visioned our more important highways extended and interconnected to form a vast network, serving local, State and national traffic, only limited by the confines of the United States. This is the conception which has been written into the law, and which, because of the projected effect of that which is done now into the future, lifts the importance of this requirement, that is, the selection of the Federal-aid system, above any other principle or duty therein announced.

Senator Phipps, in a letter regretting that he must decline an invitation to address ARBA during its annual meeting in Chicago in January, said he was proud that his name was connected with the measure, sometimes called the Phipps-Dowell bill, but he gave much of the credit to Senator Townsend, "one of the most stalwart champions of good roads for many years." Phipps recalled his thoughts while watching President Harding sign the bill:

As President Harding affixed his signature to the bill, it occurred to me that here was one measure concerning which there was no question, one legislative proposition which could not be called in any sense an experiment but which represented a forward step along sane and constructive lines.

There should be no difference of opinion as to the vital principles involved; there should be no sectionalism, no feeling of class discrimination; for, as a matter of fact, good roads inure to the benefit of all our people – the farm, the manufacturer, the local merchant and incidentally the tourist

I believe that acting as a unit the people of the United States will establish at an early date a system of good roads second to none in the world.

A letter from President Harding, dated January 10, 1922, to ARBA stated:

There is now pretty nearly universal agreement that no single public improvement has done in recent years or will do in the coming years, more for the general good of the country, than the development of our highway system. The task is an enormous one, but better methods both in physical construction and in the relations of the community to highway development have been taking form in a most encouraging way. [“The Nineteenth Annual Convention of the American Road Builders’ Association,” *Good Roads*, January 25, 1922, pages 50-51]

The Federal Highway Act of 1921 would settle the battle between national roads and the Federal-aid highway program by combining the two into what *Engineering News-Record* had called a “golden mean.” This resolution of the battle was reflected in the views Judge Lowe had expressed during the National Old Trails Road Association’s 1921 convention. In his 1925 compilation, he reprinted the legislation and observed:

Note: - It requires no great amount of legal acumen to construe this Act. The application of common sense and an honest purpose is all that is required.

It is stated elsewhere in this book the cost in each State of constructing a National (Interstate) System of Roads; and if an inter-county System is to be included under this Act, and if the States will capitalize the automobile tax in order to raise a State fund with which to co-operate with the Federal Government, as twenty-four of them have done, then, in such States it will not cost the tax payers one dollar, whether one owns a car or not. If any State refuses to raise such State fund this will not block the wheels of Government for one moment, the only effect will be that such State will have to pay its proportionate part of Federal taxes in any event. It is for each State to decide whether it shall share in the benefits of this measure or prefers to see the Federal taxes paid by such State appropriated to the States prepared to receive it. [*National Old Trails Road: The Great Historic Highway*, pages 276-277]

Professor Seely summed up the result of the 1921 legislation:

After the discord of the 1910s, the ensuing two decades were notable for their quiet, as state engineers settled down to construct a road system that could handle the influx of drivers. In a number of respects, the golden age of highway engineering was beginning, with Thomas MacDonald and his Bureau of Public Roads once more

the recognized leaders of the field. [Seely, page 64]

(For a more detailed account of the battles leading to the Federal Highway Act of 1921, see "'Clearly Vicious as a Matter of Policy': The Fight Against Federal-Aid, on this Website.)

Progress Noted

Good Roads reported on a ceremony that took place on October 29, 1921:

The City of Greenfield, seat of Hancock County, Indiana, and birthplace of James Whitcomb Riley, will celebrate, October 29, the opening of the completed paved road between that city and Indianapolis, a distance of 21 mi. The Hoosier Motor Club is preparing to erect a number of needed danger signs along the route. The highway Commissioner has seen to it that heavy guard railings are erected at many embankments.

"This is but another link on the National Old Trails Road, which eventually will be hard-paved across the Nation," stated Secretary Noblet of the Motor Club. "Our organization believes the Old Trails Road should be made a national memorial highway under federal direction and is working to that end. It is the main St. of the nation and is much more entitled to be known as a memorial highway than any other." ["National Old Trails Road Celebration," *Good Roads*, October 26, 1921, page 203]

As Noblet's comment indicated, good roads advocates thought of designation of a memorial highways to those who gave their lives for the victory. One project was a transcontinental named trail called the Victory Highway. *American Motorist* discussed the route:

The first step toward a national monument to those who fought and gave their lives in the world war has been taken by the California State Automobile Association, which has sent a specially designed motor truck to sign a new transcontinental route to be known as the Victory Highway.

This route, which will stretch from San Francisco to New York, will be laid out by the Federal Department of Public Roads over a consolidation of present integral highways. The Victory Highways [sic] was born in Kansas, where there has been organized and incorporated the Victory Highway Association, headed by George Stansfield, a capitalist of Topeka, Kansas

The Victory Highway at present is routed over the Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway from Reno to Colby, Kansas; the Golden Belt Highway from Colby in Kansas City, and the National Old Trails Highway to Jefferson City, Missouri

The remainder of the Victory Highway was to be laid out later:

The plans of the Victory Highway Association call for the erection of monuments to America's soldier dead at both San Francisco, the western terminus of the highway, and New York, the eastern terminus. ["Mark World War Memorial Road," *American Motorist*, September 1921, page 18]

THE NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD
PART 4: From Named Trails to U.S. Numbered Highways

By
Richard F. Weingroff

On November 9, 1921, President Warren G. Harding signed the Federal Highway Act of 1921, a landmark law that would set the framework for the Federal-aid highway program for decades to come. In passing the bill, Congress dashed the hopes of many good roads boosters, including Judge J. M. Lowe, president of the National Old Trails Road Association. Long before passage of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 that created the program, Judge Lowe had fought for the Federal Government to build and maintain a system of long-distance interstate roads, including the National Old Trails Road.

As discussed in part 3, many officials of the named trail associations, some State highway departments, and related organizations urged Congress to create a Federal Highway Commission to build a national highway system to supplement State highway systems and intercounty connectors. By the time Congress finally took up the issue in 1921, however, a revitalized post-war Federal-aid highway program and a new, more cooperative chief of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) resulted in growing support for renewal and strengthening of the existing program initiated in 1916, but interrupted by World War I. The Federal-aid concept, ultimately, prevailed.

While Congress considered the legislation, the country was in a post-war economic downturn that held back the road building that was needed to restore the highway network from the damage it sustained during the war. Conditions, however, were improving. With implementation of the 1921 Act, BPR Chief Thomas H. MacDonald could begin his annual report for Fiscal Year (FY) 1922 with the good news:

Without overstatement it may be said that greater progress has been made in providing the means of highway transportation during the fiscal year 1922 than in any similar period in the history of the country. Industrial and financial conditions were better, as a whole, than they have been at any time since before the war, and as a consequence remarkable progress has been made in highway construction under the States and counties as well as under the joint control of the Government and States.

Ten thousand miles have been added to the Federal-aid roads alone, and doubtless more than an equal mileage has been constructed without Federal assistance. And there is now apparent a real public appreciation developed in large measure by the forceful words of the President in his message to Congress.

More significant, however, than the progress in the physical work of road construction, or any other accomplishments of the year, are two developments the results of which are not immediately apparent, and which can not be measured in miles or dollars and cents, but which promise results for the future unequaled by any developments of the quarter century of highway activity.

First of these is the passage of the Federal highway act with its plan for a connected system of roads for the whole Nation; the second is the extraordinary activity in economic and physical research in connection with the financing, location, management, and design of the highways. For more than two decades there has been in progress a slow but certain development of highway construction from a casual activity in the hands of unskilled local officials without plan or progress, other than to maintain an established minimum of facility in highway transportation, toward a reasoned industry in the hands of State and national officials, supplemented by intelligent local aid, the aim of which is to provide complete and economical highway transport service throughout the Nation.

Designating the Primary System

The Federal Highway Act provided for a system of public highways not exceeding 7 percent of the total highway mileage in each State. The 7-percent system was divided into primary or interstate roads and secondary or intercounty roads. The 1921 Act required that the primary or interstate highways may not exceed three-sevenths of the 7-percent system, but the State highway departments could use up to 60 percent of Federal-aid funds on these roads. The remaining funds were reserved for the secondary highways connecting or correlating with the primary routes. In addition, the system in adjoining States was to be correlated. As Chief MacDonald put it:

The selection of 7 per cent of the roads of the Nation for future systematic improvement is unquestionably the largest and most important task ever assigned to the bureau.

Even before President Harding signed the legislation, Chief MacDonald asked each State highway department to certify its total public road mileage. They certified a national total of 2,859,575 miles, which meant that the Federal-aid system – the combined primary and secondary systems – would be up to 200,170 miles long.

As soon as the bill was signed, BPR asked the State highway departments to submit maps showing their tentative Federal-aid systems for initial examination.:

At the end of the fiscal year [June 30, 1922] tentative maps showing the systems proposed by the several States had been received from all States except Alabama, Indiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

While that task was underway, MacDonald asked one of his engineers, Edwin W. James, to devise an equitable way to test the State systems. James assembled a task force of BPR officials who used data from the Census Bureau and other sources to calculate county-by-county indices based on population, mineral products, forest products, and manufactured products. This data allowed them to calculate a composite index for each county. The Federal Highway

Administration's Bicentennial history explained:

By October 1922, tentative system maps had been received from all but nine States. Most of the routes in these systems followed existing roads, and they agreed remarkably well with the BPR task force's studies. Surprisingly, the largest deviations from what appeared to be the best interstate routes occurred in States such as New York and Massachusetts where a large percentage of the principal roads was already improved. In these States there was "a natural disposition to designate other roads of less importance as the Federal-aid highway system for the State." These and other differences were smoothed out in conferences between the BPR and the individual States and by regional conferences between the States to coordinate across State boundaries. [*America's Highways 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program*, Federal Highway Administration, 1976 pages 108-109]

The first such conference, MacDonald explained in his annual report, was held in Troy, New York, "at which the tentative systems were correlated for all of New England, New York, and New Jersey." [*Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture for the Year Ended June 30, 1922*, pages 461-463]

Automobile Blue Book, 1921

For motorists in the 1910s and early 1920s, the *Automobile Blue Book* was essential for traveling the unmarked primitive roads of the period. As the title page of the 1921 and other editions put it:

The Blue Books cover the entire United States and Southern Canada in twelve volumes. They tell you where to go and how to get there, giving complete maps of every motor road, running directions at every fork and turn, with mileages, all points of local or historical interest, state motor laws, hotel and garage accommodations, ferry and steamship schedules and rate. A veritable motorist's encyclopedia.

Instead of the road maps that would soon become the standard for road atlases, the *Automobile Blue Book* relied on descriptions that a motorist, or more likely a passenger, could read to stay on the intended road. Directions might involve turns at a stated building, a painted barn, a notable tree, a trolley, or a railroad crossing.

By the early 1920s, the publisher employed official pathfinders in Blue Book cars to update the listings. As John T. Bauer noted in an article about the guides:

Today, the method of navigating by detailed mileages and turn-by-turn directions may appear cumbersome and unnecessary to some drivers, especially those who excel at map reading, but those techniques were ideally suited for the conditions of automobile travel during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Roads at the time were constructed with only local uses in mind and often lacked descriptive signage. Prior to the automobile, roads that stretched across the country, or even a state, in an unbroken fashion were unnecessary. Traveling that far was reserved for railroads. Therefore, anyone wishing to travel cross-country by automobile was forced to make hundreds of turns onto hundreds of different roads. Such details could not have been depicted at an

appropriate scale on a sheet map because of the generalization that would have been required. Publishers and automobile enthusiasts turned to route guides such as the *Official Automobile Blue Book* and their turn-by-turn directions as a more effective solution. [Bauer, John T., "The Official Automobile Blue Book, 1901-1929: Precursor to the American Road Map," *Cartographic Perspectives*, Winter 2009, pages 4-27]

In talking and writing about the National Old Trails Road, Judge Lowe gave the roadway as positive a description as he could. Segments were hard surfaced in many States, funds were available for hard surfacing, or the pavement was good except for a stretch here or there. The 1921 edition of the *Automobile Blue Book*, Volume T ("Main Trunkline Highways of the United States") covered the National Old Trails Road/Santa Fe Trail broken into segments, each assigned a route number, found throughout the book. In addition to helpful directional guides, each entry commented on the road itself as observed by those without a vested interest in the success of the named trail.

The following compiles data on the National Old Trails Road, from east to west:

Route 198 – Baltimore to Washington – 39.7 miles

Via Elkridge, Laurel, Hyattsville, and Bladensburg.
Macadam and concrete all way. Summary: 6 miles concrete; 34 miles macadam.

Route 180 -Washington, D.C., to Hagerstown, Md. – 76.7 miles

Via Rockville, Gaithersburg, Ridgeway, Frederick, Braddock Heights, and Boonsboro.
Macadam and concrete roads.

Route 51 – Cumberland to Hagerstown, Md – 64.7 miles

Via Hancock.
Macadam with some short stretches of brick and concrete.

Route 350 – Cumberland, Md. to Uniontown, Pa. – 63.5 miles

Via Frostburg, Grantsville, Keyzers Ridge, Somerfield and Hopwood.
Macadam with some short stretches of brick and concrete.

Route 349 – Uniontown, Pa. to Wheeling, W. Va. – 68.2 miles

Via Brownsville, Washington, West Alexander, and Elm Grove.
Macadam practically all the way.

Route 348 – Wheeling, W. Va. to Zanesville, Oh. – 74.9 miles

Via Cambridge.
Practically all brick.

Route 347 – Zanesville to Columbus, Oh. – 54.3 miles

Via Brownsville, Jacksontown, Hebron and Reynoldsburg.
Macadam, concrete, and brick.

Route 346 – Columbus to Dayton, Oh. – 67.8 miles

Via Springfield.
Macadam and asphalt roads.

Route 345 – Dayton, Oh. to Indianapolis, Ind. – 209.2 miles

Via Eaton and Richmond.
Hard surfaced roads the entire distance, with several badly worn stretches.
Summary: 8 miles brick, 15 miles macadam, 49 miles stone, 26 miles concrete,
5 miles gravel.

Route 535 – Indianapolis to Terre Haute, Inc. – 538 miles

Via National Road.
Gravel and stone all the way.

Route 536 – Terre Haute, Ind. to St. Louis, Mo. – 176.3 miles

Via Effingham and Vandalia
Approximately three-quarters of this route is hard surfaced; the balance will no doubt be
closed in places for construction during the year.

Route 537 – St. Louis to Columbia, Mo. – 139.4 miles

Via St. Charles, Wentzville and Fulton.
Macadam to St. Charles, graded dirt and some gravel to Wentzville, balance stretches
of dirt, gravel and macadam.

Route 538 – Columbia to Kansas City, Mo. – 152.8 miles

Via Boonville, Marshall, Waverly, Lexington and Independence.
Gravel to Rocheport, next 110 miles graded dirt, with stretches of gravel and macadam
between Dover and Wellington; balance macadam and pavement. Summary: 102 miles
dirt; 50 miles macadam, gravel, and pavement.

Volume T did not cover the Old Santa Fe Trail routing of the National Old Trails Road in
Kansas, but did cover the rival New Santa Fe Trail, which departed from the National Old Trails
Road between Olathe and Syracuse:

Route 600 – Kansas City, Mo. to Emporia, Kan. – 130.6 miles – New Santa Fe Trail

Via Olathe, Edgerton, Ottawa, and Waverly.

Pavement to Waldo; next 8 miles macadam; balance graded dirt. During dry weather, good average time can be made on this trip, especially where surface of dirt road has been dragged and oiled.

Route 601 – Emporia to Hutchinson, Kan. – 122.4 miles – New Santa Fe Trail

Via Cottonwood Falls, Florence and Newton

Graded dirt road all the way.

Route 602 – Hutchinson to Dodge City, Kan. – 154.5 miles – New Santa Fe Trail

Via Lyons, Ellenwood, Great Bend, Larned, Kinsley and Spearville.

Dirt roads all the way.

Route 603 – Dodge City to Syracuse, Kan. – 107.3 miles – New Santa Fe Trail

Via Garden City.

Dirt roads the entire distance.

Route 811 – Syracuse, Kan., to La Junta, Colo. – 114.9 miles

Via Lamar and Las Animas.

Practically all dirt roads, with a few stretches of sand.

Route 810 – La Junta to Pueblo, Colo. – 66.0 miles

Via Rocky Ford.

Practically all gravel.

Route 789 – Pueblo to Trinidad, Colo. – 89.3 miles

Via Walsenburg and Aguilar.

Graded gravel highway excepting some stretches of dirt between Walsenburg and Aguilar.

Route 611 – Trinidad, Colo., to Las Vegas, N.M. – 138.4 miles

Via Raton, Maxwell, Springer, and Wagon Mound.

Gravel highway to 15 miles beyond Raton. Natural dirt and prairie roads extend to Wagon Mound. The surface is generally fair, but in wet weather traveling will

be poor near Maxwell and Springer. From Wagon Mound to Watrous the road is hardly more than a trail and some very poor rocky stretches make only the slowest of progress possible. A dirt road which is very fast in dry weather connects Watrous and Las Vegas.

Route 612 – Las Vegas to Santa Fe, N.M. – 72.6 miles

Via Tienda, Rowe and Pecos.

The average condition on the first 60 miles of this trip is only fair; balance gravel highway. Constant improvements are carried on towards the establishment of a permanent highway between the two terminals.

Route 613 – Santa Fe to Albuquerque, N.M. – 64.6 miles

Via Domingo and Alameda.

With the exception of about 8 miles of sand along the foot-hills, skirting the Rio Grande, road conditions on this trip are good. There are long stretches of graded dirt and natural prairie road where excellent traveling will be encountered. Steep grades and sharp turns on La Bajada hill require slow and careful driving. The length of this grade is one and one-half miles.

Route 614 – Albuquerque to Magdalena, N.M. – 109.8 miles

Via Isleta, Los Lunas, Belen and Socorro.

Graded gravel and dirt road to Belen; natural prairie roads then predominate to Socorro, with a few bad stretches of sand and some rough crossings on dry river beds; gravelly road from Socorro to Magdalena.

Route 615 – Magdalena, N.M., to Springerville, Ariz. – 130.5 miles

Via Datil and Quemado.

Dirt Roads with stretches of natural gravel are traversed to the Arizona line, balance gravel.

The Blue Book did not cover the road from Gallup, New Mexico, to Holbrook, Arizona, following instead the Springerville routing.

Route 616 – Springerville to Winslow, Ariz. – 135.8 miles

Via St. Johns, Petrified Forest National Monument and Holbrook.

There are long stretches of graded highway and a good dirt road between Holbrook and Winslow. With the exception of a few poor stretches thru Petrified Forest and thence to Holbrook, this is a good road and fast time can be maintained during favorable weather conditions. The trip can easily be made in one day with plenty of time for sight seeing in the Petrified Forest.

Route 617 – Winslow to Flagstaff, Ariz. – 64.89 miles

No intervening cities noted.

Gravel and dirt roads, with about 10 miles of rough and rocky surface.

Route 618 – Flagstaff to Grand Canyon, Ariz. – 87.4 miles

Via Grand View Point

First 70 miles prairie road, with some short stretches of rough sand and rock; balance graded dirt. There are no accommodations or supply stations between terminals.

Route 620 – Grand Canyon to Williams, Ariz. – 64.8 miles

First 25 miles natural dirt and sand road; balance graded gravel and dirt. There are no stopping or supply stations en route.

Route 625 – Flagstaff to Kingman, Ariz. – 177.4 miles

Via Williams, Ashfork and Seligman.

Graded gravel and dirt to Seligman, poor road to a point 6 miles east of Peach Springs, good road to Hackberry, followed by graded gravel to Kingman.

Route 626 – Kingman, Ariz., to Needles, Cal. – 71.0 miles

Via Yucca and Topock.

Good graded, gravelly dirt to Yucca, fair to poor road to Topock, good road to Needles. Good time can be made between Kingman and Yucca and again from Topock to Needles, but the intermediate distance slows travel, owing to many cross washes. The route traverses a desert country, crossing the Colorado river on a steel bridge at Topock. Make local inquiry regarding road via Oatman which may be preferable to text here given.

Route 627 – Needles to Barstow, Cal. – 166.2 miles

Via Goffs, Amboy, Ludlow and Daggett.

The road is either of gravelly sand or of an oil surface. Between Amboy and Ludlow the old road is still preferable to the new road which follows the south side of the RR. Both, however, are in very poor condition. Average road conditions on this route are good and very fast time can be made except between Amboy and Ludlow. This route crosses the Mojave desert and owing to the intense heat during the summer months, tourists frequently make this run at night.

Route 628 – Barstow to San Bernardino, Cal. – 81.7 miles

Via Victorville.

Gravel and sand road to summit of Cajon pass, balance macadam

and concrete. After crossing the western edge of the Mojave desert and reaching the summit of Cajon pass, the tourist is suddenly confronted with a magnificent panorama of incomparable grandeur. Descending on easy winding grades over splendid roadway with high mountains towering on all sides, the tourist almost abruptly finds himself within the semi-tropical vegetation of southern California.

Route 629 – San Bernardino to Los Angeles, Cal. – 63.3 miles

Via Foothill Blvd. and Pasadena.
Paved roads all the way.

The D.A.R. Continental Congress – 1922

In April 1922, the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) met in Washington for its 31st Continental Congress. Mrs. William H. Talbott, of Rockville, Maryland, was allotted only 5 minutes for her report on the work of the National Old Trails Road Committee. She said, “It is impossible that in the five minutes allotted for this report I can give you the results of this work. It will be published and you will receive it later.”

The proceedings contained Mrs. Talbott’s full letter report. She began:

While we do not come with hands laden with work accomplished, your Chairman is glad to report we are getting back to our original object which, of necessity, was laid aside during the war. At that time this committee was encouraged to search out local pioneer trails, and since then much valuable history has been brought to light, and this research is greatly stimulating that degree of patriotism which is building the National Old Trails Road, our Memorial to the Pioneers. Today we are more closely united, more definitely concentrated upon one road than in any previous year.

To “conserve energy and prevent loss of time,” she had asked each State chairman “not to undertake any local work this year, except that which bore directly upon the National Old Trails Road.” The chairmen were asked to “organize a study course whereby the Chapters would search out their own pioneers, and then, in their honor, establish a National Old Trails Road Fund for our road signs”:

When reports show that only the States through which our road runs have expended funds upon this road we know it is entirely due to misunderstanding, and all that we now need is to get together on some plan for raising funds.

In response to many requests regarding “the exact location” of the National Old Trails Road, the committee had prepared a brief history of the road that went out in February, “and immediately there were requests for hundreds of copies.” This experience led to a puzzle:

While preparing this letter it became necessary for me to learn why our road, clearly defined and with a historic record, and which traversed 12 States, had gradually taken in under its name other trails of historic value, but not in any way associated with our

National Old Trails Road, and it was found that originally there was, and still can be, *but one* National Old Trails Road; yet, while searching out pioneer trails our road had added to it lateral trails until it included a system of roads instead of one definite highway.

From this review, she concluded, “There was but one thing to do.” With the concurrence of D.A.R.’s president general, Mrs. Talbott had spoken with Representative Frederick N. Zihlman of Maryland to ask him to amend his bill to coincide only with the original National Old Trails Road:

All past and present bills were compared and changes noted as they appeared, and it was definitely determined that with several bills in Congress asking legislation for the National Old Trails Road the only possible hope of favorable action was in having all bills describe definitely one road, so steps were taken to amend our bill. We stand *pledged* to sign this road. When the States were encouraged to search out local pioneer trails they were not authorized to mark them, yet we find our committees working upon the Lincoln Highway, the Lee Highway, the Dixie Highway, the Old Spanish Trail, the Natches [sic] Trace, as well as marking old trails in nearly every State.

On January 25, 1922, Representative Zihlman had introduced H.R. 101165, the Daughters of the American Republic Old Trail Act to “provide a national ocean-to-ocean highway over the pioneer trails of the Nation.” It had been referred to the Committee on Roads, from which it would not emerge.

Much valuable work, Mrs. Talbott continued, had been accomplished in many States during the year, “but I am sorry to add that every bit of work, even by our committee, which is not related to our road properly belongs to another committee.” She added, “please remember, we can only report matters relating to our road.”

The committee had established a fund to pay for monuments to the pioneers who “reduced the dense wilderness to broad fields for cultivation . . . until, at last, they laid their lives upon the altar of patriotism”:

Where are the monuments to mark their resting place?

We are asked to commemorate their sacrifice; what do we offer in return? What could be more appropriate to commemorate their heroism than for their descendants to contribute towards a fund which will be used to memorialize their sacrifice?

. . . You will recognize the importance of having a fund in the hands of the Treasurer General, which will enable us to make a contract for road signs.

To that end your Chairman has asked each State Chairman to suggest a plan by which we can raise this fund. Every reply but one urged the per capita tax as the only equitable plan, and this is the only plan by which the small Chapters will not be overtaxed.

Your Chairman further asked for a contribution this year, and a definite pledge for next

year. So far, five Chapters in Pennsylvania have given \$25 each; five Chapters in Florida have given \$10 each; Wisconsin has given \$30; Iowa sends \$15; one Illinois chapter has raised \$119; one Alabama Chapter gives 15 cents per member; and other States favor the plan.

To stimulate patriotism in our work, the National Chairman has donated 5,000 little seals, "The Madonna of the Trail," with the request they be used on your letters. Ours is the only National Committee that can use such an emblem, and we must give to our work the distinction which is added by this appealing, and oft-time pathetic picture

There are many highways, stretching in every direction, but the Daughters of the American Revolution were the pioneers in the desire to build a road as a Memorial, and we must maintain the integrity of our road or we lose our identity.

She reported on State activities around the country, including those the National Old Trails Road passed through.

In Pennsylvania, the road was in "fine condition," and "the old Mile Stones are in good condition and will be preserved."

West Virginia reported that "upon the 16 miles of the National Old Trails Road have been erected four handsome bronze tablets and the funds are in hand for the fifth one, when the bridge of the Baltimore & Ohio Company is completed. The unveiling of each tablet was conducted by special program, with prominent speakers and special music":

The National Old Trails Road is in excellent condition, the whole having been recently rebuilt, and the old Mile Stones which were placed by the Government are in fine condition and are kept just as they were placed over 100 years ago.

The Ohio chapter reported:

The State Highway Department has widened the road (the Old Cumberland Road) to 80 feet, and it is being rapidly paved. Portions have been marked by the Highway Department with a red band on a white background, painted on telegraph poles; there are no permanent road signs erected, so far. Old Mile Stones are being reset and permanently preserved.

The Ohio chapter also was offering prizes to school children for the best essay on the National Road, "and one Chapter has presented a prize of \$25 for the best essay on this subject."

The Maryland chapter was not relaxing its efforts "to get the State Highway Commission to erect our road signs in accordance with the authority given them by our legislature." She added, "Maryland has a beautiful stone road which, with but a slight difference, follows Braddock's Road and the Old National Pike across the State."

After summarizing State activities, Mrs. Talbott added, "Nearly every State has expressed its

interest in our work – the kind of interest that will, in time, bear fruit”:

Many have stated they did not understand their efforts belonged to one road, and they manfully pledged “loyalty to the Society and the National Old Trails Road.”

It is but natural that committees want to *see* results, and this led many into local work, without realizing that *if* it is not related to our road then our energy and our funds are benefiting other committees.

She could report “what belonged to *our* road, but other committees will give the States full credit for what has been done.”

She concluded with an emphasis on the committee’s work:

It was not intended that we should erect even bronze tablets – we were specially organized to erect permanent road signs, which display our insignia and the words “National Old Trails Road” upon bands of red, which, and blue.

This must be our work for next year. If you can do nothing more, get your State to pledge 2 cents per members – just a postage stamp. Two cents per member today would produce over \$2,000. Is not this worth while? Do we realize that a pledge of 10 cents per member, *now*, will enable us to make contract for road signs?

Having presented her 5-minute report, Mrs. Talbott asked to add a word or two about the road signs:

Just as I left my home this morning I received by special delivery the picture I hold in my hand of our road signs, with complete details and specifications. We will present to you later a plan for erecting these road signs, with complete details, the cost of each set in the ground, etc. That we will submit to you for your consideration another year.
[*Proceedings of the Thirty-First Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution*, April 1922, pages 101-105]

In addition to reporting on the committee’s work, Mrs. Talbott prepared an article for *The Washington Post* on the history of the National Old Trails Road, beginning:

The National Old Trails road is composed of five sections, with a space of almost 100 years between the opening of the first and the last.

After summarizing the history of the segments, she concluded:

Thus we have a road from the waters of the Atlantic across the continent to the Pacific, a large portion of which was opened by the Federal government for military purposes, and all of it financed by authority of Congress.

Under the authority of Congress this road was surveyed and taken over a national road from the capital of the nation to St. Louis, Mo. Then taken as a military road under Kearney for the capture of the Southwest. It thus became a “national” road and, being based upon these “old trails,” is properly called the National Old Trails road, and there is none like it either in its national characteristics or historic interest.

The National Old Trails road committee was organized to urge the construction by the government (and by the States through which it passes) of a permanent roadway over these old trails, and to erect thereon the National Old Trails road signs of the Daughters of the American Revolution as a monument to and a memorial of the hardy pioneers who carried civilization from the Atlantic to the Pacific and through whose patriotic action the flag of our country now floats over a united people across the continent. [Talbot, William Hyde, “National Old Trails Road,” *The Washington Post*, April 17, 1922, page 6]

In addition to Mrs. Talbot’s report, the proceedings included a report on Patriotic Lectures and Lantern Slides during the congress, including one on “National Old Trails” that had been “rearranged with the contour of the regular map, showing the various States where the D.A.R. has put up the boulders and bronze markers. As our Society was the first to commence the marking of these old trails, these markers are of special interest.” [*Proceedings*, page 138]

Mrs. Alice Bradford Wiles read her report on the Legislation in the United States Congress “as rapidly as I can, and please no one ask that I read more slowly, because if I do I cannot get through and the last part is the most important.” After going through several issues, she pointed out that some issues were “a matter for State rather than National legislation”:

Since the making of good roads and their suitable marking is under State control, the raising of money for the Old Trails Road and for its proper marking was referred by the board to the legislatures of the twelve States through which the road passes, with the hope that this might be included in the appropriations for good roads in those States. West Virginia has marked the road with four boulders at suitable distances and with bronze tablets upon them telling the story of the road. Illinois has completed this year the road through its boundaries, from Vincennes to East St. Louis, and will ask the road commissioners to place historical markers upon it. Other States have done likewise, but the data are not in my possession, as is the work of our very capable and enthusiastic National Committee on “Old Trails Road.”

(Mrs. Wiles’ “most important” reminder at the end of her report urged all D.A.R. chapters to support the National Society’s legislative goals through gathering information, educating others, and contact with Members of Congress.) [*Proceedings*, page 139, 141]

Missouri’s Centennial Road Law of 1921

Under the Federal Highway Act of 1921, only roads identified within each State’s 7-percent system were eligible for improvement with Federal-aid highway funds. Judge Lowe understood the importance of ensuring that every mile of the National Old Trails Road would be designated

as part of each State's primary or interstate road system. Considering the prominence of the National Old Trails Road, that goal was not as easily attained in Judge Lowe's home State of Missouri as he may have expected.

Voters in Missouri had approved a \$60 million bond issue in November 1920. Despite high expectations, the measure proved unworkable due to a defect in the law that prevented revenue from automobile licenses to be used as intended to back the bonds. In December, John M. Maland, superintendent of the State Highway Department, issued a tentative map along with his plan for using the funds:

The general idea of the plan is to have five main highways to be built of concrete; two east and west through the more thickly settled portions of the State; two north and south, one following generally the bank of the Mississippi River, and the other generally the western border of the state, with a fifth road extending from St. Louis southwesterly to the Kansas line, generally following the Frisco railroad.

Work should, in my opinion, proceed simultaneously on both primary and secondary roads. Primary roads should cost slightly less than \$140,000 a mile, and the secondary approximately \$10,000 a mile. ["Look Out for the 'Peacock Trails,'" *The Farmington Times*, December 24, 1920, page 2]

On December 18, the Commercial Club of Columbia appointed a committee to fight the Malang plan because it did not designate the entire Missouri portion of the National Old Trails Road as a primary road. The primary route proposed between Kansas City and St. Louis would include the Old Trails road only as far west as Fulton, where it departed for a southern route that would run through the State capital, Jefferson City.

E. W. Stephens, president of the Missouri Old Trails Road Association, headed the committee that would attend a meeting of the executive and legislative committee of the Missouri Good Roads Federation in St. Louis to explain the protest. He said he had communicated with the commercial clubs of Boonville, Arrow Rock, Marshall, Lexington, and Fulton. They were, he said, "all aroused and enthusiastic about the Old Trails route as a primary road across the state." The towns intended to send representatives to the St. Louis meeting.

Judge Lowe was among those protesting vigorously against any action to make part of the National Old Trails Road a secondary road. He wrote on December 20 to Malang to protest the announced plan. Judge Lowe cited the unfairness of Malang's proposed system and intimated that the trails association would go over the head of the board and carry the matter to the legislature. In addition to many other reasons, Judge Lowe called attention to the fact that the National Old Trails Road in Missouri had already been selected as the official cross-State route and that this action, taken years ago, must stand.

Malang replied in part:

I have your favor of December 20 subject, tentative map and plan for building state system of roads, at hand. We are in the midst of moving our office and as I am trying to

get away for the holidays, I beg of you to permit me a little more time to answer your letter in detail. I beg to say, however, that I have no desire to discriminate against anyone or any road, and hope to be able to show my disinterestedness when I answer your letter more fully. Thanking you for writing me on the subject, I beg to remain. J. M. Malang
[“City to Fight for Place on Primary Road,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, December 23, 1920, page 1; “Columbians Go to St. Louis Road Meeting,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, December 28, 1920, page 1]

The Missouri Old Trails Association met on January 5, 1921, as the General Assembly session convened in Jefferson City. Columbia would not be on a first class highway under the bond issue, Stephens said, unless the cities and counties along the Missouri Old Trails Road, fought for it. The association unanimously adopted a resolution that set forth the delegates’ sentiment:

We the undersigned members of the Resolutions Committee of the Missouri Old Trails Association recommend to the Association:

Whereas – The Old Trails Road was established in 1911 through Legislative act by the State Board of Agriculture as the first official cross-state highway after due deliberation and authority on the part of the board –

Whereas – The Missouri Old Trails Road is a link of the historic National Old Trails Highway connecting with official cross-state roads in states on the east and west and is a part of the only transcontinental highway through the state –

Whereas – The Missouri Old Trails Road is the logical route serving the state from St. Louis to Kansas City, traversing the counties of great population, great wealth per capita and serving the greatest amount of traffic at present and promised in the future –

Whereas – The Missouri Old Trails Road is the shortest route traversing the state from the east to the west and is best physically adapted to construction –

Whereas – The Missouri Old Trails Road as now laid out is one third constructed with hard surface and the remainder is organized and financed –

Be It Resolved – That the Missouri Old Trails Road be recognized as designated and that whatever provision is made for the designation for other primary roads in the state whether by direct action of the Legislature or through a highway commission, every precaution be taken not to permit the repudiation or setting aside partially or completely the action already taken in this connection under authority of the Legislature by which this road was officially established as the first cross-state highway in Missouri –

Be It Further Resolved – That a committee be elected by this association with ample power and authority to present the claims of the road to the Legislature and before such other agency as may be constituted to have charge of the designation and administration and construction of the roads under the \$60,00000 bond issue.

The association appointed a committee to present its resolution and claims to the General Assembly. Judge Lowe was among the members. He had been unable to attend the meeting, but sent a telegram:

I recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

“We favor a system of state highways; through roads reaching every part of the state to

be designated by act of the Legislature and constructed and maintained under the supervision and control of a state highway commission.” I also suggest that a committee on legislation be appointed.

Much depends on this convention. Vigilance is the price of success. We must not sleep at the post. Having come up through tribulation our crown of victory will be the greater – [“Recognition of Old Trails Road is Asked,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, January 5, 1921, page 1]

The Missouri Old Trails Road was not alone in seeking designation as the cross-State highway under the \$60 million bond issue:

The Missouri Old Trails Association is not alone in organizing for a fight to get a cross-state highway built under the \$60,000,000 bond issue. One hundred and twenty-five delegates representing eighteen of the twenty two towns between Kansas City and St. Louis along the route of the Missouri North Cross-state Highway met in Moberly Thursday and reorganized to conduct a vigorous campaign before the Legislature to make this road the chief east and west cross state highway under the 60 million dollar road building campaign.

The road passes through Excelsior Springs, Brunswick. Moberly. Mexico and St. Charles and traverses the counties of Jackson, Clay, Ray, Carroll, Charlton, Randolph, Boone, Montgomery, Warren, St. Charles and St. Louis. [“Rival For Old Trails,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, January 8, 1921, page 1]

The General Assembly attempted to develop road legislation to correct the bond law, but the issues were too complex to be taken up during a regular session filled with many other matters. A special session was called for the summer to consider the issue, getting underway on June 14. The legislature was sharply divided, with members from large cities and members from small towns and farm areas wanting different things, as did the Senate and the House.

(With the new administration of Governor Arthur M. Hyde taking office on January 10, 1921, Superintendent Malang resigned his \$5,000-a-year post to enter the contracting business. [“Personal Mention,” *Good Roads*, February 2, 1921])

During the special session to consider legislation to revamp the State’s highway program, Stephens appeared before the House roads and highways committee to call for a State system of hard-surfaced highways and designation of the National Old Trails Road between Kansas City and St. Louis as the cross-State highway. He reminded committee members that several years earlier, the State Board of Agriculture had chosen the National Old Trails Road as the official cross-State highway between those two cities – and the importance of a hard-surfaced road connecting them.

As summarized in a newspaper report, Stevens explained that “the counties the road runs through . . . have a larger population, greater automobile registrations, higher assessed valuation and greater value of farm products than the counties through which any of the competitive routes

run.” Four-fifths of the State’s public institutions are located along the road. “There are more than 15,000 in the denominational and eleemosynary institutions located in the towns on the road, he said, and \$450,000 has just been raised for the construction of a bridge across the Missouri River to join the north and south sections of the route.” [“E. W. Stephens Makes Strong Road Appeal,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 7, 1921, page 1]

In mid-July, Stephens took strong exception to a claim by Representative David Bagby, Jr., of Howard County that the legislature had not received any propaganda from the Missouri Old Trails Road Association. Stephens said that a detailed statement about the comparative resources of the competitive cross-State highways had been placed on the desk of each member of the legislature. He admitted, however, that the literature had not been mailed until the preceding Thursday and may not have been distributed until the following Monday:

An erroneous impression as to the publicity given to the Old Trails road in the legislature has been created by the statement of Mr. Bagby. We have not believed it necessary to devote much time to advertising the Old Trails road before the General Assembly because it has not seemed probable there would be any cross-state highway designated.

However, the Old Trails road is the only highway, according to the information I have obtained for which arguments have been presented to the House road committee

Afterwards, on learning that other routes have been sending in literature for distribution among the members of the Legislature, we sent to Jefferson City to be placed on the desk of both houses a full statement of the comparative resources of the counties through which the different cross-state highways pass. The figures contained in the statement are official, dependable, impartial, and not inflated. They cannot be refuted.

The three cross-state routes that have been most under consideration are the Old Trails road, the North Cross-State highway, and the suggested route through Fallon, Jefferson City, and Sedalia.

The figures we have collected from official sources show that in the grand total value of the farm products the counties through which the Old Trails road runs lead those of the North Cross-State by \$9,328,510 for the past year and those of the suggested Sedalia route by \$7,904,531.

In the same way, the Old Trails road leads the North Cross-State by 2,738 automobiles and the suggested Sedalia route by 3,615. In population, the Old Trails road exceeds the North Cross-State by 3,598 and the suggested Sedalia route by 27,147. In assessed valuation, the difference in favor of the Old Trails road over the North Cross-State is \$597,792,236. Furthermore, the Old Trails road is more than fifteen miles shorter than either of the other two routes.

In addition to the statement containing the facts and figures regarding the Old Trails road, we have prepared the material for an illustrated booklet giving in full a great deal of other information concerning the highway. This booklet will tell of the schools, colleges and state institutions located along the Old Trails road, and set forth the advantages of the new bridge at

Bayville. It will also call attention to the connections of the highway east and west and point out that the road has been the official cross-state highway in the past.

Many other facts will be included in the booklet, which we will publish at the proper time. We have not thought that the Legislature will designate the routes to be improved, our opinion being that the designation of the principal highways will be left to the State Highway Commission. To the commission, all the facts and other information concerning the road will be presented when we deem it advisable. We have no doubt as to the selection of the Old Trails road as the official cross-state highway.

The Commercial Club was mailing maps to the legislators showing the route of the National Old Trails Road across the continent. [“Better Roads Data Goes to Legislators,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 19, 1921, page 1]

Theodore Gary, who would become chairman of the new Missouri State Highway Commission, wrote about the General Assembly’s deliberations resulting in the Centennial Road Law on the anniversary of Missouri statehood. The law, he said, “was a last day compromise to end what seemed to be a hopeless deadlock and neither members of the House and Senate who finally voted for it nor the governor who approved it felt that it was satisfactory”:

Nearly all the men who had led the bond campaign were grievously disappointed. Road experts declared it “a miserable mess.” It was freely predicted that it was impossible of execution. This general opinion warrants a brief study of how it was fashioned. There had been no adequate data on which to base the amount of the bonds. The Hawes law had provided for 3500 miles of road and the McCullough-Morgan amendments had provided for 6000 miles built by Federal aid, state aid and local “match money.” Federal aid of over \$2,000,000 a year might be reasonably expected for the estimated twelve years of road building. Advocates of the bonds naturally expected a state system. The memory of the cross-state highways designated in the Hadley administration was fresh. The Senate readily passed a bill, of which Senator Ralph, of St. Louis County, was author. It provided continuous, connected hard-surfaced state roads, such as Missouri would doubtless have built first, had its representation in the House reflected the population more and geography less.

The House struck out the entire Ralph bill and substituted one of its own, designating a state road system, dealing with each county separately, in alphabetical order. It was virtually a town to town designation. Each member of the House knew his own county, its towns and roads. He had the advantage of field surveys. Connections with neighboring counties were arranged among neighboring members. Scant consideration was shown the “peacock lanes,” as they dubbed the Senate highways. The House, overwhelmingly rural, talked farm to market roads. Some members did not believe that any roads except dirt roads could be built in Missouri. But for the conditions of Federal aid and the necessity for final concurrence by the Senate, many members would have disposed of the funds in the old fashioned way, by distribution among the counties. The 4000 road overseers would have found a way to spend the money. The metropolitan press and other advocates of “peacock lanes” styled the House members “dirt roaders” or “daubers.”

When the House bill was returned to the Senate, that body in turn struck out everything the

House had adopted and put back the Ralph measure.

The resulting conference to reconcile the two bills was so contentious that many legislators thought that the special session would end in failure:

Road friends had come in from all points of the state to help in solving the problem. Largely through the influence of Speaker Sam O'Fallon, of Holt County, the House agreed to certain provisos written by him, under which the State Highway Commission was permitted to designate as higher type than claybound gravel road approximately 1500 miles of the outlined state highway system to connect the principal population centers and one-third of the proceeds of the bond money and an additional \$6,000 a mile from the other two-thirds was allotted to the higher type roads.

With that and other provisos, the House and Senate agreed on the bill. It passed the House by a vote of 129 to 2 and the Senate by 28 to 0. [Gary, Theodore, "The Road History of Missouri," *Missouri, Mother of the West*, Volume 2, The American Historical Society, 1930, pages 614-615; "\$60,000,000 Road Measure Passes Missouri Legislature," *Good Roads*, August 17, 1921, page 91]

On August 4, 1921, Governor Hyde signed the Centennial Road Law. The law replaced all previous sections of State road laws. Chairman Gary wrote that before this law, Missouri did not have ". . . legal provision, funds and proper directing force for building a state highway system." [Gary, page 597]

As Stephens had predicted, the battle of the cross-State highway would be settled by the new commission.

The Memorial Highway

In April 1921, Judge Lowe announced in Columbia that he had a plan to make the National Old Trails Road in Missouri a memorial to the soldiers, sailors, and marines from the State who had died in the World War. He had written a bill that he would submit for consideration during the special session on road legislation:

An act to authorize the acquiring and holding of lands along and adjacent to public highways for the purpose of beautification and adornment, and as a Memorial to the Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines of Missouri in the late World War, by any corporation or association engaged in the promotion and building of a highway or highways across the several states, including the state of Missouri, and particularly from Washington, in the District of Columbia, to Los Angeles, in the state of California, and commonly known as the National Old Trails Road.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section 1. Any corporation or association engaged safely in the promotion, marking out or building of a highway or highways between the City of Washington, in the District of

Columbia, and Los Angeles, in the State of California, crossing or passing through the several states between such points, including the State of Missouri, is hereby authorized and empowered to receive and accept donations, conveyances and dedications, or purchase, strip or strips of land not exceeding 100 feet on each side of the right of way of such highway as may be in, or pass through, the State of Missouri.

Section 2. Such association or corporation is empowered and authorized to condemn such strips of land not exceeding 100 feet (100 ft.) in width, without expense or cost to the State of Missouri or any county therein; the proceedings for acquiring such strips of land by condemnation shall as nearly as may be the proceedings for acquiring or condemning for rights-of-way for railways, under the laws of the State of Missouri.

Provided, that nothing in this Section of this Act shall authorize any condemnation of strips of land in any city, town, or village in this State, nor of any land which is occupied by any public road or the right-of-way of any railway, nor of any land upon which there is any improvement in the nature of a building.

Section 3. Reasonable access over such strip or strips of land to and from the land adjoining such strip or strips of land, shall not be denied or obstructed.

Section 4. Such strip or strips of land shall be held and kept for the purpose of adornment of the highway or highways adjoining them by the planting and cultivation of trees, shrubbery and such other ornamentation as may be determined upon by such association or corporation as a memorial to the soldiers, sailors and marines from Missouri in the great World War.

Section 5. It shall be a misdemeanor for any person to injure damage or destroy any trees, shrubbery or other ornamentation on any such strip of land. [“Bill For Road Memorial is Now Prepared,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 1, 1921, page 3]

Judge Lowe prepared a flyer on the proposal displaying the National Old Trails Road in Missouri. The horizontal center contained three panels. The left panel contained a drawing of memorial trees along a roadside. The center panel contained a road map of the State of Missouri with the National Old Trails Road highlighted. The right panel was a copy of the bill.

Below the panels were the words:

**A MEMORIAL TO THE SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AND MARINES
OF MISSOURI IN THE LATE WORLD WAR**

As provided for in the Accompanying Act by the State General Assembly. About 250 miles of Highway across the State (exclusive of City and Town Streets). A 60-foot Roadway Flanked by 100-foot strips of Memorial Parkways. [Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum, Accession Number: M1357]

A revised version of the bill came up for debate in the Missouri House during the special session on July 20, 1921, and was defeated, as reported in the news the following day:

An effort to provide for the paving of the Old Trails road between St. Louis and Kansas City as a memorial highway was defeated in the House late yesterday afternoon after a lengthy discussion in which the rural delegates denounced peacock lanes at every opportunity.

The paving of the road was included in the provisions of an amendment to the House road bill offered by Judge J. Allen Prewitt of the First district of Jackson County. A substitute for the amendment providing for five primary roads based on the plan suggested by John Malang, former state highway superintendent, was also defeated.

The amendment offered by Judge Prewitt provided for the designation of the Old Trails road as a memorial to the soldiers, sailors and marines of Missouri who gave their lives in the war with Germany and to the sturdy pioneers who blazed the Old Trails across the state. The amendment specified that the road was to be constructed of material most practical for a permanent hard surface road and that as a part of the construction of the road a monument of Missouri granite was to be erected at each mile post. The contents of the amendment were practically the same as those contained in the bill introduced in the House by Judge Prewitt but killed by the House committee on roads and highways.

Immediately after the amendment was offered by Judge Prewitt, William P. Elmer of Dent County tried to put through the substitute, causing the lengthy discussion of "peacock lanes." The substitute offered by Elmer provided for five primary roads reaching from St. Louis to Kansas City, from St. Louis to Joplin by way of Springfield, from Hannibal to St. Joseph with connecting spurs to St. Louis and Kansas City, from St. Louis north and south along the eastern edge of the state, and from Kansas City north and south along the western edge. The adoption of the substitute and the approval of the amendment would have left the Old Trails road out of the primary system since the road from St. Louis to Kansas City in the substitute ran by way of Jefferson City and Sedalia.

In support of the amendment, however, Judge, Prewitt made a strong plea. "The Old Trails ought to be hallowed ground," he said, in reviewing the history of the road across the continent. "The paving of the road," he continued, "will serve the double purpose of commemorating the memory of those old pioneers as well as the boys who crossed the water." He then called attention to the colleges and state institutions located on the route saying that "it is a burning shame that Columbia, the educational capital of the state, does not have better transportation facilities."

When questioned regarding the amendment, Judge Prewitt said that he estimated it would cost \$9,000,000 to construct the cross-state highway.

Opposing the amendment, Elmer claimed that Prewitt was attempting to take the Old Trails road, "or whatever else they called it," from the class of all other roads and put it in the so-called primary class. "He seeks to weave around that all the sentiment he can," Elmer added, and then began his argument for the primary roads included in his substitute for the Prewitt amendment. He pointed out the primary roads had been laid out by the state highway commission and that they connected almost every important town in

the state, including St. Louis, Kansas City, St. Joseph, Joplin, Carthage Springfield, Cape Girardeau, Hannibal, Jefferson City, and Sedalia.

Both the amendment and substitute were opposed, Prewitt and Elmer being severely criticized for attempting to designate primary roads. "This tomfoolery ought to stop," declared William A. Hubbard of Lawrence County, in concluding a short talk against the proposals.

The substitute and the amendment were both voted down by acclamation. ["Old Trails Memorial Is Badly Beaten," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 21, 1921, page 2]

Seeking Recognition for the Old Trails Road

The resulting Centennial Road law called for designation of a State road system that the legislation specified by county. The bill called for improvement of a system of approximately 7,700 miles of as described in the legislation. They were to be "properly bound" gravel, but the new State Highway Commission was to "designate the routes and types of the higher type roads of approximately 1500 miles connecting the principal population centers of the state." In the last minute compromises that made the bill possible, this provision for 1,500 miles of hard-surface highways satisfied the advocates for primary roads and was acceptable to those who favored farm-to-market roads. In addition, the commission was to make changes in the routes as deemed necessary "in the interest of economy and directness of routes, and it is authorized to commence the construction of said higher type roads at such place or places on such routes as it may deem advisable." The only limitation was "that no changes in designation shall increase the total mileage of the state highway system."

The August 1921 issue of the Missouri Road Bulletin explained:

Everybody is greatly interested in the new highway law as passed at the special session. The Highway Department has been requested to outline its program under that law. To those who have read the law it is no doubt plain that its interpretation into the actual construction of highways in 114 counties of the state involves much preparation and much thought. The building of such a system of highways of approximately 7,700 mi., can not be planned in a month or in two months. As the program of construction actually develops, new features will occur which may be overlooked at the beginning.

Taken in connection with the extension of the present law, it is evident that the carrying out of its provisions means a great undertaking. The Highway Department faces the new law with full courage, but without, as yet, a complete knowledge of what the new highway commission will desire. The highway engineer has no fears of the future, but his decision and his acts must be passed upon by the new board before they can be effective. For that reason, a road building program under the new law can not be promulgated at this time. ["The New Highway Law of Missouri," *Good Roads*, October 19, 1921, pages 191-192]

The law had emerged only after extensive debate, wrangling, and compromise, but as noted in part 3, Judge Lowe said of the law:

The legislature of Missouri, after much ill-natured criticism and abuse, has written into the statutes the finest road law in the United States, bar none. We most sincerely rejoice with this epoch-making legislature on the splendid results of its action.

The important thing for Judge Lowe was to have Missouri's entire segment of the National Old Trails Road in his home State designated for construction as a higher type road. The National Old Trails Road Association was confident of success, having survived the earlier battle to identify a cross-State highway (see part 1).

On February 21, 1922, the Highway Commission instructed Chief Engineer, Bion Harmon "B. H." Piepmeier, who had taken the position after 13 years with the Illinois road agency, and Consulting Engineer Rollen J. Windrow to begin investigating possible routes for the 1,500-mile network of higher type roads. They reported their findings on July 11, 1922, noting:

We realize that the most important route as well as the most difficult one to locate satisfactorily to all concerned is the road from St. Louis to Kansas City.

The observation revived the battles that had been fought in 1907 and 1911 over designation of a cross-State highway. After discussing and rejecting the northern and southern routes, Piepmeier and Windrow concluded:

The only economic and practical location of the St. Louis-Kansas City route is therefore the straightest possible location along the center line of population passing thru or near St. Charles, Danville, Fulton, Columbia, Boonville, Sweet Springs to Kansas City with primary connections with Mexico, Jefferson City, Moberly, Sedalia, Marshall, Warrensburg and Higginsville from this designation. A location on this route can be had that will be shorter by more than fifteen miles than any other location that may be secured elsewhere and this route will serve more population than any other road that could be selected.

From St. Louis to Boonville, the recommended route generally followed the National Old Trails Road. However, from Boonville to Kansas City, the recommended route diverted from the trail.

The National Old Trails Road Association had adopted a route through Arrow Rock and Lexington, to the north of the recommended line, for one simple reason: that was the route followed by the historic Santa Fe Trail. Historian Marc Simmons, who has written extensively about the Santa Fe Trail, discussed this northern turn. Arrow Rock had been a Missouri River crossing since a ferry began operating in 1817, and Santa Fe traders had crossed at this site. Before 1821, the Santa Fe Trail from Arrow Rock through Marshall and Lexington to Fort Osage had been called the Osage Trace. The Aull Brothers' store in Lexington was a leading outfitter for the traders in the 1830s. William Clark had established Fort Osage in 1808. During the early days of the Santa Fe Trail, Fort Osage was the westernmost outpost of the Federal Government. Traders stopped at Fort Osage to make their final purchases before heading into the wilderness. [Simmons, Marc, *Following the Santa Fe Trail: A Guide for*

Modern Travelers, Ancient City Press, 1986, Revised edition, pages 21, 32-45]

Because of the historic significance of the northern branch, the National Old Trails Road in Missouri had included it in the cross-State highway. From a practical standpoint, however, the northern branch was well off the straightest line between the two cities.

In a biographical recollection, Piepmeier's son, Francis, wrote about the alignment of the cross-State highway under the Centennial Road Act. The Missouri State Highway Commission was planning a concrete highway from St. Louis to Kansas City on the most direct, straightest, and practical alignment. On a Missouri map, Theodore Gary drew one line from the north end of the Missouri River bridge at St. Charles to the north end of the Boonville Bridge. From just south of Boonville, he drew a second line to Kansas City on a line south of Independence. Gary instructed Piepmeier to determine the alignment for the new concrete highway within a mile of the two lines.

Piepmeier and his reconnaissance party drove when they could, and walked when that was the best option to determine if a road could be built on that alignment. In a few places, the topography called for minor variations from Gary's line. The alignment "skirted the north city limits of Columbia, but missed Fulton by about seven miles," which greatly displeased the residents of Fulton who were used to being on the main highway – the National Old Trails Road.

Francis Piepmeier wrote:

One of the most difficult alignments on Route 2 was the hill several miles east of Boonville where the highway goes down into the Missouri River bottom. Bion once said that five different alignments were studied. One must remember that funds were limited and excavation in the 1920's was done with mules and slips This location was a worry to Bion, there didn't seem to be a good alignment using the money and earth moving equipment available

Another difficult topographic problem was near the City of Minneola. Here the route had to go down into a river valley. The original route down the hills departed from the general tangent alignment. [Piepmeier, Francis, "1922 to 1926 – Jefferson City, Missouri, compiled for a letter, dated August 31, 1992, from Arthur L. Piepmeier to author Arthur Krim]

The Missouri State Highway Commission held a public hearing in Jefferson City on July 25, 26, and 27, 1922, to discuss the engineers' report. Gary, who was the presiding officer, discussed the meeting in his chapter on roads in a book on the history of Missouri:

This hearing was somewhat like that presided over by Governor [Herbert S.] Hadley in the Capital city eleven years before; there was deeper earnestness, for an official decision, to be carried out by machinery, clothed with legal power and supplied with funds, was to result.

There were 8000 visitors during the hearing, which was held in the Senate chamber of the new capitol. Friends and foes of several recommended routes came as delegations, many accompanied by bands. At one time six different bands played as many different selections in the Senate chamber simultaneously. The commission on seat of permanent government had provided police for the occasion but Chairman Gary, who presided over the hearings, never found occasion to use force

The delegations had chosen resourceful speakers, familiar with every hill and valley and creek and spring and advantage and disadvantage of competing routes, and skilled in rough and tumble debate. The engineers found it no mean task to defend their recommendations against the assaults of such well-equipped speakers. But the liveliest debates were by the road champions. Lifelong friends were pitted against each other, in some instances. Often there were heated personal controversies over the character of the recommendations. Chairman Gary invariably stopped such controversies by calling for a rereading of the engineers' report. This was no punishment to newcomers but it was intolerable to those who had sat through the hearing and who knew the report by heart. They sat about the jammed Senate chamber in the torrid weather, fanning themselves with their hats and inwardly groaning at the monotonous reading. It checked the tendency to debate contents of the report. [Gary, page 619]

Judge Lowe presented the argument for the National Old Trails Road. He began:

I shall confine myself to a very brief statement of our position on the road question so far as it concerns the Missouri division of the National Old Trails Road. We shall further limit the discussion, so as to make it as brief as possible, to the discussion of just two questions.

Our first position is that every question involved in the proposition to either modify or change the location or character of the Missouri division of this road has been long since settled. For four long years, beginning during the Administration of Joseph W. Folk and extending on into the Administration of Governor Hadley, this question was agitated as no other road question ever had been in this state.

He summarized the history of the cross-State highway debates in 1907 and 1911. The Central Road had been selected, subject to certain conditions. They included formation of special road districts, the orders of the county courts, and subscription of private funds:

I repeat it took just four years to thresh out and settle this question. Let me call your attention to the fact that the questions thus adjudicated and settled were not only the location of the road, but the reasons for making such location, and those reasons were the very reasons at issue that are now being rediscussed and proposing to be reconsidered. All this was declared as in the nature of a contract between the representatives of the state and the representatives of the Central Route. Can it be possible that Governors Folk and Hadley, the Agriculture Department, the State Engineer and the parties concerned were acting without authority – not knowing what they were trying to do – but trifling with the

people?

He quoted a letter dated September 29, 1911, from State Engineer Curtis Hill discussing the decision on the cross-State highway. Hill concluded:

I further suggest that the name of the cross-state highway be "The Missouri Cross-State Highway – Old Trails Road." Other cross-state highways will in time be built and this name will distinguish it from them. In view of the fact that you have practically selected the old trails gives it a logical significance and a name which will remain with it always. Not only will this have a local significance but a national one since, with the Old Cumberland Turnpike on the east and the Old Santa Fe Trail on the west, the name "Old Trails Road" will soon be applied entirely across the continent. There can and will be nothing else like it across the country, and now that this route across Missouri will be built I recommend that it be officially named "The Missouri Cross-State Highway – Old Trails Road."

Judge Lowe also quoted a report by Engineer Hill dated August 1, 1912:

Progress has been slow; it requires time, but the Old Trails Road is now made a fixture, and sooner or later will become a great route for cross country travel. It is through a section of the state of varied interest, scenery and topography, the shortest and most direct route between the two large cities and whether in one year, five or ten years time it will eventually be a great highway.

Judge Lowe resumed his presentation:

It is already more than Curtis Hill prophesied it would be.

Permit me to close the discussion of this branch of the question by stating as I did in the beginning, that every question in this discussion at this time was threshed out and passed upon by the [State] Agriculture Department, authorized to make the decision by the Statute.

Next, he reminded the commissioners that on April 17, 1912, Governor Hadley had addressed the first convention of the National Old Trails Road Association and had commented on that recent decision on the cross-State road:

It seems to me I have seen a part of this crowd before. I have seen a part of you early in the morning and late at night. It seems to me that you were looking for the designation of a certain route as the official cross-state highway in Missouri and if my recollection serves me correctly, you got what you were after, and I am disposed to think that you can have the satisfaction, as we can all have the satisfaction, of knowing that in those early morning and late at night activities in which you engaged during the course of the last summer, you were making history; because you were beginning not only the designation, but the construction of a great transcontinental highway, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Judge Lowe asked, “Can it be possible that the accomplishment of so great an enterprise as this by Governor Hadley and those who held up his hands can now be desecrated and destroyed, diverted or materially changed by the existing administration? I don’t believe it.”

He continued:

Immediately following this definite selection and location our people got busy all along the line building the road, carrying bond issue after bond issue, grading and hard surfacing it at various points, including the construction of a bridge at Boonville, aggregating more than a total of \$1,706,900, not including Jackson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties.

I pause here to ask what town in the United States (and I speak with a degree of certainty on this subject) with a population of 4,665 could raise, by voluntary subscription, \$376,000, and then carry a bond issue of \$50,000 on top of that, with which to build the bridge – the balance of the money necessary to build the bridge was raised by voluntary subscriptions in Columbia, Marshall and Lexington.

“Poor Old Missouri,” indeed!

Also comes Howard County with a bridge bond issue of \$105,000 for the bridge at Glasgow, and Saline with a bond issue of \$300,000 for the same purpose.

So, we have made good! We have kept the faith to the very letter, and at the time the sixty million dollar bond was carried we had already practically financed the entire construction of the road, and but for the sixty millions of bonds thus voted, possibly this road would have been completed by this time; but when that question was submitted, as the plan had originated with our Association as early as the first day of May, 1912, we threw our hats into the ring, went into the fight as earnestly and enthusiastically as we knew how, and aided in securing the great victory. Shall we now be relegated to a second place in the appropriation of that fund, and have a kind of stigma placed upon all the history of the past, and be rebuked by this Commission because of these activities?

(He was referring to the idea he had proposed using the revenue from automobile licensing for road improvements.)

The comunity of States also required Missouri to maintain good faith with regard to the cross-State highway in view of the actions of the other States:

On the adoption of the road by this state eleven other states, accepting the action of Missouri as made in good faith and as final, in some instances strained a point to include the Old National Highway in their state systems. Illinois, for instance, where the road does not connect or touch important centers of population as other roads do in that state [because of the shift of the State capital from Vandalia, the western terminus of the Cumberland Road, to Springfield], yet so strong was the patriotic sentiment for the

pioneers who handed this National asset down to her people, built this road first, and it stands today as the only completed highway in that State. And Pennsylvania and West Virginia, where it is for the most part a connecting link – these states, **after** Missouri's action, felt constrained by reason of patriotism and good fellowship to take part in a National enterprise that Missouri was sponsoring, and they restored in its entirety within their borders the road which had been permitted to fall into decay – a road which Henry Clay declared on the senate floor “superior to the Appian Way.” Similarly on the western end, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado; but here in Missouri, with two of her largest cities at either end, and through which the principal tourist travel of the continent passes – the state which has received the greatest credit for the entire enterprise, is the only state where any purpose has been manifested to discredit it.

The Tourist Bureau of the Kansas City Automobile Club had informed him “that tourist travel passing through that city is greater than through any city in the United States”:

When the man in charge of that bureau was asked what road this traffic came over he promptly answered, “The Old Trails Road, of course.” This traffic has not been coming through St. Louis because, until the road was completed across Illinois, it was diverted at Indianapolis, but from now on it will come straight through.

Judge Lowe summarized the six points in favor of redesignating the entire Missouri route of the National Old Trails Road as Missouri's cross-State highway:

1. Valid, official designation and adoption by the State.
2. Faithful compliance with all the conditions required or imposed upon us.
3. The acceptance in good faith of Missouri's sponsorship by the other eleven states, and their accomplishments toward this end far in advance of Missouri.
4. Securing the greatest traffic through this state of any other road.
5. Its length, admittedly the shortest line between the two great terminals.
6. The action of the Agricultural Department was confirmed by the legislature at its last session when it was adopted as part of the State Highway System.

He recalled the last paragraph of Section 29 of the Centennial Road Law designating the State system of road: “Provided further, that no changes in designation shall **increase** the total mileage of the state highway system,” which limited the primary system to 1,500 miles.

He then came to the second question, namely the Federal Highway Act of 1921, which provided that, “In approving projects to receive Federal aid under the provisions of this Act the Secretary of Agriculture shall give preference to such projects as will expedite the compliance of an adequate and connected system of highways, **INTERSTATE IN CHARACTER**”:

This Act does not say that this Board, or any Board, shall create “a connected system of highways, Interstate in Character,” but it says that you shall give preference to such projects as will expedite the completion of an adequate and connected system of highways, **INTERSTATE IN CHARACTER**.

Our position is that the National Old Trails Road fills the exact definition of the roads provided for in the Federal Highway Act. It is not only “interstate in character” but it is National in character as well. It is completed across six states, beginning at the Atlantic and ending at the Mississippi, at St. Louis; very much of it built and under construction between the Mississippi and the Pacific. No action by this Board could make it, **or any other road**, “Interstate in Character” unless it was already in existence as such, or, unless the Highway Commissions of the adjoining states would unite in agreement with the Highway Commission of Missouri and establish an interstate road, **co-operatively**.

No other road east of the Mississippi between Illinois and Missouri is either built or proposed by the Illinois Board. No interstate road in Missouri can go east across the state of Illinois unless it comes to St. Louis and claimed the privilege and right of adopting the Old Trails Road from that point. It would seem an ungracious thing to try to bolster up such propositions by relying upon the work already done on this historic highway east of the Mississippi. Why turn down an existing interstate road for one yet to be established? Why permit the cuckoos that never build, to deposit their eggs in another’s nest? Why make this Interstate road an inter-county road – in part, or as a whole?

We say with all the emphasis at our command that an interstate road is a fact, and not a theory.

He quoted BPR Chief MacDonald, who addressed the American Association of State Highways Officials’ (AASHO) annual convention in 1921:

None of us has had or is ever likely to have a more serious responsibility than the one imposed of selecting the Federal Aid system to be composed of the most important highways, articulating not only within the state, but with the systems of the contiguous states. From the conception of highways as a purely local institution, a viewpoint we held for over half a century of our national life, we progressed to an acceptance of their importance to the state. This attitude persisted for another quarter of a century until, through the universal use of the motor vehicle, the transportation crisis of a great war, the repeated threats of extensive railroad tie-ups and the results already secured with Federal Aid, we have in a short period of five years visioned our more important highways extending and interconnecting to form a vast network, serving local, state and national traffic, only limited by the confines of the United States.

This is the conception which has been written into the new law and which, because of the projected effect of that which is done now into the future, lifts the importance of this requirement, that is, the selection of the Federal Aid system, above any other principle or duty therein announced.

Judge Lowe said, “I am admonished not to indulge in sentiment but I venture to say that if comparison is sought with the Appian, or other historic roads, I will ask you to look upon one richer far in historic interest, more replete in scenic grandeur, running through the center of the greatest agricultural and commercial districts in the world, every mile of which preaches the gospel of Christian civilization. This Old National Road carries more traffic over its entire

length than any road one-third of its length anywhere in Europe. The famous Appian Via is less than one-eighth the length of this road – and they were three hundred years building it. Let us now, at least, emulate this feature of that great example.

He promised one more word “and I shall have done”:

For long years we have labored, in season and out of season, to further this great project, and all other roads as well. It was a labor of love, and we make no apology for it. No organization ever broke a lance or shivered a spear in a greater commercial or patriotic endeavor. Under most adverse circumstances, and with an insignificant amount of Federal money, we brought this great National project to your door, and now lay it down at your feet. **Take it or leave it.** If you decide to abandon, change or materially modify any portion of it whatsoever by making it, or any section of it, an inter-county highway, we shall then set us down as one upon whose brow is written disappointment and despair. Do not, I beseech you, undertake to hand it back to us a mangled corpse.

Finally, Judge Lowe closed his speech:

Bear in mind it was Missouri through her great Senator, Thos. H. Benton, in 1824, that the move was made to extend this road beyond the Rockies to end at Santa Fe. It was Missouri through her lamented Borland who introduced a bill, prepared by this association, in 1913, to build this road. It was Missouri through the same representative who offered our bill in the same year to establish and build a great National system of 32,000 miles, reaching every capitol [sic] of every state in the union. It was Missouri again through our Association as early as the 1st day of May, 1912, that first suggested capitalizing the automobile tax for road purposes. It may be possible by the action you take to mar or tarnish this record, but “all the waters of multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red,” cannot blot it out. [“Statement by J. M. Lowe, president of the National Old Trails Road, to the Board of Highway Commissioners of Missouri,” Vertical File, FHWA Research Library]

(The quote is from Shakespeare’s *MacBeth*, written at a time when “incardine” meant making something pink.)

The Highway Commission adopted the engineers’ report on August 1, 1922, after eliminating enough mileage to stay within the statutory 1,500 miles. Regarding the central road, Gary explained in his chapter of the Missouri history:

This meant direct routes, considerably departing from the routes chosen in Governor Hadley’s administration, and there were many protests from advocates of old trails. No. 2 (later numbered U.S. 40) from Atlantic City to San Francisco, was severely criticized for sentimental reasons, but when sufficient progress had been made to show the kind of highway it would really be – second to none in the world in its layout according to the published opinion of the assistant state highway engineer of Wisconsin, criticism subsided. [Gary, page 619]

In short, Judge Lowe had lost. The National Old Trails Road in Missouri was State Route 2 from St. Louis to the vicinity of Boonville. From there, State Route 2 continued straight west on new alignment. Because the State had adopted a numbering system using even numbers for east-west routes and odd numbers for north-south routes, the number “2” indicated the route was the “first” route. The remainder of the National Old Trails Road in Missouri was split among State Routes 5, 20, 41, and 67. In fact, the Highway Commission would build SR 2 on new alignment to a large extent, bypassing towns along the original route for the first time.

Historian George R. Stewart, in his classic 1953 photo essay book on U.S. 40, commented on the Missouri section of U.S. 40. He was not much impressed by the landscape or the history of the route between St. Louis and Kansas City:

Anyone driving across it will be likely to describe it most easily by the word “pretty.” Its eastern half is a land of rolling hills, forested with oak. Here and there it opens up to display fine pastures for cattle. The alluvial bottoms along the river and the smaller streams are rich cornlands. In the western half, after the road has entered the Osage Plains, the country is flatter, and the cornlands stretch out more widely.

Yet, when all is said, nothing stands out. The ordinary tourist, having made the drive, would probably be hard put to tell anything, except that he had twice crossed the Missouri River.

Historically, also, the road is pleasantly interesting, not outstanding Across the western half of the state U.S. 40 is a very modern road. Missourians, indeed, claim that the Santa Fe Trail originally started from Boonville, but even if this somewhat doubtful claim is allowed, we cannot assert that the wagons for Santa Fe ever followed the line of U.S. 40 for more than seven or eight miles. After that point west of Boonville the older route swings off circuitously to the north.

The road swinging off circuitously to the north was the National Old Trails Road. Stewart continued to narrate his experience on U.S. 40:

From there on, to Kansas City, the highway runs across open, generally level country, on a direct course. It has many straightaways, one of them twelve miles long. Although these stretches follow the original lines of the land-survey, the highway is not a “section-line road” in the ordinary sense, for there are no right-angled turns and no north-south courses, even for short distances. This section from Boonville to Kansas City best exemplifies what the State Highway Department reports, not without pride: “the majority of Rte. 40 was built on new location in order to make it as near as an air line highway between St. Louis and Kansas City as possible.” [Stewart, George R., *U.S. 40: Cross Section of the United States of America*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953, page 149]

Judge Lowe looked back on the State’s decision in his 1924 compilation of material related to the National Old Trails Road. After a document-heavy narrative of the cross-State debate that resulted in the selection of the National Old Trails Road, he added:

Note: This is the road the present Highway Board and State Administration has done so much to divert at different points, so as to leave out such important community centers as Fulton, Marshall, Lexington, Independence, Warrensburg; and have tried to take away even the name of the road, although they had adopted two-thirds of its original line and the Legislature had adopted it in its entirety. The changes made added more than 100 miles to the road system, and cost more than \$1,000,000. Why? Better not attempt to answer this question.

Of course, one of the excuses for making these changes of location is that they avoid going through populous towns where the people would be subject to much inconvenience on account of the reckless manner of operating automobiles. That this is an untenable position is illustrated by the fact that in the City of Indianapolis, Washington Street, the principal street of the city, is and always has been, the line of the N. O. T. Road. The same thing is true all through Illinois and all the towns such as Terre Haute and Richmond, in Indiana, through Dayton, Springfield and Columbus, in Ohio, and many of the other large towns in that State; through Wheeling W. Va., Washington, Pa., a town of 30,000 population, Cumberland, a town of 60,000, Fredericksburg, etc. It was supposed that roads were to be built where the people live, where transportation is required, both for passenger and freight service. In changing the route in Missouri, between the two largest cities, they establish a brand new line, paralleling closely the N. O. T. Road as established by the State Legislature, across the counties of Callaway and Boone, and again parallels an old established road which is a part of the State System clear across LaFayette, Slaine and a part of Cooper and Jackson, without any reasonable excuse – building a brand new road where the right-of-way had to be obtained through a district where difficult grades occur and along lines where no road ever existed before or is likely ever to exist – and all of which it is repeated, adds to, instead of diminishing the general road mileage of the State System. In Kansas City, the N. O. T. comes to the heart of the business district, while the new line, called No. 2, and “St. Louis-Kansas City” road, stops outside the city limits about fifteen miles away from the business center, and makes no connection with any road leading West or in any other direction.

The same thing has occurred on the Jefferson Highway, a part of the Interstate System, and the Surveyors are now in the field running lines all along the roads in various directions, and resulting in a tremendous additional cost for construction. [“Missouri State Board of Agriculture,” Chapter II, *National Old Trails Road: The Great Historic Highway of America*, National Old Trails Road Association, March 29, 1924, pages 77-78]

Isothermal Map of the National Old Trails Road

While debate over the inclusion of the National Old Trails Road in State Route 2 was underway, E. W. Stephens of the Missouri National Old Trails Road Association submitted the brochure he had mentioned to the State Highway Commission in support of renewed designation of the road as the cross-State highway. As explained on the cover, the National Old Trails Road across Missouri was:

The **Route**
Short
Logical
Practical
Smooth
Historic
Transcontinental
Educational
Agricultural

The National Old Trails Road was shortest:

The route that is the SHORTEST and traverses the section of greatest population and most abundant resources must be the line on which the state can most profitably expend its money and which will be of the greatest service to the people.

Each of the alternatives had their advantages, “but we think it can easily be shown that the Old Trails is superior to any of the other three”:

In the first place it is shorter by many miles than either the Jefferson City or the Northern Route, which means the saving of several hundreds of thousands of dollars in construction and an hour of travel time. It is shorter than the Southern Route and far less hilly and hence more quickly covered, and it runs through a much more populous, fertile and attractive country.

In addition to the Old Trails being the shortest, it is the smoothest route between St. Louis and Kansas City. There are only a few small hills on the entire distance. No other route can be so economically built or operated.

The brochure listed mileage totals taken from the *Automobile Blue Book*, 1920, “the latest at hand,” for the distance between St. Louis and Kansas City:

It is no doubt possible to take out crooks and bends and make short cuts of all these routes so as to shorten any one or all of them. The Old Trails can thus be shortened. It is claimed that at least one of these routes has been abbreviated since the publication of the Blue Book. But an examination of the map of Missouri, the laying down of a rule measure upon it, or the drawing of a straight line across it, will convince any reasonable person that the most direct and practical route across the State of Missouri, and the one nearest a straight line, with the least number of hills, and through the most populous and resourceful country, is undoubtedly the Old Trails.

The brochure emphasized the businesses, universities, churches, farms, and other valuable properties along the National Old Trails Road. “The commerce of its thriving cities and villages corresponds with its educational advantages”:

Nowhere in the state are there more enterprising towns than Lexington, Marshall, Boonville, Columbia, Fulton, Warrenton, and St. Charles.

The Missouri Old Trails Association acknowledged one problem:

There has hitherto been but one tenable argument against the Old Trails. That has been its lack of a bridge across the Missouri River. That objection is now overcome by the subscription, within a remarkably brief period, of nearly half a million dollars by the citizens of the counties of Boone, Howard, Cooper, Saline, and Lafayette for a highway bridge at Boonville. The contract for this bridge has been let and it will be finished and in operation by the close of this year, 1922, by the terms of the contract. The city of Boonville voted \$50,000 for the construction of the Southern approach.

Since the stock to this bridge was subscribed Congress has passed an amendment to the Federal Aid Act declaring bridges to be highways and prohibiting aid to highways charging tolls. To meet this objection, it has been determined to make the bridge free, the details of which movement are familiar to the Highway Commission.

Recently Howard County has voted \$100,000 and Saline County \$150,000 to erect a bridge across the Missouri River at Glasgow, which city will add thereto \$25,000. The citizens of Glasgow have arranged for this amount to be supplemented by Federal aid in amount sufficient to build the bridge which will be free to all passengers. Thus the Old Trails whether it runs by Boonville or Glasgow, or by both, has assurance of a bridge across the Missouri River.

After summarizing the history of the route in Missouri, the brochure covered designation of the cross-State highway after a thorough investigation:

We claim that legally this route thus set apart holds that relation today for neither by legislation nor change of conditions has there been any occurrence to modify action taken at this time. We respectfully submit that to ignore this route at this time would be an act for which there is neither cause or justification.

On the assumption that the State had acted in good faith in 1912, the counties along the line had done so as well, the report stated, noting that "nearly all the counties along the route have since voted bonds for the hard-surfacing of the road within their limits." Moreover, at the request of the D.A.R., the State legislature appropriated funds "for the placing of granite markers on historical spots along this route." Since then, "These markers have been since erected and are sources of great historic interest and convenience to tourists and others."

In conclusion, the main text stated:

So in shorter distance, in higher productiveness, in larger population, in educational development, in economy, because of much of it being already built, and of its logical relation to the country, being a link in a great transcontinental highway, half way finished, of its value as a factor in the development of the road system and the prosperity of the state and last but not least, because it has stood for ten years as the legally authorized and officially dedicated and recognized cross state highway, we respectfully

submit that the Old Trails presents arguments for its adoption and construction that are pre-eminent and unanswerable.

The brochure included one additional item. In the back was a map of the National Old Trails Road, shown as a thick black line from New York City to Los Angeles. The map included a dashed, parallel second line. It was the Isothermal line drawn by William Gilpin in his 1860 publication, *Mission of the Northern American People, Geographical, Social, and Political*. Gilpin had a diverse career (the Wikipedia page describes him as: “US explorer, politician, land speculator, and futurist writer about the American West” who “served as military officer in the United States Army during several wars . . . and was instrumental in the formation of the government of the Oregon Territory. In addition, Abraham Lincoln, shortly after his inauguration, appointed Gilpin to be the first Governor of the Territory of Colorado (March 25, 1861-March 26, 1862).

The Missouri association explained that in “that remarkable book . . . written by that most remarkable man, Governor Gilpin, in 1860 (2d edition, 1873), there is much curious learning and optimistic prophesy concerning what is called “The West.” His prophesies of great things were “not the result of whimsical dreaming, nor of an over-heated imagination.” They “were the logical results of profoundest study, and most painstaking investigation.”

One of Gilpin’s ideas was the Isothermal Map of the world, as described in the brochure:

This Isothermal line is along the line of the 40th degree of North latitude, and is the axis of intensity whose annual mean temperature is 52 degrees of Fahrenheit. It belts the globe within the 25th and 55th degrees.

Gilpin had explained that, “It is along the axis of the Isothermal zone of the Northern Hemisphere that the principles of revealed civilization make the circuit of the globe.” He pointed out that along this axis are the great centers of population, including the great cities of China, India, Babylon, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Paris, London, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Columbus, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Topeka, Denver, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco. According to Gilpin, “The people along this axis are upon the line of intense and intelligent energy, where civilization has its largest field, its highest development, its inspired form”:

Along this line have come from the plateau of Syria, our religion, our sciences, our civilization, our social manners, our arts, our agriculture, our domestic animals, our articles of food and raiment; and here is the eternal fire from which is rekindled the spirit of the unconquerable mind, and freedom’s holy flame.”

The brochure explained:

It will be observed that when we reach the bulwark of the Rockies, the National Old Trails Road swings considerably below this line in order to find an easy pass and a better grade, to Los Angeles, but otherwise, it follows this Isothermal line most closely.

The line closely followed the National Old Trails Road in Missouri, including the circuitous route west of Boonville.

As if that were not enough reason to designate the entire route in Missouri, the narrative on the map included another reason:

Just before this war came upon us, a road convention was held in London for the purpose of promoting a great paved highway around the world along this line. That matter is necessarily postponed, but is fully assured in the future.

Whatever the merit of the Isothermic map, it did not alter the commission's decision to exclude the western end of the National Old Trails Road in Missouri's State Route 2. ["Isothermal Map of the National Old Trails Road," *The Old Trails: Missouri's Official State Highway From St. Louis to Kansas City*]

President Harding on Trucks and Railroads

On December 8, 1922, President Harding delivered his second annual message before a joint session of Congress. For the first time in history, the President's address was broadcast by radio to "be heard by many thousands outside of the House chamber and hundreds of miles distant from Washington," as *The Washington Post* told readers. "The broadcasting will be done from the naval air station at Annapolis."

When the President entered the chamber around 12:30 p.m., he was greeted with applause for several minutes. First Lady Florence Harding, "in her room at the White House, through a receiving set specially installed, listened to the address and the applause that greeted him upon entering the House and that frequently punctuated his message." ["Will Read Message to Congress Today" (December 8, 1922) and "Applause Greets Request for Prompt Action" (December 9, 1922), *The Washington Post*]

He went through a number of concerns, foreign and domestic, but after describing the problems of the farming sector, turned to transportation:

I know of no problem exceeding in importance this one of transportation. In our complex and interdependent modern life transportation is essential to our very existence. Let us pass for the moment the menace in the possible paralysis of such service as we have and note the failure, for whatever reason, to expand our transportation to meet the Nation's needs.

In the three decades ending in 1920, the country's freight by rail had increased from 631 million tons to 2.234 million tons; "that is to say, while our population was increasing, less than 70 per cent, the freight movement increased over 250 per cent." The country had 40 percent of the world's railroad mileage, "and yet find it inadequate to our present requirements":

When we contemplate the inadequacy of to-day it is easy to believe that the next few decades will witness the paralysis of our transportation-using social scheme or a complete

reorganization on some new basis. Mindful of the tremendous costs of betterments, extensions, and expansions, and mindful of the staggering debts of the world to-day, the difficulty is magnified. Here is a problem demanding wide vision and the avoidance of mere makeshifts. No matter what the errors of the past, no matter how we acclaimed construction and then condemned operations in the past, we have the transportation and the honest investment in the transportation which sped us on to what we are, and we face conditions which reflect its inadequacy to-day, its greater inadequacy to-morrow, and we contemplate transportation costs which much of the traffic can not and will not continue to pay.

Manifestly, we have need to begin on plans to coordinate all transportation facilities. We should more effectively connect up our rail lines with our carriers by sea. [Applause.] We ought to reap some benefit from the hundreds of millions expended on inland waterways, proving our capacity to utilize as well as expend. We ought to turn the motor truck into a railway feeder and distributor instead of a destroying competitor.

It would be folly to ignore that we live in a motor age. The motor car reflects our standard of living and gauges the speed of our present-day life. It long ago ran down Simple Living, and never halted to inquire about the prostrate figure which fell as its victim. With full recognition of motor-car transportation we must turn it to the most practical use. It can not supersede the railway lines, no matter how generously we afford it highways out of the Public Treasury. If freight traffic by motor were charged with its proper and proportionate share of highway construction, we should find much of it wasteful and more costly than like service by rail. Yet we have paralleled the railways, a most natural line of construction, and thereby taken away from the agency of expected service much of its profitable traffic, for which the taxpayers have been providing the highways, whose cost of maintenance is not yet realized.

The Federal Government has a right to inquire into the wisdom of this policy, because the National Treasury is contributing largely to this highway construction. Costly highways ought to be made to serve as feeders rather than competitors of the railroads, and the motor truck should become a coordinate factor in our great distributing system.

This transportation problem can not be waived aside. The demand for lowered costs on farm products and basic materials can not be ignored. Rates horizontally increased, to meet increased wage outlays during the war inflation, are not easily reduced. When some very moderate wage reductions were effected last summer there was a 5 per cent horizontal reduction in rates. I sought at the time, in a very informal way, to have the railway managers go before the Interstate Commerce Commission and agree to a heavier reduction on farm products and coal and other basic commodities, and leave unchanged the freight tariffs which a very large portion of the traffic was able to bear. Neither the managers nor the commission saw fit to adopt the suggestion, so we had the horizontal reduction too slight to be felt by the higher class cargoes and too little to benefit the heavy tonnage calling most loudly for relief.

He was mainly concerned about operation of the railroads. The companies were "not to be

expected to render the most essential service in our social organization without a fair return on capital invested, but the Government has gone so far in the regulation of rates and rules of operation that it has the responsibility of pointing the way to the reduced freight costs so essential to our national welfare. [Applause.]”

He rejected the idea of government operation:

It was Government operation which brought us to the very order of things against which we now rebel, and we are still liquidating the costs of that supreme folly.

“Surely,” he said, “the genius of the railway builders has not become extinct among the railway managers.” When labor, which took 50 to 60 percent of railway earnings, went on strike, it “threatened the paralysis of all railway transportation.” What was needed was “the effective correlation and a concerted drive to meet an insistent and justified public demand.” [“Address of the President,” *Congressional Record – House*, December 8, 1922, pages 213-214]

President Harding’s supporters in Congress concluded that he had laid out enough tasks for 6 or 8 months of work, far beyond what a Congress that was to end on March 4, 1923, could achieve. One issue involved whether to ban railroad workers from going on strike. His requests may not have been as specific as some had hoped, but “his demand for cheaper and better transportation was expressed in no uncertain terms,” according to *The Baltimore Sun*. He had received applause for his call to relieve the plight of farmers by extending them further credits and ensuring the availability of cheaper transportation:

President Harding coupled transportation and farm problems in his message. After showing that additional credits should be extended to the farmer, and that this would possibly be enlarging the powers of the Farm Labor Board, he laid down the proposition that freight rates were now so high and transportation had been so inadequate in recent months that the farmer has suffered “losses counted in tens of millions.”

Although “permanent agricultural good fortune depends on better and cheaper transportation,” according to the President, he laid down no formula for cheapening transportation. [“Harding Plans Make Special Session Likely,” *The Baltimore Sun*, December 9, 1923, page 1]

Boonville Bridge Planned

Judge Lowe had been in Jefferson City, Missouri, on January 26, 1921, for a meeting with the executive committee of the Missouri Old Trails Association at the Madison Hotel. A major portion of the meeting concerned construction of a Missouri River bridge at Boonville. All agreed the bridge must be built. Judge Lowe declared:

The Old Trails Road is a national highway created by an act of Congress and the State Legislature cannot change it and there will be no disposition to change it; but there will be an effort to change the route by way of Jefferson City because of the fact that there is no bridge on the north side of the river. Such a bridge must be built.

While agreeing the bridge was needed, the executive committee was neutral on where it should be located. The members believed that State highway officials should make that decision.

A news account of the meeting continued:

When asked his opinion on the cost of the bridge, Judge Lowe said he believed \$500,000 would be sufficient to cover it. While a free bridge would be preferable, it would probably be necessary to collect tolls until the federal government or state took it over, he believes.

The article quoted Boonville's Arthur W. Wallace:

Boonville is eager to have the bridge cross the river at that point. He stated that should the project cost \$500,000, at least \$250,000 could be raised in Boonville by subscription. It was his opinion, however, that it would not be necessary to build a bridge of this nature. The M.K.&T railroad has contemplated building a new bridge to replace the present one and the town has offered the [rail]road a \$100,000 bonus to make it suitable for automobile traffic. So far the road has not seen fit to take up this offer. Wallace believes that the road will build such a bridge if they were given approximately \$250,000. He holds that if such a scheme should be accepted the cost of maintaining the bridge, which would be borne by the railroad, would save a large amount of money.

The executive committee's chairman, E. N. Hopkins of Lexington offered his thoughts on the National Old Trails Road. These comments came before enactment of the Centennial Road Act:

There should be no contest with regard to the Old Trails Road. Whatever rights other routes may have, the matter of state pride should be recognized. Missouri was the first state to form an Old Trails Road society, June 24, 1911. It is strange that the eastern and western states have taken up the work and completed it. Missouri is the weak link in this great ocean-to-ocean national highway, because the road laws were designed to meet agricultural conditions of a few years ago. Now that we have the funds to carry on the work the idea of going back on the sentiment and first project and take up another one seems to strike at the integrity of the state. ["Committee to Consider Old Trails Bridge," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, January 26, 1921, page 1]

A year and a half later, on July 8, 1922, Cooper County ratified a \$125,000 bond issue for construction of a free bridge across the Missouri River at Boonville on the National Old Trails Road, by a vote of 4,898 for and 1,708 against. Within Boonville township, only 11 votes were cast against the bonds.

The estimated cost of the bridge was approximately \$500,000. The Old Trails Bridge Company, organized in Boonville, was in charge of construction, with the cost to be divided:

Cooper County bonds:	\$125,000
Old Trails Bridge Company:	\$100,000

Franklin Township, Howard County:	\$25,000*
Federal-aid:	\$250,000**

* Subject to a vote on July 22.

** Promised.

The bridge was to be 3,128 feet long, including 1,820 feet in the river section consisting of three riveted steel spans 420 feet each, and two 280-foot long steel spans. The longer spans were to be supported on pneumatic concrete piers sunk to bedrock. The two shorter spans would rest on concrete piers resting on piling. The roadway on the bridge would be 20 feet wide. The bridge clearance over the river at the high-water stage would be 55 feet, which engineers predicted would be sufficient for any steamboat to pass under the bridge.

Boonville voted a bond issue of \$50,000 for the approach to the bridge from the city. The approach would be 564 feet long of reinforced concrete. The approach on the other end, in Howard County, would be of piling and earth connecting with a macadam highway.

The Mount Vernon Bridge Company of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, won the contract for the steel work on the bridge at a cost of about \$398,000. The contract for the substructure was awarded to the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company of Leavenworth, Kansas. The contracts called for completion of the bridge by December 31, 1922. ["New Bridge Over the Missouri," *Missouri Road Bulletin*, March 1922, page 7; "Missouri River Bridge at Boonville, 1922/How the Bridge Will be Paid for," *Forty-Second and Forty-Third Annual Reports*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, State of Missouri, 1921-1922, page 766]

The New Mexico-Arizona Connection

BPR Chief MacDonald had asked the States to submit tentative Federal-aid systems and instructed them on how to prepare the maps, along with a caution about length:

The present policy is to assent to no expansion of the existing State system, to encourage a reduction of the systems as revisions are made, and as individual projects are considered to assure that they lie on routes which are sufficiently important to warrant complete improvements as construction work is continued over a period of years.

To comply with BPR's request, Arizona State Engineer Thomas Maddock wrote to each county to request a map showing the roads and a report on total mileage. In his biennial report, he explained, "It was difficult in many cases to get a definite report, owing to the fact that many of the desert and mountains trails were not included."

After compiling the data, Maddock wrote to E. S. Wheeler, BPR's District Engineer for the southwestern States, on December 30, 1921:

The mileage of roads in the various counties of the State is approximately 21,400 miles, which compels us to limit our 7 per cent system to approximately 1,500 miles. This is a reduction of approximately 300 miles from the roads suggested by your office, but this

action is in accordance with instructions of Mr. MacDonald

The selections included the National Old Trails Road. There was a problem, as Richard K. and Sherry G. Mangum explained in their history of the National Old Trails Road in Arizona:

When the Engineer presented his first map to federal officials for approval of the state's section of 7% Roads, however, he omitted the Holbrook-Gallup [via Lupton] branch of the Old Trails, showing only the Holbrook-Springerville highway.

Maddock had written that he had eliminated "the road from the junction of the Apache trail east of Mesa thru Holbrook to Lupton, as we have not sufficient mileage for this road nor have we the funds in sight for its construction." He added, "The major portion of the road from the junction east of Mesa to Holbrook also lies within the forest reservation so it will no doubt be taken care of by forest funds":

We will endeavor to construct a road from Holbrook to Lupton, but in view of the fact that there is hope of little Apache county bond money being placed on this road and very small possibility [due to opposition from St. Johns and Springerville] of securing an appropriation from the legislature sufficient to construct to Federal Aid standards, we believe that even if we had the mileage available we should not indirectly pledge the state to its early construction by incorporating it in the 7 per cent system.

Federal engineers disapproved the map and sent it back. BPR's Wheeler replied on January 24, 1922, to suggest possible changes in the map. One suggestion was to eliminate the connections from Tombstone to Nogales and from Nogales to Tucson. While they would eventually be desirable, "they are not particularly pertinent to the skeleton system at the present time":

The mileage resulting from such elimination would provide sufficient mileage to close the gap between Holbrook and Lupton, a very necessary connection in view of the fact that the State of New Mexico proposes a connection at Lupton primary in character. In fact it would appear that this connection would almost be required. Further, this eliminated mileage would furnish a possible route from Grand Canyon connecting with your east and west northern route.

Maddock continued to work with BPR officials and participated in a July meeting called by BPR for the 11 western States to finalize their systems. The meeting allowed for discussions to ensure connections of the primary system across State lines.

On July 31, 1922, Maddock confirmed Arizona's agreement:

We are submitting five copies of map of Arizona showing the 7% system, in accordance with the verbal understanding arrived at between the various State Highway Departments, at the meeting held in San Francisco at the call of Mr. Thomas H. MacDonald, Director of the Bureau of Public Roads, on July 25-25, 1922.

Regarding changes from the December 1921 map, he included:

At the suggestion of the Bureau of Public Roads, we have placed on our secondary system the connection between Holbrook and Lupton with the understanding that in return for this action on the part of Arizona, New Mexico will place on her 7% system the road from Lordsburg to Franklin.

The road from Lordsburg, New Mexico, to Franklin, Arizona, carried several main named trails, including the Lee Highway, the Atlantic-Pacific Highway, and the Apache Trail.

On September 1, 1922, Secretary of Agriculture Henry C. Wallace approved Arizona's 7-percent system. It totaled approximately 1,498 miles, "so that the system does not exceed the mileage allowed by law." He listed the routes that were in the system, including:

Topock, Kingman, Ashfork, Flagstaff, Winslow, Holbrook, Lupton, New Mexico Line.

Holbrook, St. Johns, Springerville, New Mexico Line.

Thus, the final 7-percent system included the National Old Trails Road and both of its Arizona-New Mexico connections.

Secretary Wallace added that "it has been considered advisable to defer until later the determination of the classification which shall be given to each of the routes embraced in the system for each state." The relative importance of each route – whether it was primary or interstate in character – could be determined after "future study" developed additional information that "might influence the final classification." In short, the National Old Trails Road's links across the New Mexico State line were included in the 7-percent as neither primary nor secondary routes.

Maddock, in his summary of designation of the State's 7-percent system of Federal-aid roads, stated:

The seven per cent was divided into three per cent primary or interstate, and four per cent inter-county, but in the eleven western public land states practically the entire seven per cent will be absorbed in the construction of interstate roads.

To date no differentiation has been made by the federal law or by the rules and regulations of the Bureau of Public Roads between the primary and secondary highways, as to funds available from the government, the width of the road or the type of surfacing.

In length Arizona's portion of the seven per cent system is less than one per cent of the total seven per cent mileage in the United States. A glance at the map indicated that these roads pass through nearly every large city and town in Arizona. Nearly two-thirds of Arizona's Seven Per Cent system is already improved

At the present rate of progress, it is conservatively estimated by the Arizona Highway Department that Arizona's Seven Per Cent system will be so improved within the next

fifteen months that it will be possible to average thirty miles per hour in traversing any road across the State. [*Fifth Biennial Report of the State Engineer to the Governor of Arizona*, Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 1921 and 1922, pages 19-31]

The Mangums summarized:

The Arizona Engineer had no choice but to consent, since Arizona sorely needed federal aid and had to abide by the federal decision. Had the federal engineers not insisted on the inclusion of the Gallup branch, the Arizona Engineer would have torpedoed the work of the National Old Trails Road Association, stealthily thwarting it without notice and without review. The Gallup route thus had narrowly survived another attack by hostile forces. But it turned out that this was only a battle, not the end of the war.

The problem was that as was happening around the country, Arizona had been hit by the post-war economic downturn in 1921. The Mangums explained the result:

Bureaucrats in the state house hid the impact by shifting money back and forth from budget to budget, hoping that conditions would improve and fresh funds could be used to patch up their fiscal manipulations. The State of Arizona was essentially kiting checks to pay its bills. The music stopped when an audit revealed that the Arizona Highway Department was in debt to the tune of almost half a million dollars.

In 1921, Arizona did some work on the National Old Trails Road, including the “road West of Williams and down Ash Fork hill,” but the work was primitive “because the funds would only allow grading, not surfacing.” Further work would depend on resolving the financial mess.

At the same time, Flagstaff decided to stop complaining about the Grand Canyon bypass of their city (see discussion of the Walnut Canyon Bypass in part 3) “and took the bill by the horns, convincing Coconino County to improve the road from Maine to the Grand Canyon so that it could be considered the primary automobile road to the scenic wonder”:

County officials had a hidden agenda in connection with this project, for they had decided that once the Maine road was usable, they would no longer maintain the old route to the Grand Canyon from Flagstaff, which would solve the bypass problem . . . once the old road became impassable due to lack of maintenance. [Mangum, Rickard K, and Mangum, Sherry G., *The National Old Trails Road in Arizona*, Hexagon Press, Inc., 2008, pages 105-107]

Snailing Around

The January 1922 issue of AAA’s *American Motorist* contained an article by Elwood Lloyd titled “Snailing Around the U.S.A.” Snailing, he explained, involved traveling around the country in “a motor conveyance that carries its house upon its back and travels slowly.” His vehicle was a General Motors Corporation one-ton truck chassis on which a local truck body builder had erected a “five-room house having all the modern conveniences, but with no room less than 7 by 16 feet in dimension.” He had room for his two dogs.

Traveling around the country he covered the “wonderful roads from Cincinnati to Dayton, “and then nothing finer could be wished for motor travel than the National highway leading eastward to West Virginia”:

The roads were too good. Nothing to do but just sit at the wheel, like a bump on a log, and keep the accelerator depressed. Even the scenery proved uninviting where there was such ease of motion – developed instead of interest, a sort of day dreaming and species of self-hypnotism that did nothing other than to throw the miles behind. Our longest day’s run was made in this section, 127 miles, and of all the cruise thus far it bore the smallest fruit of real enjoyment. From reports heard we are sure that Ohio people are friendly but we have no first hand information on the subject; we traveled too fast to determine for ourselves.

West Virginia’s hilly travel, while not quite so swift as Ohio, is more conducive to friendly loitering and we like her people, notwithstanding certain sections are prone to argue matters of principle in manner forceful. Where we stopped long enough to swap a cheerful smile we found friends.

Southern Pennsylvania and Maryland are countries in which it is a delight to cruise leisurely. The Lincoln and National highways provide good runways for scooting from point to point for delectable side jaunts off the beaten path. [Lloyd, Elwood, “Snailing Around the U.S.A.,” *American Motorist*, January 1922, pages 29-30, 42]

President Harding on the Road

For President Harding, automobile travel was a favorite pastime, along with golf and cards. A contemporary account in *The Baltimore Sun* described him:

The President has succeeded in creating the impression that he is always at the service of the people. He is ever ready to make a speech to a group of children, a delegation of Shriners, a committee of scientists, at a memorial meeting and informal gatherings. No President has ever been more democratic in his personal relations to the people. He likes to mix with them, and very frequently dodges the Secret Service sleuths assigned to protect him from annoyance, to wander around as he pleases. He likes to go off on trips by railway, boat or motor. He could qualify as an expert chauffeur, and some of his passengers say that he “steps on it” a trifle too hard to suit them, which means that he likes to “hit it up.” [“Harding Often At Work, But very Seldom At Play; A Close-Up of President,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 24, 1921, page T2]

He was the first President who had driven automobiles as opposed to being driven in one. After being elected to the Senate in 1914, he had often driven his Locomobile on the National Old Trails Road to and from his home in Marion, Ohio, to Washington.

He also was the first President to ride in an automobile to his inauguration. The vehicle was a Packard Twin 6 supplied by the Republican National Committee. As *The Washington Post* put

it, “President-elect Harding’s action in choosing a more modern method of transportation probably sounds the death knell of the carriage as the presidential conveyance on Inauguration Day.”

His Locomobile was brought to the White House, and he purchased a new Locomobile in 1921 that cost \$9,000 (the equivalent of \$125,000 today). During his term, however, the official White House automobile during his term was a Pierce-Arrow. The Secret Service would not let him drive any of the vehicles. [Collins, Herbert Ridgeway, *Presidents on Wheels*, Acropolis Books, 1971, page 143-145; “Harding Will Ride in Auto to Capitol,” *The Washington Post*, January 1, 1921, page 1]

On July 1, 1922, President Harding and his wife Florence left at noon in the White House Pierce Arrow for the 83-mile trip to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to watch 5,000 U.S. Marines reenact Pickett’s Charge, one of the pivotal moments in the Battle of Gettysburg 49 years earlier on July 3, 1863. The presidential party of 10 vehicles arrived in mid-afternoon after a drive of 3 and a half hours. Part of the trip was in a “driving rain,” as *The New York Times* reported. The President made several stops, including one near Frederick, Maryland, at “Richfields,” the birthplace of General Winfield Scott Schley, a hero of the Spanish American War in 1898:

A group of men, women and children had assembled there, including a dozen perspiring men, who said they had been threshing in a nearby field. As the President grasped the hand of each he remarked that any man who lived on a farm was to be envied.

Approaching the Pennsylvania State line, the presidential caravan stopped to allow Governor William C. Sproul and his party to welcome the President to the State. An automobile carrying some of the President’s officials “was crowded off the road to avoid colliding with an automobile ahead and crashed into a fence. The machine was not damaged, however, and none of the occupants was injured.”

Although the official reenactment would take place on July 3, the Marines staged a rehearsal for President Harding to observe before he left for his first presidential visit to his home in Ohio. He watched the rehearsal by climbing to the top of Ziegler’s Grove Observation Tower on Cemetery Ridge. [“Harding Watches Pickett’s Charge,” *The New York Times*, July 2, 1922, page 6]

They stayed overnight in a “temporary White House of canvas and wood,” as the *Times* described it, on a temporary camp the Marines had established for the reenactment. “The structure is equipped with elaborately fitted sleeping rooms [sic], baths, electric lights and even has a front porch.” Bell Telephone Company ran a line to the camp in case a need arose for communication with Washington.

On Sunday, July 2, the Hardings and their party left Gettysburg to drive to Ohio. “Reveille bugles of the Marine Corps at Camp Harding, Gettysburg, roused the Presidential party at 6 o’clock this morning. Few were able to sleep the night through, for a severe thunderstorm with high wind and torrential rain hung over the Gettysburg battlefield for several hours.” Following Sunday services, the Harding party left Gettysburg at around 9:30 a.m. to follow the Confederate Army’s retreat from Gettysburg. Because of the severe storm, Army vehicles had to haul the

automobiles out of the mud.

They briefly followed the Lincoln Highway through Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and continued on to the National Old Trails Road at Hagerstown and Cumberland, Maryland, where they stopped an hour for lunch. The rest of their trip would be on the National Old Trails Road. "All along the route they were greeted by thousands of person [sic] who had received word of their coming and massed to greet them as they motored through." At Chambersburg, church services and Sunday school were delayed "to give men, women and children an opportunity to see the President."

They then continued through a heavy shower to Uniontown. After a 175-mile ride over the Cumberland Mountains, they arrived at the Summit Hotel about 7 miles from Uniontown at around 7:30 p.m. The ride "was taken at a comfortable rate of speed, and a few stops were made on the hill tops to enjoy the views over the rolling valleys of dense shade trees, splashed with the gold of ripening wheat." At one point, they "drove through a terrific storm over the mountains from Cumberland, and at one stage of the storm the party had to stop to seek shelter from the rain."

As they traveled, "each village was on the lookout for the President. Motor parties along the road were also on the watch, and all received a cheery wave from the President and Mrs. Harding." The President retired early at the Summit Hotel, according to *The Washington Post*. He hoped to reach Marion the following evening, "but those in charge of the itinerary hesitate to believe that the journey can end before Tuesday unless good weather and good roads expedite traveling":

The automobiles accompanying the President's car were not so fortunate in today's run from Gettysburg to Uniontown as was that of the President. The latter made the journey without the semblance of a mishap, but heated axles, blowouts and a variety of misfortunes bobbed up during the journey to vex others, and the President's secretary and his military aid several times were separated by miles from their chief and were compelled to stop along the mountain roads of Maryland to make repairs

Mr. and Mrs. Harding seem not in the least fatigued by their journey and assert they prefer the view of the fine scenery of the country through which they are passing to a train ride, by which it is only a little more than a night's journey from Washington to Marion. ["President Resumes Journey to Marion," *The New York Times*, July 3, 1922, page 6; "Cheer Harding Party," *The Washington Post*, July 3, 1922, page 1]

At 8 a.m., on Monday, July 3, the Harding caravan left for Marion, still on the National Old Trails Road. They passed "without incident" through the bituminous district where miners were on strike. Between Washington, Pennsylvania, and Wheeling, West Virginia, they had to take "a ten-mile detour, the main road having been closed for repairs":

This delay and the prolonged enthusiasm of a number of county and local reception committees that hailed the President's car to pay their respects put the party about two hours behind its schedule.

There was a stop at Wheeling for luncheon, and then the party pushed on for Columbus. Townspeople and farms along the National Highway between Wheeling and Columbus apparently had been waiting hours for a glimpse of the President. Intent upon seeing Mr. Harding and not knowing in advance that General [John J.] Pershing [the leader of the American Expeditionary Force in the recent war] was also in the party, the faces of the watchers were a study when the General's high-powered car flew by behind the President's.

But they were not too surprised to find their voices. On the outskirts of Columbus several automobile loads of the Marion Centennial Committee . . . followed the members of the Presidential party to their hotel After a quick dinner at their hotel the President and his party left the city for Marion.

President and Mrs. Harding, along with their accompanying vehicles, were escorted to Marion by a delegation of his old friends. They arrived around 11:45 p.m.

Marion officials and residents had expected the President earlier in the evening and had arranged a big welcome. However, when they were told that the presidential party would dine in Columbus and arrive in Marion around midnight, the official welcome home was postponed. "The result was that when a quick dash through the dust from Columbus brought the President and Mrs. Harding here ahead of time there were few people on hand to greet them." Because they had rented their home to a retired coal and lumber dealer, they were headed for the home of the President's father, Dr. George T. Harding, at 498 East Centre Street. ["President is Home After Motor Trip" and "Stops At Columbus For Lunch And Rest," *The New York Times*, July 4, 1922, page 4; "Hardings At Marion," *The Washington Post*, July 4, 1922, page 1]

The Hardings returned to Washington on July 8 – the anniversary of their wedding in 1891 – again following the National Old Trails Road on their 2-day journey. From Columbus, they spent the night at the Summit Hotel before leaving for Washington at 8:30 the next morning. After lunch at the Hagerstown Country Club, the presidential party left for Washington, arriving at around 7:30 p.m. ["Hardings, Wed in '91, Mark Anniversary," *The Baltimore Sun*, July 9, 1922, page 2; "President May Get Home Late Today," *The Evening Star*, July 9, 1922, page 2]

The New York Times was inspired by President Harding's auto trip to publish an article about exploring Maryland's National Road. The article by T. C. Carrington, secretary of the Frostburg Commercial Club in Maryland, began:

President Harding's recent selection of the National Road for his motor trip from Gettysburg to Marion, in preference to other more direct routes, has renewed the interest of motorists in that famous continental Highway, the oldest of all through roads and the most replete with scenic beauty and historic associations.

Carrington described the road from Baltimore to western Maryland as an example of "perfect construction" and referred to "the excellent condition in which it is maintained." It was "one of the best known and most traveled highways in the United States." The entire run from Baltimore

or Washington to Wheeling “can be made in twelve hours, but those unused to mountain driving, or who pause to admire the beautiful scenery, take from fifteen to sixteen hours”:

It is the popular route for tourists from the West and Northwest to and from Florida. The road winds for hundreds of miles over majestic mountains and gentle hills, and through happy valleys offering rare and glorious views.

Travel over the National Road has been made peculiarly attractive this Summer by the establishment of comfortable camping grounds at various points in Maryland. There are eight of these camps; going west from Baltimore they are in the following order: Elkridge Farm, one and a half miles west of Ellicott City; Cooksville, Frederick, Conococheague west of Hagerstown, Hancock, Bellgrove, Frostburg, and Negro Mountain. All are supplied with the usual conveniences for tourists, the most elaborate being at Frostburg.

In an era before roadside infrastructure had developed, communities created campgrounds to provide the service that later would be provided by the private sector.

Carrington explained that Maryland’s State roads “have a width of 24 feet with a metal surface of 15 feet, to which is usually added five-foot shoulders”:

The Road Commission is now building five-foot concrete shoulders on each side of the National Road between Frederick and Baltimore, later this work will be extended the entire length. Statistics show that last year the greater number of accidents occurred not on the steep mountain grades but on the comparatively level stretches from Frederick east. The addition of these five-foot shoulders is expected to reduce these accidents. Where the National Road winds over the mountains in Western Maryland the commission is spending about \$75,000 in banking and widening curves.

This Summer the commission has also placed markers at all horizontal and vertical curves on the National Road. These markers are lines put on with specially prepared paint and so drawn around and over curves in the road that the place of the car is clearly indicated to the driver either on the right or left side of the highway. They are of great protection to drivers where vertical curves prevent observation of cars coming over steep grades. At the summit of all mountains are signs giving the name of the mountain and its elevation, also detailed instruction to chauffeurs regarding mountain driving. [Carrington, T. C., “Motoring in Maryland,” *The New York Times*, July 23, 1922, page 89]

Across the Continent

In June 1922, *The Saturday Evening Post*, the most widely circulated weekly magazine in the country, carried an article about a coast-to-coast trip across the country on the National Old Trails Road. The author, Nina Wilcox Putnam, and her husband traveled across the country in 1920, crossing Missouri in the fall. (She referred to her husband as “George,” but at the time was married to her second husband, Robert J. Sanderson of Boston. During the 1920s, she wrote

a humorous syndicated column that appeared in 400 newspapers called “I and George” that readers of this article would have been familiar with.)

Ms. Putnam was a prolific author, novelist, and playwright, as well as a frequent contributor to the magazine. Her article, which referred to the road only as the Santa Fé Trail, began:

In another year or so they are going to need traffic cops on the Santa Fé Trail all the way from Broadway and Forty-second Street to San Bernardino, California. And it is for the benefit of those who want to join the crowd that this article is written. Having made the trip myself and suffered upon it from lack of certain knowledge, it occurred to me that perhaps a lot of folks who contemplated motoring across this trail might like a little practical dope on the trip. So here you are. Tear this out and stick it in your wallet. You can depend upon its being the real thing.

To begin with, it is possible to cross the continent by motor at any time of the year, but it is not probable. Take it all in all, the best bet for general good weather and good road conditions is from the first of June to the first of September. I wouldn't, however, advise making the start from the East after September first, as on the Lincoln Highway snow would very likely be encountered on the Continental Divide and through the Rockies. As for the time it takes, George – that's my husband – and I drove across in eighteen days, actual driving time, without any night driving at all, taking our way in leisurely fashion and seeing everything as we went.

Two things scared motorists from a transcontinental trip:

Crossing the desert, and the fear of not being able to get adequate supplies for the motor and for their living. Both of these fears are chimeras. There is a gasoline station every seventy-five miles all the way across the desert, and other supplies may be purchased anywhere along the route. There is no Sahara stuff about it, except that which is derived from the Eighteenth Amendment [which declared the production, transport and sale of intoxicating liquors illegal, ushering in Prohibition].

After a motorist decides to make the trip, a route must be selected. “There are no less than six main roads from coast to coast, and the first thing to do is to obtain a good map and look it over carefully.” She recommended the “Transcontinental Map of Main Traveled Roads” issued by AAA. “This is not only a clear and well-arranged map but has a great deal of valuable detailed information printed on the back.”

She chose the National Old Trails Road/Santa Fé Trail, but wrote, “Every trail is worth taking of course.” She broke the trail into a series of “comfortable jumps, that any average driver can make”:

New York to Baltimore, Maryland.
Baltimore to Wheeling, West Virginia.
Wheeling to Columbus, Ohio.
Columbus to Indianapolis, Indiana.

Indianapolis to Terre Haute, Indiana.
Terre Haute to St. Louis, Missouri.
St. Louis to Columbia, Missouri.
Columbia to Kansas City, Kansas.
Kansas City to Hutchinson, Kansas.
Hutchinson to Syracuse, Kansas.
Syracuse to Trinidad, Colorado.
Trinidad to Las Vegas, New Mexico.
Las Vegas to Albuquerque, New Mexico
Albuquerque to Magdalena, New Mexico.
Magdalena to Springerville, Arizona
Springerville to Winslow, Arizona
Winslow to the Grand Cañon.
Grand Cañon to Seligman, Arizona.
Seligman to Needles, California.
Needles to Barstow, California.
Barstow to Riverside, California.

Another factor in her “jumps” was “the fact that excellent hotel accommodations can be secured in all the places mentioned.”

She chose the route because of “its infinite variety”:

Beginning with the charming Southern city of Baltimore you will next in order come upon the quaint little town of Frederick, which looks exactly as though it had been plucked bodily out of a set for a Civil War motion picture. It’s all you want and expect a small Southern town to look like, and then some. Next you get a good glimpse of the Western Pennsylvania coal fields and mining towns of which you read in the newspapers whenever there is a big rumpus going on in the coal industry.

Wheeling was “a charming city, alive, yet with a touch of quaintness, too” as was true all the way to Columbus. “This is agricultural country, and so much of a muchness as there is of it, then on to Indianapolis:

During the rainy season – or any other season for that matter – it is quite possible that you will find mud in this district, but there is always a way to get through.

The motorist will encounter cornfields in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois – “not measured by the acre but by the mile, and the growth not by the foot but by the yard”:

One passes literally through forests of corn and, I might say, shoals of pigs.

There is a richness about the entire stretch of territory that is enheartening to the Easterner, to whom bugaboos of Bolshevism and labor conditions are constantly presented.

Between Indianapolis and St. Louis, the motorist travels “over the Mississippi bottoms, a fertile flat land which in September is a blaze of golden bloom.” St. Louis “is a true city in the sense in which we know the word in the East,” but the rest of Missouri “is interesting chiefly because here begins a succession of beautiful little cities which are, so far as I know, unique and which continue from St. Louis through and beyond Kansas City to La Junta.”

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, “the whole journey has so far been leading up to the great change from the East to the West, but here it is as though the curtain had suddenly been lifted up on the play itself.” Leaving Kansas City, which she notes calls itself the “The Gateway to the West,” the motorist expects “enormous stretches of flat country filled with wheat and nothing but wheat.” Instead, Kansas was “one of the most varied states in the Union, and one of the most scenically dramatic.”

Approaching Colorado, the motorist is about to encounter mountain grades:

Trinidad comes next, and from this place one makes the Raton Pass over the Rockies, a drive that leads one to enormous heights over extraordinarily well-planned grades, a beautiful safe road, offering views that are like something you have dreamed about.

Alas, alack that I should have to say it of so marvelous a country as New Mexico, but it is the truth that the roads leave very much to be desired. There is a great deal of volcanic ash over this country, a substance which in its rough states is hard on tires, to say the least, and though it is an interesting experiment to cross an extinct volcanic cone heaped with black boulders, it is not good motoring. But it is worth any trouble to reach the city of Santa Fé.

There is situated one of the most interesting and important institutions in the country – to wit: The Institute of American Archeological Research, housed in buildings that are perfect reproductions of old Spanish and Indian structures. The original Spanish governor’s palace is preserved in character.

The city of Santa Fé “is itself remarkably beautiful and picturesque, replete with old churches and walled gardens. One is reluctant to leave it.” She commented on interesting sights in the area, including how an “excellent road leads right to the edge of a thousand-foot cliff at the bottom of which a prehistoric community house lies, and to see this at sunset is to find suddenly at your feet the civilization of a bygone age, revealed as if by magic, in all its strange beauty”:

I note with interest that none of the big road maps mention the La Bajada grade. But believe me, anyone who has once been over it is likely to mention it – considerably! It consists of a series of sharp turns, and if you like the shoot-the-chutes at Coney Island you will be strong for it. In Santa Fé they told me it had originally been a mule trail used by the Indians and Spanish as far back as 1600, and all I can say is that it sure was some mule that first made the grade.

The drive from Santa Fé to Albuquerque, a large and prosperous town, is a dramatic one, good for dry weather, but in the event of a cloudburst in the mountains it is sometimes

impassable. I have known of cars being stalled between washes for twenty-four hours at a stretch, unable to go either back or forwards.

In Albuquerque, she confronted the problem all motorists on the National Old Trails Road had to address, namely “which route to take to Holbrook, and to do so is an extremely difficult thing”:

If your time is somewhat limited and the upper road is in good condition I would suggest taking that one, as it makes the Laguna Indian Reservation very easily accessible, and there are no Indian villages on the southern trail. Los Lunas is the turning point where one must make one's final decision. As a matter of fact both ways are interesting, although, all things considered, the northern route is perhaps more picturesque. On the southern route the Datil Forest offers a relief from the desert country and is extremely beautiful in a friendly and more intimate manner, and one rides for hours through great cathedral-like columns of fox-tail pines, an uncommonly straight tree with red bark and dark green needles. The route is unquestionably cooler than the other.

After discussing the Hope Reservation between Winslow and Gallup, Putnam discussed the Grand Canyon trip:

The road from Winslow to Flagstaff is through a mountainous pine-clad country, and both roads up to the Grand Cañon are passable but not good, having sand in many places, but no very bad grades. But from Williams to Needles, California, is perhaps the most difficult part of the trip, for the roads are undeniably poor and it is desert country.

Kingman, “one of the biggest mining interests for hundreds of miles around,” was the “only large town en route.” Motorists had two options between Kingman and Needles, California:

One is across a rather bad stretch of alkali desert, thought Yucca and Topock. And the other is by way of Goldroad, directly through the mountains over very bad roads and dangerous grades, but passing through several real mining settlements that bear all the earmarks of a gold boom town in a moving picture. Exceptionally careful driving is certainly necessary hereabouts, for the roads are full of blind turns and there is a long and unusually muddy stretch of bottomland approaching the Colorado River, which must be ferried on this route. The other route, which crosses the alkali stretch, is much longer, but the approach to Needles is over a bridge.

At Needles, “the real desert, the part of the trip which most people fear, is still before one.” Here, she credited the Automobile Club of Southern California, but she misunderstood its role

compared with the California highway department:

But here begins the work of that astonishing organization, the Automobile Club of Southern California, which has attempted to lay a hard road over the face of the desert. In point of fact it has actually done so, though succeeding at times indifferently well, and after wading through heavy sand for a few miles immediately out of Needles one comes upon this paved boulevard in the middle of nowhere. It is an unexpected sight that raises

one's hopes unduly, for the character of the ground is such as to make a permanent road little short of impossible. Nevertheless, their attempt has resulted in good stretches, although the frequent sandstorms have completely buried it in places. Very likely even as I write[,] this condition has undergone a tremendous improvement, but it is true that the terrors of crossing the desert have been greatly alleviated by the work of the club and you can now drive and still look at something besides the wheel and the road immediately ahead of you.

Moreover, the desert was not like the Sahara. It was filled with growth and color, "except that one piece of alkali country between Kingman and Needles":

If you can see nothing else upon the desert be sure you train yourself to perceive it shifting color and the weird tricks the light plays. More than this I cannot say. If you can't see what is there I can't tell you about it; it is one of those things that everyone must find for himself.

Between Daggett and Barstow, "the road is difficult; sandy, rough and high crowned." The road between Barstow and the San Bernardino Pass "is also poor, the roadbed being of loose gravel, and the grades stiff":

But at the end of this pass the miracle of California roads begins. At the very summit, sharply divided from the crude trail as though a knife had cut the black tar ribbon off abruptly, the paving starts, and from there on into San Bernardino, and thereafter, the beauty of the roads and the charm of the scenery both exceed the Eastern motorist's wildest dream of perfection.

She went on to discuss what to wear; tools and equipment to carry in the car; the choice of car; life in the wilderness; sleeping and eating; and the wonders of the west. For women, her advice on clothing began:

East of the Mississippi George and I found it practicable to wear just such motor clothes as we would use around home. But we both made one serious mistake – to wit: We started out in dark clothing. Believe me, before we'd gone very far we found that what you want is dirt-colored clothes. West of the Mississippi khaki for all hands becomes positively *de rigueur*. After we left Kansas City I put on a pair of riding trousers, and oh, the joy of that! I need not sing their praises to any female who has tried them, but for the encouragement of those who have not, allow me to insist and reiterate that they are the only thing to wear in thorough comfort west of the Rockies. Everyone from grandmamma to the snappiest chicken in the snappiest roadster that you pass wears 'em. Do not dream of going without them. Every department store that boasts of a motoring goods department now carries coat and knickers of khaki for women as well as for men, and these suits are remarkably reasonable, being purchasable for as little as six dollars; and believe me they will give six hundred dollars' worth of comfort and ease. I assure you, ladies, that you can walk into the best hotels through the Far West in the aforesaid garments without the slightest embarrassment, and the clerk will not even smile after your back is turned.

She concluded her article with a discussion of the wonders of the West:

But replete with interest as the whole Santa Fé Trail is, and inescapable as are the beauties thereof, I am still going to lay stress upon the advantages of certain side trips that are easily made from the main road, and without which no transcontinental tour is complete.

All through the Middle West you will recognize the trade names of familiar articles blazing across in front of their home site, and you will find a welcome from practically all these concerns if you care to visit them. I would suggest that whenever possible you do so, inasmuch as actually seeing the tremendous scale upon which America manufactures goods and the wide variety of articles we produce aids materially in forming a proper concept of the country as a whole.

St. Louis does not appear to be a packing center, which it is, “for its residence district is uncommonly handsome, and it possesses an exceptional art museum”:

Kansas City is an object lesson in home building, and the average Easterner will be astounded at the uniform beauty of its residence developments and the interesting manner in which areas are restricted to a given type of architecture. The plan upon which its boulevards are laid out also is unique, and the planting of the parkways that border them will bring joy to the garden lover and the tree worshiper.

She found nothing particularly interesting to recommend between Kansas City and La Junta:

La Junta is the real starting point beyond which a variety of interesting side trips may be taken, beginning with the comparatively short run up to Colorado Springs via Pueblo, where the road in normal times is excellent, and from which a jog may be made back to the main route via Aguilar to Trinidad.

She recommended that readers planning a trip through the area write to the U.S. Department of the Interior to request “an excellent decorative pamphlet covering all the national parks,” including information about motor vehicle regulations, saddle-horse rentals, and other details. “All these folders contain splendid maps, which are kept up to the minute as to road conditions.”

She had already spoken of the wonders of Santa Fé, but south of Albuquerque, she advised, “allow yourself an hour or two at Isleta, an Indian village, which is one of the cleanest and most self-respecting of the Indian centers but which has not foregone picturesqueness in favor of blue jeans, as so many of the professional railway-station Indians have.”

On the southern route between St. Johns and Holbrook, allow time to stop at the Petrified Forest. On the northern route from Belen, “it is a short trip to the Enchanted Mesa, while Laguna, perhaps the most noted of the pueblos, is almost directly on the railroad but is exceedingly picturesque in spite of the fact that it is the most highly commercialized of the Indian villages.

From Thoreau, New Mexico, is “a splendid trip to the more remote Pueblo Bonita, but Gallup was a starting point for several beautiful side trips, “notably the Zuni Indian Reservation and the far-famed Cañon de Chelly, which is perhaps the most dramatic trip of all.

At Winslow, “you can go down to the Roosevelt Dam over a somewhat difficult but exceedingly beautiful road, or north to the four little sky cities which represent the last stronghold of the Hopi Indians.”

Whatever else the motorist sees or passes up, “you cannot, must not, pass up the Grand Cañon of the Colorado.”

The gold country began at Kingman, “and the great basins used for washing gold by modern methods are only one of the many interesting things you will want to stop off and see.”

Nothing to see of importance was located between Kingman and Barstow, “and the only thing calculated to delay the traveler, who has by now become thirsty for a glimpse of California, are the marvelous experiments in dry farming for which this district is famous.”

Putnam concluded her article:

Upon leaving Barstow I strongly advise making straight to Riverside, California. But there is no news in that; I have from the start been advising you to go to California.
[Putnam, Nina Wilcox, “A Jitney Guide to the Santa Fé Trail,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, June 10, 1922, pages 26-30, 76-77]

The Columbia Evening Missourian featured an article about Putnam’s article on its front page on June 9, 1922:

The authoress passed through Columbia in the fall of 1920 on a transcontinental tour and at that time liked the city so well that she remained here for two nights and a day. Women students in the School of Journalism gave an entertainment for her on this visit. At that time she expressed enthusiasm over Columbia and surrounding territory.
[“National Old Trails Road Among Best,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, June 9, 1922, page 1]

The Worst Stretch in Missouri

Readers of *The Columbia Evening Missourian* on June 13, 1922, must have been relieved, if not surprised, by the beginning of a first page article:

Tourists traveling to and from many parts of the United States stop at the Columbia Tourist Camp.

Among those at the camp last night were Mr. and Mrs. P. M. Gortner, of Wabash, Ind., who are motoring to Pomona, Cal.

“The worst roads in the United States are not in Missouri,” Mr. Gortner said emphatically. “Everybody told me to beware Missouri roads but they should have said Kentucky, for that’s where the worst ones are.” [“Many Motors Stop at Camp For Tourists,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, June 13, 1922, page 1]

In early September, however, the Commercial Club of Columbia, Missouri, received a “bomb-shell” in the form of a letter from the Automobile Club of Missouri. One of the club’s drivers, who had crossed the State on the National Old Trails Road, concluded that the road between Columbia and Rocheport was in “very, very bad condition; consequently, it makes it impossible for us to send tourists over this route.”

Directors of the Commercial Club agreed that this stretch of the road was in deplorable condition, as a news report explained:

It was brought out at the meeting that tourists coming through Columbia say the worst piece of road encountered on a trip across the country is between Columbia and Rocheport. The directors of the Commercial Club were deeply concerned over the condition of the road and expressed a desire and willingness to do everything possible to remedy the trouble.

They appointed a committee, headed by E. W. Stephens of the Missouri Old Trails Association, to determine what could be done in the short run to improve the road and to identify a permanent solution. “The committee was instructed to confer with county road supervisors, school districts, the State Highway Department, and others interested in good roads to ascertain what can be done to get the road in better condition at least until the permanent highways are completed.” [“Road Must Be Improved Soon,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, September 4, 1922, page 1]

The same issue of the newspaper carried an article about the Columbia-Rocheport bombshell about plans to apply 254 miles` of concrete from the Kansas City-St. Louis road.

The Kansas City-St. Louis primary road, which passes through Columbia, will be built the entire distance of 254 miles of concrete eighteen feet wide, B. H. Piepmeier, chief engineer, announced Saturday. Possibly in the sections adjoining the larger cities the width may be increased to twenty feet, he said.

The concrete will be built with a line of tar in a wide crevice in the center to divide the traffic. The line may serve also as an expansion joint.

The first block of \$5,000,000 in bonds, according to the \$60,000,000 road program, was sold to a syndicate headed by Liberty Central Trust Company of St. Louis for the high bid of \$5,032,215. Seven syndicates submitted bids for the entire amount and the three individual bids were made for parts of the 5 million dollar issue.

The bonds are to be printed as soon as possible and delivered to the successful bidders. The \$5,032,213, including premium and accrued interest, must be in the State Treasury by September 20.

The first contract for road construction work will be let as soon as the money is obtained. Final arrangements will be made September 19, and according to the program construction work will begin early in October. The contracts for the primary system, upon which Columbia is situated, will be let in sections of not more than five miles. The first contracts to be let will be near Kansas City-St. Joseph and St. Louis. Fifteen sections of the secondary system will be let at the same time and work begun immediately.

The fund commission of the highway department may sell another 5 million dollar bond issue this year. ["254 Miles of Concrete For New Highway," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, September 4, 1922, page 1]

On September 7, Stephens approached Piepmeier, who indicated that funds were not available for the Columbia-Rochepoint road, but that after surveying for the cross-State highway was completed, funds might be available for part of the stretch. At present, the State almost was ready to advertise a contract for 25 miles of road in St. Louis County.

Those living along the gravel road admit it needs immediate attention:

According to one of the men on the ferry boat at Rochepoint, tourists are also complaining about the entire road across Boone County on the Old Trails road. It is said they think the Fulton Gravel road in the Harg Special Road District from Big Cedar Creek on the Callaway County line to the beginning of the Columbia Special Road District road is almost as rough as the Rochepoint end of it, and the four miles west of Columbia in the Columbia Special Road District is nothing to brag about. ["No Funds are Available for Road Repairs," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, September 8, 1922, page 1]

Stephens called a meeting for October 11 in Rochepoint to discuss improving the road. A news report about the meeting began:

Nearly fifty farmers, living between Columbia and Rochepoint met at the Midway School house last night and effected an organization to carry out the plans made for the repair of the Rochepoint road. Committees for the solicitation of money from those living along the road were appointed and the plans for the repair of the road, the nature and extent of the work, were gone over.

Already, \$1,500 had been pledged for the work, with \$942 in cash. The new organization was going to try to raise more funds, in part by seeking contributions from the farmers living along the road. Some of the farmers would be able to contribute by working on the road.

Kirby Raines, a roadbuilder from Fayette, explained the problem to those at the meeting:

It is a waste of money to haul gravel to fill the holes in the road, unless it is properly ditched and crowned. If you just pile a lot of gravel on the bad parts of the road, it will all be washed away before next summer. The road must be well ditched to carry off the

water that now stands in the center of the road.

The outer edges of these parts of the road must be torn up and graded in the center. This will require the use of an elevating grader. In most places clay is needed to bind the gravel and sand together.

He estimated the work would cost an average of \$300 a mile for the 10 miles of the Columbia-Rocheport road.

The group discussed asking students from the School of Engineering at the University of Missouri in Columbia to participate in the road repairs, but a decision was not made. The concern was that not enough tools were available for so many students and farmers; they would have to work in shifts. ["50 Farmers Organize for Road Repair," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, October 11, 1922, page 1]

On October 19, 12 farmers came to Columbia to ask the County Court for aid on the road, but the members were not available. They met instead with a county clerk to get an estimate of the possible funds available for the work, but were informed that all the County Court's funds had been spent and that the current members would leave office in January. The court would not have any additional funds until the next term.

Aside from securing funds, the farmers were looking for an experienced road contractor who would be able to take complete charge of the construction work and see it to completion. ["Farmers Seek Aid of Court to Mend Road," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, October 19, 1922, page 1]

On October 19, the committee headed by Dr. Porter Mitchell, appointed Frank M. Quisenberry of the Midway district to direct construction of the improved gravel road. The plan was to work on several portions of the road at the same time so the farmers involved could work close to home. Initial work will be financed by the funds raised by the farmers before drawing on the \$1,800 contributed by citizens of Columbia. A member of the committee, John T. McMullen, explained that the funds would be kept as far as possible for maintenance work on the road over the coming year. The committee considered it a waste of money to improve the road without providing for its upkeep. ["Repairs Start by Next Week," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, October 20, 1922, page 1]

The plan agreed on for the project was to dig ditches for drainage. Gravel will then be applied to fill in the holes before the surface is leveled. The committee had located rollers to pack the gravel in place and smooth the surface of the road. The project also included repairing culverts and bridges. McMullen commented, "It is very gratifying the way all persons solicited have responded and I think we will have no trouble now in putting the road in shape for travel." ["First Work on Road to Begin," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, October 24, 1922, page 1]

In early December, the newspaper reported:

Repair of the Rocheport gravel road will be completed within the next two weeks if the weather continues favorably, according to Dr. Porter Mitchell, one of the executive

committee in charge of the work.

Work on the road has been in progress for the last week under the direction of Frank Quisenberry, superintendent. The road from the Columbia Special Road District to within three miles of Rocheport had been plowed on the outer edges, and the gravel that loosened was being graded to the center of the road

Sixty-Five loads of gravel have been placed on the road. Doctor Mitchell said that the recent rains and the travel over this part of the road have packed the new roadbed until it is as hard and smooth as a city street.

Gravel is being obtained from Sugar Creek and is costing the farmers nothing. Milton Lowery, who lives near the Rocheport road, is also donating gravel. Dr. Mitchell said that so far the repair of the road has cost only a small sum.

A large force of men is to be put on the road next week hauling gravel and spreading it over the road. More than a dozen men and many teams and two graders have been busy this week. The plowing of the old roadbed is being done by a tractor which is capable of plowing a mile of road a day.

Doctor Mitchell said this morning that when actual work on the road was begun, enthusiasm was high and most of the pledges of money and help were doubled and even trebled. ["Road Nearing Completion," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, November 3, 1922, page 1]

By December 5, work was nearing completion. Men were directing teams dragging the road and filling in the "chuck" holes. McMullen reported that the work was progressing satisfactorily, with the road already surprisingly smooth considering how bad it was at the start. As of mid November, more than \$500 had been spent on the work. McMullen estimated that the balance of funds when the project was completed would be enough to maintain the road for more than 6 months. ["Road Work Finished Soon," *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, December 5, 1922, page 1]

According to *Good Roads*, engineering students wanted to help repair the road:

Three hundred University of Missouri engineering students recently volunteered their services for repairing the Columbia-Rocheport section of the Old Trails roads [sic], between St. Louis and Kansas City.

The road, which was hard-surfaced a number of years ago, is described by tourists as the worst in the United States.

The Missouri Automobile Club, according to reports received here, has been sending tourists across the state by other routes because of this bad stretch of road. ["University of Missouri Students Build Roads," *Good Roads*, December 6, 1922, page 197]

D.A.R. Congress – 1923

During the 32nd D.A.R. Continental Congress, Mrs. Talbott reported on the work of the National Old Trails Road Committee. She began by emphasizing “the educational and historic value” of the committee’s work:

We believe that in the concentrated effort to search out the pioneers it has not only given to us, individually, a keener appreciation of the glory which crowned their sacrifice, but we have gained a broader knowledge of what “America” means. We are prone to accept conditions as we find them; but this movement has set in motion influences which will continue to operate long after our work is done.

The “determination of the greatest patriotic society, in the world, to erect a Monument extending from Ocean to Ocean, has drawn out the best your chairman could produce in a year of tremendous activity”:

Since the last Congress your National Chairman has written 717 personal letters; has distributed more than 1,000 maps of our road, and has issued 2,294 bulletins; also Congressmen have been interviewed regarding our bill, and House Resolution.

During this year there had been introduced in the House of Representatives a Joint Resolution by which the name “National Old Trails Road” is to be permanently and officially settled, as applying to this highway, and commending the patriotic services of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the National Old Trails Road Association, in promoting and signing the same. This Resolution did not pass the last session, but it will pass at the next session.

These two organizations have identical objects; that is, to ascertain and publish its location, its history, its relation to the development of the great west and the westward progress of civilization in pioneer days; the reconstruction of this highway into a wonderful military and civil transportation line; the permanent fixation by Acts of Congress of the name “National Old Trails Road,”: and the permanent sign-posting thereof, so that those who run may read, and become interested in the work of those who contributed so largely to the development of this country.

To show the value of cooperation, “and in the hope of completing our fund this year as the crowning achievement of our President General’s splendid term, the National Chairman offered a prize of \$25.00 to the State which contributed the largest amount, in proportion to membership, for our road signs.”

Although Mrs. Talbott would be stepping down as chairman, she concluded her final report with enthusiasm:

In closing our final report I cannot adequately express my appreciation of the splendid co-operation which has always been accorded to me. To my State Chairmen I render whole-hearted praise; many of you I have not seen but across the distance we have

clasped hands, and you who have so nobly rallied to the National call have made this a labor of love. To our National Officers, who have journeyed hither and yon, along our road, I express my appreciation of their every effort to advance this work

One more year of enthusiastic work will see our road signed from coast to coast. All of the details for the completion of our Memorial to the Pioneers have been worked out, and the end is in sight!

Pioneers, O Pioneers;
'Tis your toil shall break the road;
'Tis your backs shall bear the load;
'Tis your souls must feel the goad;
Where ye sow shall others reap;
Others laugh where ye must weep;
But your deathless souls shall keep;
Vigil through the waiting years,
Pioneers, O Pioneers.

[*Proceedings of the Thirty-Second Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution*, April 1923, pages 130-134]

Four Great Highways

The Literary Digest informed its readers in May 1923 of their options for transcontinental travel by automobile:

“The majority of motorists dream of the time when it will be possible for them to cross the American continent in one continuous journey,” says Arthur Cobb, Jr., in *Motor Life* (Chicago), but many are deterred from undertaking this jaunt because “they visualize themselves hanging over the brink of a cañon on a winding mountain road or plowing hub-deep through sand for weary miles across the dry and dismal deserts.”

The writer, who is manager of the Blue Book Touring Club, hastens to assure us that “the excellent work done during the past few years in improving coast-to-coast highways” makes a trip from the Atlantic to the Pacific no more formidable than one from Chicago to Milwaukee, for instance, “always provided you have sufficient leisure at your disposal.” Obviously the duration of a transcontinental journey depends a good deal upon the motorist’s inclinations and, to some extent, upon the car he drives, but with a total distance of 3,300 miles to cover, it is safe to figure on three weeks for the trip, taking 150 to 200 miles a day as a good driving average.

More important than the time is the route. It may be a surprise to some tourists to learn that the Lincoln Highway is not the only connecting-link between the shores of the two oceans. Three other “trails” across this broad land are systematically blazed with road-markers throughout their length, and no one possesses any definite superiority over the others.

The three trails were the Yellowstone Trail (Boston to Seattle), the Old Spanish Trail (Jacksonville, Florida, to San Diego), and the National Old Trails Road:

Unfortunately a great deal of confusion and in some cases deliberate misrepresentation exists. In many cases even nationally known highways coincide for a distance, tending to confuse the tourist who attempts to follow the markers; and in other cases, owing to sectional disputes or road construction, the exact routing is uncertain, the officials of the highways themselves not being able to give a straight answer to questions about the routing. The highway officials are in many cases not answerable, as these conditions sometimes arrive from causes beyond their control.

Whichever route the motorist chooses, “a trip across the American continent is an education and a lesson in geography that will last throughout the remainder of your life.” The automobile is the only means of conveyance “suited to so all-inclusive a purpose.”

As for the highways, Cobb wrote:

The National Road and the Old Spanish Trail are usually open the year round; the others are not. Of these two the National Road is by far the better. The Lincoln may be traveled at any time from June 1 to the middle of October, but its reputation is suffering severely from conditions in Nevada and western Utah. The Yellowstone Trail should not be attempted west of Minneapolis before June 15, nor after snow begins to fall in autumn.

As Cobb explained, the Lincoln Highway was the “most widely known of the transcontinental routes,” but he warned that “through western Utah and Nevada there is a great deal of rough, unimproved road, and while passable, it is somewhat unpleasant.” (The problem will be discussed later.)

As for the National Old Trails Road, Cobb described it:

The National Road is hard-surfaced from Washington to beyond the Mississippi River, then stretches of dirt and gravel alternate. Through the Mohave Desert, it is “sandy, but nearly always passable.” One advantage, says Mr. Cobb, is that –

This route goes through the Petrified Forest, and furnishes a side-trip to the Grand Cañon. If you take the National Road and wish to visit Denver and Yellowstone Park and points north, you can leave it at Indianapolis and follow the Pike’s Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway through St. Joseph, Missouri, to Colorado Springs or Denver, then north over the Yellowstone Highway to Yellowstone Park.

Cobb also summarized the Old Spanish Trail:

The Old Spanish Trail . . . is mostly sand-clay as far as New Orleans, with a few short stretches of dirt and several long ferries. If you take this route, watch your ferry schedules closely as the boats across Mobile Bay and into New Orleans run but twice a

day, and plans should be made accordingly. From New Orleans to San Antonio the road is largely gravel with some stretches of hard surface; from San Antonio to El Paso mostly dirt and gravel with forty-five miles of concrete on each side of El Paso; from there on, alternative stretches of sand and gravel as far as Phoenix.

You have two choices from Lordsburg to Phoenix, one via Douglas and the other through Globe. The Douglas road is in very good condition and always passable and includes about twenty-five miles of concrete from Douglas to Bisbee. The shorter route through Globe is good in dry weather and will save considerable mileage, but should not be used in wet weather. From Phoenix a concrete road extends thirty-six miles west through an irrigation district to Buckeye and enters the desert at Hassayampa . . .; from here a fair desert road extends to Mecca, from which point pavement is almost complete to Los Angeles.

The Yellowstone Trail “is hard-surfaced to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and gravel from there to Ortonville, Minnesota; dirt – with a few short stretches of gravel from Ortonville to Billings; alternating dirt, gravel and hard surface from Billings to Seattle, with much pavement within the State of Washington.” [“Four Great Highways From Sea to Sea,” *The Literary Digest*, May 26, 1923, pages 61-65]

Another New President

After campaigning in 1920 for a “return to normalcy,” President Harding would preside over one of the most corrupt Administrations in American history. The first major problem, known as the Teapot Dome Scandal, had emerged in 1922. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall had leased Navy petroleum reserves at Teapot Dome in Wyoming, and other locations, to private oil companies at low rates without competitive bidding. Investigation of the emerging scandal led to other scandals that undermined the Harding Administration’s reputation, although the full extent of the corruption was not known in 1922 and 1923. In a 2021 survey of presidential historians of all 45 Presidents, President Harding ranked 37th, between President Herbert Hoover and Millard Fillmore. [C-SPAN Survey on Presidents 2021, C-SPAN.org]

With the economy gaining strength in 1923, President Harding’s confidence about his political future was increasing, as biographer Francis Russell explained:

By the end of spring Harding’s intimates were aware that he intended to run for a second term Facing four more years in the White House, Harding at last gave up the familiar thought of returning to his old editorial desk.

He was planning a trip to Alaska, the first President to visit the territory. He called the trip a Voyage of Understanding, as Russell explained:

But what had originally been planned as an excursion, he now saw in his earnestness as a “Voyage of Understanding,” reaching out and bringing his policies and his great issue of the World Court over the heads of the self-seeking politicians to the people’s judgment. He would speak at every city and whistle stop along the way, just as – although the irony

escaped him – [former President Woodrow] Wilson had done four years before in defense of his League [of Nations]. Writing to Walter Brown [an aide during the 1920 campaign], Harding asked his help in planning the journey from Washington to Seattle to Alaska and back by way of San Francisco and Los Angeles, asking him to visit each scheduled city and to check up on all the local arrangements

To assert and justify his leadership in a series of speeches, to see and draw attention to his country's neglected Northern territory where no President had yet set foot, to encounter ordinary shirt-sleeved Americans – that was how Harding saw his Voyage of Understanding. In preparing for his Alaskan journey it was as if he wanted to break the threads spun round him in Washington and “bloviate” with his obscure fellow countrymen beyond the city. He sensed his own inner change and confided to his friends that he felt a “conscious spiritual influence” in his actions. Walter Brown's elaborate schedule for the tour now seemed an imposition. He complained to Colonel [Edmund] Starling [head of the White House Secret Service detail] that Brown was making a circus of the trip and ordered the Colonel to cut every program to the bone. Even so, the President was unavoidably faced with eighteen set speeches, plus innumerable informal talks at rural depots and whistle stops

Harding's mood as he made the last preparations for his Voyage of Understanding continued morose and restless. He told [Judson] Welliver [one of Harding's political secretaries] before leaving Washington that people he had supposed to be his friends had been “selling him all over this town, and all over the country.” But his mind was made up now to run for a second term and at the right time he would go to the country with his story of how his administration had been betrayed. “And the people will believe me,” he concluded, “when they hear that story.” [Russell, Francis, *The Shadow of Blooming Grove: Warren G. Harding in His Times*, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968, page 573]

After visiting the western States, he planned to return to Washington by a U.S. Navy ship through the Panama Canal that would allow him to relax before getting back to work.

After his trip to Alaska, he traveled along the West Coast. On August 2, 1923, President died of a heart attack in San Francisco.

Although presidential historians consider Harding one of the country's lesser leaders, highway historians give him high marks for his role in creating the Federal Highway Act of 1921. The landmark 1921 Act corrected the remaining defects in the Federal-aid highway program established in 1916 and modified in 1919 (see part 3). Under the legislation, the State highway agencies and BPR began one of the greatest road building eras in history, one that continued with some interruptions, through the 1930s, resulting in an interstate system of paved two-lane highways. The principles it established would be at the core of the program established in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 to build the modern Interstate System.

In addition, on June 19, 1922, President Warren G. Harding signed the Post Office Appropriation Act for 1923. The legislation included an unusual provision for the Federal-aid highway

program that replaced the statutory phrase "providing appropriation" with "there is hereby authorized to be appropriated." Although an appropriation of the authorized funds would still be needed, the change in wording meant that the Secretary of Agriculture's approval of a Federal-aid highway project "shall be deemed a contractual obligation of the Federal Government." In short, the Secretary's approval would "obligate" the Federal Government to pay the Federal share even though Congress had not yet approved a separate annual appropriation act for the authorized Federal-aid funds for that fiscal year. With contract authority, the State highway agencies could plan multi-year projects with the assurance they would be reimbursed for the Federal share. To this day, contract authority, signed into law by President Harding, remains a key element of the Federal-aid highway program.

Vice President Calvin Coolidge was in Vermont visiting family at the time. Because the home did not have electricity or a telephone, a messenger was dispatched to deliver the news about President Harding's death. On August 3, Calvin Coolidge's father, a justice of the peace, administered the oath of office to the new President.

President Coolidge's general view was that the Federal Government should play a more limited role than it had played in recent years. He did not believe the Federal Government had a role in regulating the stock market or should help farmers through hard times. He summed up his philosophy of government in a comment to Senator James Watson of Indiana: "Senator, don't you know that four-fifths of all our troubles in this life would disappear if we would only sit down and keep still?" He earned the nickname, "the Prince of Laissez-Faire." [Smith, Gene, *The Shattered Dream: Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1970, page 48-50]

The new President supported highway development, but not the Federal-aid concept, which was used for highways, but also for activities as diverse as vocational education, cooperative agricultural extension work, maternity and infant hygiene, and industrial rehabilitation.

In his first Annual Message to Congress on December 5, 1923, he spoke in support of expenditures for highways:

Highways and reforestation should continue to have the interest and support of the Government. Everyone is anxious for good highways. I have made a liberal proposal in the Budget for the continuing payment to the States by the Federal Government of its share for this necessary public improvement. No expenditure of public money contributes so much to the national wealth as for building good roads.

He began speaking against Federal-aid on January 21, 1924, just 5 months after taking office. During a meeting of the Business Organization of the Government, he explained that, "There is scarcely an economic ill anywhere in our country that cannot be traced directly or indirectly to high taxes." He was in favor of sound administration as opposed to the tendency "to lapse into the old unbusinesslike and wasteful extravagance." After much thought, he had concluded that "the financial program of the Chief Executive does not contemplate expansion of these subsidies." He explained his concern:

My policy in this matter is not predicated alone on the drain which these subsidies make on the National Treasury. This of itself is sufficient to cause concern. But I am fearful that this broadening of the field of Government activities is detrimental both to the Federal and the State Governments. Efficiency of Federal operations is impaired as their scope is unduly enlarged. Efficiency of State governments is impaired as they relinquish and turn over to the Federal Government responsibilities which are rightfully theirs.

Although President Coolidge based his opposition to Federal-aid on his view of economy in government affairs and his support for lower Federal taxes, sympathetic State officials saw the debate he had launched from their perspective. Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland, a Democrat who strongly opposed Federal intrusion in State affairs, joined in the denunciation of Federal-aid in a speech to the Governors' Conference at Poland Springs, Maine. After complaining that the Federal Government collected more in taxes from residents of Maryland than did the State government, he explained one of the causes for "this Federal invasion of the pocket-books of the people":

One of the contributory causes of this Federal invasion of the pocket-books of the people is maintenance of an enormous and growing overhead of bureaus and commissioners, of which some are not needed, while others should be curtailed, and still others do work and spend money for purposes which should be turned back to the states...

He particularly disliked the 50-50 Federal-aid concept that he said had begun in 1914 with

Federal land grants. In fact, he considered the term a misnomer:

The Federal Government can scarcely be said to "aid" the states, when all it does is take money from the people of the states and then give it back to them again. Most certainly the Federal Government does not "aid" the states, when what it actually does is give back only a part of what it collects from them, and keep the rest to pay the cost of expensive bureaus maintained for the purpose of giving it back.

He also questioned the quality of Federal supervision:

Then the everlasting annoyance of Federal inspectors and investigators and agents, often irresponsible and incompetent, prying into business which ought to be private and into affairs which ought to be personal, and exercising supervision and demanding reports and audits of almost every conceivable kind.

He was not singling out the Federal-aid highway program, but he did point out what he considered another injustice by using roads as an example:

The charge falls on all alike. But when the money goes out of the Federal Treasury,

gross discrimination is involved Maryland began her splendid system of state roads about 1910, and was far ahead of other states when Federal Aid for highways commenced in 1916. Other states have since been helped with Federal money in starting their improved road work. Maryland carried her burden alone for at least six years. [Ritchie, Albert C., "Back to States' Rights!" *The World's Work*, March 1924, pages 525-529]

Members of Congress contributed to the debate. Senator James W. Wadsworth, Jr., Republican of New York, denounced Federal intervention during a Lincoln Day Dinner on February 12, 1924. He begged the audience's indulgence to comment on a proposal "for the Federal Government to contribute from its Treasury to the support of undertakings at present carried on in the several States." He was referring to "the principal [sic] of Federal aid, so called." Based on his experience in the State legislature and the United States Senate, he explained:

I know but little of the Federal Government, but enough to know that the people of this State, for example, are competent through their own government to take care of their own affairs, and that nothing in the way of efficiency will be gained from the State surrendering to the Federal Government at the price of Federal money the control of those things which they have had under their control for a century or more.

Republican Representative John Philip Hill of Maryland expressed similar views in the House during debate on December 29, 1924, regarding the Treasury and Post Office Appropriation Bill:

Most of the causes for which appropriation from the States are asked are meritorious to [sic] themselves. Those backing them are zealous, persuasive, and tireless. Once on the statute books, the States hesitate to refuse the doles; they want their share. The movement being launched, there comes insistent demand for more and more money, more and more employees, until the States awake to the fact that there is another well-intrenched Federal agency in their midst with ever-increasing activities.

On February 6, 1925, Senator William C. Bruce, Democrat of Maryland, summarized the argument against Federal-aid during debate on a bill authorizing funds for the Federal-aid highway program for FYs 1926 and 1927:

My objection to the general system of Federal aid or subsidy is . . . fundamental. In my judgment it constitutes the stealthiest, the most insidious, the most perilous, the most effective invasion of State rights that has ever been known in the history of our country. A more skillful, a more ingenious method on the part of the Federal Government of robbing the States of the full measure of their State sovereignty could not be devised; in other words, this system of Federal aid is simply an indirect, oblique method of filching from the States the domestic powers that properly appertain to them...

Like Samson when robbed of his omnipotent locks by Delilah, the people of the United States have permitted themselves to be deprived of a large portion of the State authority with which they were originally endowed I do not quarrel with any proper exercise

by the Federal Government of the power to establish post roads. That is one of the objects to be subserved by the Federal power, just as much as any other object that falls within the domain of the power. I do object, however, to this system by which the Federal Government lures the State governments into the surrender of that State sovereignty, and that is not all; by which it tempts the State governments often into most imprudent, improvident, and extravagant expenditure of State funds.

BPR followed the debate closely. When Senator Simeon D. Fess, Republican of Ohio, a Federal-aid supporter, referred to BPR's program as being of the hit-or-miss variety, Chief MacDonald wrote to clarify that the program "is not on a haphazard basis, but is strictly confined to a system of roads, interstate and intercounty in character, limited to not more than 7 per cent of the total road mileage." His February 5 letter enclosed a map of the Federal-aid system of 174,350 miles, and explained that, "We are completing this system at the rate of about 9,000 miles per year." The goal, he wrote, was to do the major work of surfacing the system in a reasonable manner over the next 12 to 15 years, after which other work could be done, such as eliminating dangerous railroad crossings.

The Mississippi River, MacDonald continued, was something of a divider in highway policy. In the more populated States east of the river, Federal-aid projects involved higher types of surface, such as bituminous macadam, brick, and Portland cement concrete. West of the river, the less populated States requested assistance in "stage construction":

This means that we first do the grading and other necessary fundamental work such as the building of culverts and bridges, and pour on the surface a covering of gravel or sandclay [sic] to be used until funds are available and the traffic has reached a point where such a surface can no longer be economically maintained.

MacDonald concluded his letter with a general response to critics:

There are no arbitrary policies established with respect to the administration of Federal aid. Under the Federal Highway Act the States' rights and authority are very carefully preserved, and the question of State versus Federal rights is not raised in our actual operations. There is close cooperation between the State highway departments and the Bureau of Public Roads. Each respects the good faith and judgment of the other, and we approach the problem of road building as engineers seeking to accomplish the same objective and to be mutually helpful in this immense task.

Despite concerns about the concept, Congress approved President Coolidge's request to continue, but not expand, the Federal-aid program, with \$75 million for each of FY's 1926 and 1927. The President signed the Amendment and Authorization of February 12, 1925.

(This compilation is from a file called "FEDERAL-AID (prior to 1927)" maintained by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads. It included news clippings, typed excerpts from speeches, and magazine articles on the subject. The file is part of a Vertical File of material now in the Federal Highway Administration's Research Library, Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center)

President Coolidge would renew his opposition later in the year, but the Federal-aid highway program was too popular, especially in the western States, to kill. As Professor Bruce E. Seely put it, “for the BPR, the years between the wars were the ‘golden age’ of American road building.” [Seely, Bruce E., *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers*, Temple University Press, 1987, page 68]

New Roads in Indiana

Judge Lowe wrote to *The Kansas City Star* in response to a recent article:

A recent article in the Star stated it was possible to drive east on hard-surfaced roads from St. Louis by way of Chicago or Indianapolis. One can go east on a hard-surface road from St., Louis to Washington and Baltimore on just one road, the National Old Trails road.

One can also go east from St. Louis to Chicago on a hard-surfaced road. To do so one must go on the National Old Trails Road to Marshall, on the east line of Illinois, then due north on the Dixie Highway to Chicago; or, to go east from Chicago, one must return to Marshall or Indianapolis and take the N.O.T. road.

The National Old Trails road never has been discovered by St. Louis nor, to large extent, by Kansas City. Yet it is the greatest asset, in my judgment, that ever has come to this state, not excepting any railroad that reaches this part of the country.

Now that we are assured of its early completion by the State Highway Board, maybe we will begin to appreciate it more. It is more nearly completed west except in Kansas City, than most persons have any idea of unless they drive over it from Kansas City to Los Angeles. In fact, it is the only practical all-the year-round route to the Pacific, and this does not except the so-called Southern highway, which has never been started. [“Old Trails Road is Good,” *The Columbia Evening Missourian*, August 31, 1922, page 1]

Judge Lowe often described the National Old Trails Road as hard surfaced all the way from Baltimore-Washington to St. Louis. As noted in part 3, hard surfacing often meant a surface that required extensive maintenance, especially after a rain.

In the fall of 1922, Director John D. Williams of the Indiana State Highway Commission announced completion of a couple of projects on the National Old Trails Road, as *Good Roads* reported:

Twenty-two miles of hard surface pavement of 28-miles contracted in three projects on the National road between Indianapolis and the Ohio state line, and 18-miles of 35-miles contracted on the same road between Indianapolis and Terre Haute, are completed

There remains to be built this season six miles between Indianapolis and the Ohio line, and approximately 170 miles on the west end of the road. The Indianapolis-Terre Haute

projects are divided into five contracts. Anticipating that weather conditions will permit the laying of concrete as late as November 15, it is reasonably certain all pavements contracted on this road east of Indianapolis will be completed this year, highway officials believe. ["New Roads in Indiana," *Good Roads*, September 20, 1922, page 105]

The Willite Proposal

Concern about the condition of the western half of the National Old Trails Road prompted Judge Lowe to make a bold proposal. He recommended that the portion of the road from Trinidad, Colorado, to Los Angeles be reconstructed with Willite, which he called "THE GREATEST DISCOVERY IN THE HISTORY OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION." That was the subtitle of the association's bulletin of August 1922. The cover advised:

Read Openmindedly and Learn How the Best Road
Ever Devised Can Be Built for the Least Cost and Smallest Maintenance

Judge Lowe included a Foreword dated August 29, 1922, in the bulletin:

My apology, if apology is needed, for announcing our purpose to build the remaining unbuilt portion of the National Old Trails Road, from the Mississippi to the Pacific, with what is known as the "Willite" process is because, during all these years in which we have been engaged promoting the N. O. T. Road as an interstate road by all the states through which it runs, and educating the people up to the point of actual construction, we have necessarily observed the processes used in road construction and found fault with nearly all of them.

About eight years ago our attention was called to "Willite" by its great discoverer, Colonel H. P. Willis, one of the ablest engineers that New York has ever had. After spending millions of dollars in building roads in that state, none of which met the requirements that he thought they should, he resigned and devoted four long years to experimentation, with the result that he found by certain combinations of asphalt, chemically prepared, mixed with certain other ingredients, it made an ideal material for road construction. I had much correspondence with him prior to his untimely death.

I have watched it in all its phases, its tribulations and its successes. I have set down by the side of the magnificent highway, known as the Los Angeles County Highway Harbor Boulevard, at [a slough] really an arm of the sea, where the boulevard crosses it, and watched with great interest the intense traffic thereon. At this point the water stands permanently on either side of the road. No one had been found who had nerve enough to undertake the job of building any kind of a road across that slough. It is some sixteen miles from Los Angeles down to the harbor. It has now been completed and thrown open to traffic for the last three years. It is carrying ten thousand tons of traffic per day, more than is carried on any other stretch of road of like distance in the United States. Extravagant as it may sound, traffic really seems to improve it. No other road in the United States, no matter what material has been used in its construction, could stand up under any such traffic as this. More than that, no other road would carry half this tonnage

and live six months.

Harbour Boulevard opened to traffic on July 1, 1919. In a photograph included in the bulletin, Judge Lowe referred to the boulevard as the western terminus of the National Old Trails Road. The foreward continued:

This process is entirely out of its experimental stage. Whilst we were convinced of its supreme value years ago, yet we waited patiently until all known tests could be applied, and until it had proven beyond any per adventure that it was the idea that Colonel Willis conceived it to be.

Now that the National Old Trails Road is completely constructed from Washington to St. Louis in sections perhaps of all known types of construction, and the balance of the way has been approved for construction by the states through which it passes, we think the time has arrived when we should not only build the remainder of the road of the very highest type known to men, having at the same time due regard to its permanency, its cheapness of maintenance, and to its cost of construction.

It will perhaps cost little more than one-half the price of any other type of road which can be built; its maintenance is insignificant; its resiliency is not the least among its qualities; it is perfectly smooth and avoids bumps, ridges and cracks which make traveling a burden over almost any other type of road. The best road ever devised is the earth road, except for dust when dry, and mud when wet. Willite has every good quality of the earth road, and eliminates both dust and mud, and approximates permanency more nearly than any other known type of road.

We have given the most careful and patient thought to this matter that a layman can possibly give to any subject, and we are willing to risk whatever reputation we have, and are prepared to meet the criticisms that will be provoked by taking a stand for completing the road with this material.

The booklet consisted of correspondence in support of Willite pavements, which Judge Lowe urged patient reading:

If you haven't the patience, the time and energy to make an effort to inform yourself upon this great subject, then you will not exert the influence that you should, or reap the benefits that you are entitled to receive from having been a member of this Association. We are now on the home stretch and a "pull all together" will land our work on the bright sands of the Pacific, a complete highway from ocean to ocean.

One word additional as to maintenance: A great engineer has said that, "Maintenance is the biggest word in road construction," and highway builders are worrying greatly about raising maintenance funds; and well they may if the usual high type or low types of roads are to be built, for the repair accounts of any such roads will run from \$300.00 to \$500.00 per annum and up. It is a crime to build such roads. Take a five-year period, and if the maintenance cost be \$300.00 per annum, in five years it will be \$1,500.00, or five per

cent on \$30,000.00 per mile – and at the end of that time probably will have to be rebuilt. No road, the maintenance of which cost so much, is worth building.

No rigid, hard surfaced road, no matter what the material may be, will meet the requirements of modern traffic. The nearer it approaches nature's type, the better it will be. The time will come when no intelligent engineer or Highway Board will approve a rigid, brittle, hard surfaced road.

And mark the prediction (although not a prophet and not even an engineer), the time will come, even though it may be delayed for some years, when this Road from beginning to end will be constructed of "Willite" pavement, as will every other worthwhile road.

In June 1921, *Highway Engineer and Contractor* carried an article stating that the Harbor Boulevard paving in Los Angeles "was one of the first paving jobs put through in Los Angeles for which Willite was specified":

After having been subjected to heavy motor-truck and passenger-automobile traffic for more than 2 years there appears no evidence of deterioration at this date. That, at least was my impression on making a brief inspection of that pavement in April this year. [The pavement] is about 1 mile in length but was laid in three sections, crossing two sloughs and one narrow swamp. It consists of 2-course Willite, 5 ins. thick, laid upon a sand-and-loam fill 6 ft. deep. The sand dunes in that locality were drawn upon, not only as material for making the fills, but for sand required in making the paving mixture . . .

The manner in which this type of pavement is meeting the severe tests of traffic on Harbor boulevard undoubtedly has won for it a recognition that is assuring its adoption on other highways.

Calls for bids in the city and county of Los Angeles usually cite Willite "among those for which proposals will be considered":

Los Angeles county and city highway and street improvements performed within the last 6 months include considerable Willite paving. [Scott, W. A., "Willite Pavement Construction in California," *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, June 1921, pages 47-48]

Although Judge Lowe included mainly correspondence in the bulletin, he also reprinted an article from the August 1922 issue of *Highway Engineer and Contractor* titled "Willite Pavement Construction in California." The article, written by C. S. Reed, president of the Western Willite Road Construction Company in Los Angeles, explained that in June 1919, the Los Angeles Highway Department chose to employ Willite for "a supreme test" over four old earth-fills on Harbor Boulevard:

County Road Commissioner F. H. Joyner at that time stated that if Willite would stand up under the heavy pound of traffic on this road under terrific heat conditions in the summer, no one need ever have to worry about it elsewhere – that he considered it the heaviest traffic in America.

The old earth-fills were about 30 feet high, with lakes on each side thereof. This sub-grade was properly prepared and rolled with a 15-ton, 3-wheel roller. Wooden curbs were installed on each side of the road. Willite foundation 3 inches thick was laid thereon, raked, spread and rolled, on top of which Willite 2-inch top course was laid and rolled with 5 and 8-ton tandem rollers until no more compression was shown under the wheels of same

Willite pavement laid with tempered asphalt binder has been proven immune to the hottest summer temperatures and heaviest traffic loads – never a yard has waved anywhere. It cannot creep, shove or run under traffic.

The highway was opened in June 1919:

A few difficulties developed which were immediately remedied, and since the latter part of June 1919, the road has remained open to traffic every day in the year. It is now three years old and carries over 10,000 tons' traffic per day, consisting of the heaviest load units we have ever seen. Loads of 5, 10, 15 and 20 tons on motor trucks and trailers are more common than otherwise. This heavy traffic is carried between Los Angeles and San Pedro, the ocean port where the big Pacific liners are loaded and unloaded. The only limit on traffic is the number of tons the wheels will carry.

Engineers who were very skeptical of the promises made for Willite pavements were “now enthusiastic supporters of Willite.”

After discussing technical details, Reed concluded:

In view of the foregoing, we cannot see how it is possible for any progressive state, county or city highway department to refuse to investigate Willite merits and claims to the fullest extent. If they sincerely have the interest of their taxpayers at heart, they certainly will do it.

We have at this time laid in the state of California over 60 different Willite jobs showing a total yardage laid of 616,197 sq. yds., and contracts and proceedings under way for nearly that much more. These jobs are the absolute proof of the claims of Willite, because they have all been obtained upon the actual showing and record established here in the face of the most bitter competition, and if Willite was not everything claimed for it, we would have been out of business a long time ago.

Harry P. Willis had died suddenly on May 3, 1918, at the age of 45. Willis, a civil engineer and chemist, had begun work for the State of New York's surveyors' division as a leveler working on highway, canal and boundary surveys. He entered the State's engineering department through civil service and served as resident engineer for the State Highway Department and became Chief Engineer in 1909. In 1911, he resigned to devote time to his patented process for road construction. [“Death of H. P. Willis,” *Good Roads*, May 18, 1918, page 260; “Obituary,” *Engineering News-Record*, May 23, 1918, page 1021]

Willis had written a paper on his discovery that was published, posthumously, in the July 1918 issue of *Better Roads and Streets*. The paper began:

The efficiency of “Willite” has now been proven by over four years’ wear in the Borough of Queens, City of New York, and to the satisfaction of engineers and road builders from all over the world who have made an examination into the texture and method of laying this piece of pavement. The result here obtained may be said to be due to the recognition and utilization of four important principles; namely First, that the cost of maintenance of present day road construction makes road improvement an expensive luxury and almost prohibitive. Second, that in order to obtain full benefits of the earth as a foundation, the foundation for any road or pavement must be semi-elastic. Third, that the wearing course must be dense, tough and semi-elastic rather than brittle and granular, and be so bonded as to be absolutely proof against moisture, heat, cold, disintegration under traffic, slipperiness dust [sic], or noise. Fourth, that the foundation and wearing course should be joined together and consist of a solid integral mass having the same co-efficient of elasticity.

The first principle “did not fully dawn upon the writer until he had spent nearly sixteen years in actual road construction, and had been a large factor in the expenditure of nearly one-hundred million dollars appropriated by the State of New York in the improvement of its highway system.” Willis left the State “determined, if possible, to develop a type of highway construction which would render this excessive cost of maintenance unnecessary.” This, he believed, he had accomplished with Willite.

He explained the second principle:

As mother earth is the foundation of all construction, it stands to reason that the most effective paving foundation is one which transmits to the earth, in the most economical and efficient manner the loads coming from above and at the same time withstand efficiently the heaving effect of frost pressure from below.

As for the wearing course, he wrote:

It has been known for many years that Sicilian Rock Asphalt gives the best results as a wearing course but the price makes it prohibitive. One street in New York City was paved with this material over thirty years ago and yet to-day shows no perceptible wear.

Willis had studied the chemical properties of Sicilian Rock Asphalt. Willite was the result. He “tempered both wearing course and foundation so as to more fully carry out the principles just discussed”:

The final result was a pavement dense, tough and semi-elastic rather than one which is brittle and granular; one which is absolutely proof against moisture, heat, cold, disintegration under traffic, slipperiness, dust and noise.

Finally, the result would be more efficient “through having the wearing course and foundation

thoroughly bonded and of both having the same co-efficient of elasticity”:

Would it not have been more efficient and economical to have had the bottom three inches composed of a material nearly three times as tough as concrete and to that, have absolutely bonded a two-inch wearing course, tough and more dense than ordinary sheet asphalt but with the same co-efficient of elasticity as the foundation? Then no concrete base would be required. The writer answers the question in the affirmative and it is exactly the “Willite” way of accomplishing much more efficient results.

One of the most overlooked features of pavement design is that “it should consist of a solid integral mass”:

The day of weakly bonded surfacings, such as macadam, asphalt macadam, and concrete is over. First came the auto tire to suck the binder out of the surface but more recently has appeared the auto truck whose jar and vibration loosens the larger particles from the binder so that the effect is now upon both. The more general use of, and the increased loads upon auto trucks is certainly going to increase the amount of damage done by them. There are but three ways to meet this evil. One is to use a binder of greater strength, the second is to decrease the size of the particles composing the filler; and the third is to incorporate the binder with the filler and set the former just as water sets cement; except to make the resultant mixture tough and semi-elastic rather than brittle. The first of the above mentioned remedies is neither practical nor economical; the second is now being tried but with only partial success; the third is the “Willite” way which is practical, economic, and guaranteed to meet every requirement of present day traffic conditions.

That concluded Willis’s article, but *Better Roads and Streets* added a paragraph by an anonymous engineer written while the European war was underway:

I see that I owe no apology for the short time taken in bringing this paper to your notice. Mr. Willis was with the New Jersey Highway Commission the following day and on my calling at his office, a week ago this morning, I learned that he had been found dead in his bed two hours previously. I therefore consider this really as his last message to-day, a voice from the grave.

After my forty-six years of practical experience as a highway engineer, I have no hesitancy in endorsing this improved method of bituminous road construction as I not only saw the work being done in the Boro of Queens, City of New York, three years ago, but this week went over eighty thousand square yards of “Willite” laid at Kingston, New York.

I have also since leaving New York seen the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Chemist’s analyses of my friend, the Hon. Logan Wallen [sic] Page, director of Public Roads and Rural Engineering, U.S. Department of Agriculture; these were so satisfactory that I feel that the country is to be congratulated on another method of helping to “win the war” by this system involving both the saving of labor and material and also money, which can be invested in Liberty Bonds. [“Development of Willite,” *Better Roads and Streets*, July

1918, pages 264-265]

Judge Lowe returned to the subject in his December 1922 bulletin. He began by quoting an editorial in a Kansas City newspaper (October 27, 1922) noting the demand for engineering skill to “point the way to less expensive and more serviceable roads.” Can roads be more durable, the editorial asked, or “must the new road building era be accompanied by traffic laws limiting the load that may be both impractical and difficult of enforcement.” Judge Lowe replied that it was “high time” to employ engineering skills to avoid lower weight limits, which he said are not only impractical and difficult, but “illogical and contradicts every purpose of road construction,” namely to carry the traffic:

But even if it is true that highway authorities do lack this knowledge, yet we may rest assured that somewhere, locked in his laboratory, a chemical engineer will solve this great problem.

Millions of Federal Aid have been appropriated to the construction of dirt roads – gravel, macadam, etc. – other millions to roads which will not serve the traffic – and millions more to maintenance of such roads. This must stop.

He suggested comparing New York, California, and Illinois:

In New York one of the greatest State Engineers she ever had resigned because the roads that were being built would neither stand up nor carry the load. In California they have failed, and they are now calling for an additional bond issue of sixty-five million dollars to save the eighty million dollars already put into inefficient roads. In Illinois they are pleading for legislation to protect the roads against the traffic.

We, who have had occasion to look into this question most closely, are fully persuaded that it has been solved, by Colonel Harry Parsons Willis, former State Engineer of New York. After four years of intensive study and experimentation in his laboratory, this great chemical engineer made, what he believed, was the full solution of this great problem. His discovery has convinced many other engineers that roads can be built at a “reasonable cost” – a cost well within the ability of the people of any part of the country – roads, the maintenance of which will not be burdensome, and will meet the demands of traffic, and carry any load which commerce may demand.

He emphasized in bold:

Don't lets build roads which require traffic laws to regulate the load, but build the roads to accommodate the traffic. [sic]

He referred to his proposal for employing Willite on the National Old Trails Road from Trinidad, Colorado to Los Angeles. This portion of the road was “about one thousand three hundred miles, twenty feet in width,” and it could be redone in Willite for “about fourteen to fifteen thousand dollars per mile.” He explained:

This is because fully eighty-five per cent of the aggregates that go into the construction of the road through that territory are so convenient and so valuable for the purpose as to make this possible. **No monopoly or trust can possibly obtain on this eighty-five per cent.**

Wonder if this is the reason some “road authorities” hesitate to adopt or recommend Willite construction for Federal aid?

The benefits of Willite in Colorado, Missouri, and Kansas would be the same, “except the eighty-five per cent of material may be a little more expensive to transport in these states.”

Judge Lowe suggested:

Build maintenance into the road construction and no maintenance fund will be required. What more can be asked? No traffic laws limiting the load are needed. No legislation necessary to provide a great maintenance fund, and yet build a road so resilient that to ride upon [it] is a pleasure, instead of a torture – roads that automobile traffic really improves instead of destroys – roads so resilient that it meets and absorbs the shock of rubber tired vehicles instead of destroying them. In short, roads that come as near the ideal as has yet been conceived by the mind of man.

To this end we propose during the year 1923 to hold three National conventions, one perhaps at Kansas City, one either in Colorado or New Mexico, and one possibly in Washington, Pennsylvania. The sole purpose of these conventions will be to put the unbuilt portions of this road under contract during the year, and to urge that that portion of the road already built on the eastern side of the Mississippi and now ready, or soon to be ready for resurfacing, no matter what material has been used, shall be resurfaced with the same material, because we are convinced that this material, what criticism may be made upon it, is ideal for resurfacing on old foundations. Two inches of Willite on such a foundation will last almost interminably. We do not approve throwing away, as of no account, roads already built. On the contrary, we should save and utilize all the salvage possible.

As he indicated in the bulletin, Judge Lowe was concerned that “there is danger of this Association committing itself to work outside the legitimate object and purpose of this organization.” For that reason, he had asked Charles Henry Davis, his friend and long-time associate from the National Highways Association. On October 17, 1922, Davis replied:

I want to assure you that the National Highways Association, as such, and I personally, will back you in your plans for paving the National Old Trail Road from St. Louis west to the Pacific Coast with any kind of paving that you now decide upon, or that you may in future advocate.

You as President of the National Old Trails Road can at any time, and do, advocate a particular pavement for the completion of the National Old Trails Road. This is your act. You have a right to do this from every point of view, and you will be supported in this

right by your directors if they are solely guided by the needs of the National Old Trails Road and are not themselves individual exponents of a particular pavement. The National Highways Association, and I personally as President thereof, can support your efforts for the paving of the National Old Trails Road with such pavement as you select, without in any manner violating the principles that guide our Associations as enunciated above.

Davis closed by noting that “the source of much satisfaction and pleasure to me that I had the opportunity of seeing you when in Kansas City recently”:

You are not a day older in spirit than when I last saw you in Kansas City in 1917. It is men like you that make our country great and what it ought to be.

Judge Lowe reported that the association’s directors, with one exception, “unqualifiedly endorse our position.” The exception involved “a very mild criticism, more of a technical character than anything else.” He did not have the space to reprint all the correspondence, but did include “some brief extracts which, except that they are entirely too complimentary to your President, seem to cover the entire question.”

One of the excerpts was from C. S. Reed, the head of Willite’s Los Angeles office:

I am particularly interested in the National Old Trails Road as shown from Trinidad, Colorado, down through Santa Fe, New Mexico, through Arizona to Needles, California, and through the Mojave Desert into Los Angeles. In those three States billions of tons of the highest quality desert sandy aggregates are to be found on a job with which a most wonderful Willite highway could be built, which would work inconceivable economy
....

On that particular section of Willite highway, thirteen hundred miles in length, a saving could be made of approximately \$10,000,000, and at the same time build the finest and highest type of highway known in the world.

Judge Lowe explained he was not “‘blowing bubbles’ nor chasing rainbows.” Willite had been subject to “the severest tests in unfriendly laboratories.” For example, the Industrial Testing Laboratory of Los Angeles had concluded from its tests that the additives provided by the Willite formula had the effect of “giving them greater resistance to water and increased toughness, greater resistance to load . . . and longer life.” Judge added, “What more would you ask?”

He closed this essay:

The members of this association, living in other states, I am sure will take no offense nor make any objection if we close this bulletin by taking off our hat and making our profoundest bow to Arthur M. Hyde, Governor of Missouri, and to the splendid Highway Board he appointed, to-wit: Col. Theodore Gary, Chairman; Murray Carleton, C. D. Mathews, and S. S. Connett, for the splendid accomplishments already made. Missouri has been practically two states, because it was divided by a mighty river.

I think there have been just two bridges of any consequence, both privately owned toll bridges, one at St. Charles, on the extreme eastern side of the state, and one at Kansas City. Already bond issues have been carried in addition to the sixty million state road bonds; contracts are being let for four additional FREE bridges, one at Lexington, one at Waverly, one at Glasgow and one at Boonville, all of which connect directly with the National Old Trails Road.

I know of no state in the union which has risen to such great opportunities, and is carrying forward such a magnificent program of internal improvements as this.

Whether any segment of the National Old Trails Road was rebuilt with Willite is unknown. However, from the start of the Federal-aid highway program, Logan Page had objected to the many patented and proprietary pavement designs available for work. And he put his concerns into the regulations for implementation of the program. As revised in 1919, Regulation 8 ("Construction Work and Labor") included:

Sec. 4. No part of the money apportioned under the act shall be used, directly or indirectly, to pay or to reimburse a State, county, or local subdivision for the payment of any premium or royalty on any patented or proprietary material, specification, process, or type of construction unless purchased or obtained on open actual competitive bidding at the same or a less cost than unpatented articles or methods equally suitable for the same purpose.

This limitation on the use of Federal-aid highway funds reduced the likelihood that the National Old Trails Road would be improved with Willite or other patented or proprietary processes.

Motoring Pleasure

In January 1923, *The New York Times* carried an article by architect Newton C. Bond describing his 10,353-mile trip, with wife and 14-year old daughter, through 27 States. "Only the perfection of the automobile and the great improvement in roads make such a tour possible," he wrote.

After traveling around the country, the three left Oregon to cross into northern California:

When entering California by automobile you are expected to register within twenty-four hours, and you must have your registration from your own State with you. They issue a free permit for you to tour California, good for ninety days.

After touring the northern and central parts of the State, they reached Los Angeles, which served as their base for travels in southern California:

While here put your car into a service station and have it thoroughly gone over preparatory to your return. A breakdown in the desert is rather unpleasant.

When they were ready to head home, they took the National Old Trails Road to the East Coast:

Upon leaving Los Angeles we traveled over the old Santa Fe trail through Pasadena, San Bernardino, over the Cajon Pass and down to Hesperia

The road, Bond reported, had been fine to that point, but from there to Las Vegas, New Mexico, “we found about 700 miles of very rough roads. Don’t figure on averaging much over fifteen miles an hour”:

We made an early start from Barstow so as to be sure and make Needles before dark. The trail lies across the Mojave Desert for 170 miles. From Needles we crossed into Arizona at Topock then through the mining towns of Oatman and Goldroads. They lie in the Black Mountains. Here we found another real climb over a good road, but with a few hair-raising turns.

Our route took us to Seligman, Ash Fork, Williams to Maine Station. At this point we took the side trip of sixty-four miles north to the Grand Canyon. Nothing we have ever seen or expect to see can compare with this wonderful work of nature.

We returned to the Santa Fe trail at Maine Station by the same route, then east to Flagstaff, where the Lowell Observatory is located. Just eleven miles beyond Flagstaff we visited the cliff dwellings, then on to Meteor Mountain, forty-four miles east of Flagstaff. A large meteor is supposed to have hit the earth and buried itself at this point, leaving a crater-like opening approximately one-half mile across and three hundred feet deep. From here it is twenty-one miles to Winslow.

The next town is Holbrook, Ariz. Where you have the choice of two routes. We were routed through the petrified forest to Springerville and this is called by the Southern California Automobile Club the better route. The other route from Holbrook is through the Painted Desert to Gallup, N.M., and is approximately ninety miles shorter. I can hardly imagine any route with worse roads than the Springerville route, but if the other route is worse you have ninety miles less of it to drive.

These routes come together at Isleta, N.M., then on to Albuquerque and Santa Fe. About twenty miles east of Santa Fe we hit La Bajada Grade, very steep, and in less than three miles there are twenty-three hairpin turns. A large car must back up in order to get around some of these turns.

Next we arrive at Las Vegas, N.M., then over the Raton Pass to Trinidad, Col. The road from Trinidad to La Junta, Colo., is full of chuck holes and very dusty. The roads from here to Kansas City and St. Louis, Mo., are dirt roads, mostly over level country and very good. If you get caught in a rainy spell in Missouri, content yourself wherever you are, as it will be impossible to travel. Missouri is noted for its poor roads. From St. Louis we continued on the International [sic] Old Trails through Indianapolis, Columbus, Wheeling, Hagerstown, and Baltimore.

From Baltimore, they continued to New York via Philadelphia. [Bond, Newton C., “See United

States by Motor – Pleasure in Continental Tour,” *The New York Times*, January 7, 1923, page XXX14]

Motor Routes From the Mississippi

Later that year, *Sunset Magazine* discussed road conditions for the main routes into the Western States. The article began:

Ten years ago, the successful completion of a transcontinental motor trip was an event chronicled in the daily papers; as a rule such a journey was undertaken by an expedition of several machines accompanied by a truck carrying spare parts and a young machine shop for emergency repairs. This year probably 40,000 machines will travel from the Mississippi to the Rockies and beyond; thousands of them will be driven by women and few of them will be delayed on the way by any cause except their own defects. All of which indicates the size of the tremendous road-building job the Far West, having half the territory and one-tenth of the country’s population, accomplished in the last decade.

The article discussed the condition of several named trails, including the Pacific Highway parallel to the coastline. “The Pacific Highway is so nearly completed, it is so well marked and sign-posted that its full length can be traversed by strangers without the help of maps or printed directions.”

For east-west routes, the Lincoln Highway is “the best improved of the three routes here described.” In Utah, the State had refused to improve the road for 4 years in a lengthy dispute with the Lincoln Highway Association. “Rather than tackle this stretch of rough going, most of the tourists prefer to go southwest via the Arrowhead Trail to Los Angeles, or northwest over the historic Oregon Trail through southern Idaho and Oregon to the Coast.”

(The dispute related to selection of Federal-aid primary roads between Nevada and Utah. The Lincoln Highway Association wanted its route chosen across western Utah, but Utah officials chose the parallel Victory Highway/Wendover Cutoff between Utah and Nevada instead of the Lincoln Highway route through difficult terrain. The dispute eventually went to Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, who held a public hearing on the topic on May 14, 1923. He concluded that by law, he could act only on proposals from the State highway department, thus ruling in the favor of the Utah State Road Commission’s proposal. [Knowlton, Ezra C., *History of Highway Development in Utah*, Utah Department of Transportation, 1967, pages 180-191]

Next was the Yellowstone Trail. “Like the other two, the Yellowstone Trail is not a fast road when it rains in Dakota.” But some portions of it were in better shape. “From Spokane to Seattle or Portland the Trail is a real highway, the drive across the Cascades or along the Columbia river having few equals.”

The article also covered the western half of the National Old Trails Road:

The National Old Trails route traverses Kansas, a corner of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and reaches the Pacific at Los Angeles. It has been improved throughout its

entire length and as a rule is kept in good condition. In Kansas there are many miles of difficult driving during wet weather; in Colorado the road has been graded and graveled for most of its length; in New Mexico there are still a few rough stretches, but during the last three years the road has been widened and graded across the mountain passes leading into and out of the valley of the Rio Grande, thereby soothing the nerves of the flat-country motorists.

In Arizona a great deal of work has been done on this route, but of course the sparsely settled state has not had the means to improve every portion of the Trail. Even in wealthy California the desert portion of the route between Needles and the San Bernardino mountains has not been paved, though it is always kept in good condition. The mountain stretches on this route are principally in New Mexico; elsewhere it traverses a plateau country with gradual approaches to the summits.

Having covered three of the main transcontinental highways, the article concluded:

To sum up: A transcontinental motor trip no longer is a hazardous expedition. The careful driver with a reliable machine, good tires and brakes can undertake the journey without extra equipment and enjoy the trip if he takes his time and inquires at the numerous information bureaus about the road conditions ahead.

Heave away! All clear! Let's go! ["Motor Routes from the Mississippi to the Rockies and the Pacific Coast," *Sunset Magazine*, June 1923, pages 36-37]

Across the Mojave Desert

Motor West reported in 1923 on increasing traffic into California on the National Old Trails Road:

Early in July, traveling in caravans at night for coolness, swarms of motor tourists were arriving in California daily on the National Old Trails route, passing through San Bernardino. A count at Daggett in Mojave Desert showed 310 cars from 36 states, passing through Arizona via Needles. It was record travel.

The night caravans number 20 to 40 cars. The camping grounds at Needles, Daggett, Barstow and Camp Cajon – the fine camp in Cajon Pass, near San Bernardino – are said to be crowded every night. ["Tourists Pouring Into California," *Motor West*, July 15, 1923, page 29]

In the winter of 1923, the California Highway Commission created District VIII that included San Bernardino County, Riverside County, and Imperial County. E. O. Sullivan was the District VIII Engineer, with headquarters in San Bernardino. In October 1923, the State took over the eastern end of the National Old Trails Road, relieving San Bernardino County of responsibility for maintenance and construction of the route.

The November 1959 and March 1960 issues of *Profiles* magazine, published by the California

Department of Public Works, contained Sullivan's "Reminiscences," including:

"District VIII was formed in 1923. District VIII consisted of all of San Bernardino, Riverside and Imperial Counties. The gas tax had gone into effect and it was realized that something had to be done for the interstate connections. I came to San Bernardino as District Engineer. Mr. R. M. Mortan was Chief Engineer, and he instructed me to concentrate the energies of the District on passable connections to the Arizona and Nevada borders at the earliest possible time."

"... the principle road entering California was the Needles road." "The present road location to Las Vegas had not yet been conceived. The road to Blythe was a mere trail. The road to Yuma, from the edges of the cultivated area in Imperial Valley to the Sand Hills, consisted of tracks in the sand with an 8-foot plank road across the Sand Hills and two deep ruts from Sand Hills to Yuma."

"... Between Barstow and Needles, the County had at one time attempted to 'oil' the road but the 'oil' had long since disappeared except for one stretch, 8-foot wide about 10 miles near Essex"

"... This was the heaviest traveled road into California. It is my recollection that over 300 vehicles a day passed over this road, headed for the promised land of Hollywood and Los Angeles"

"... This was the only piece of oiled road in 160 miles that had not ground up and blown away in the wind. At the center of this 10-mile stretch of oiled road was a gasoline pump and a little shed service station known as Chambless. This old service station is about one half mile to the north of the present state highway"

"... I had the nagging problem of the one 10-mile stretch at Chambless that was a marvel in having stood up like pavement" "... I finally purchased a powerful compound magnifying glass such as are used by geologists to examine small crystal structures. We took a good many samples of this 'marvelous' piece of road. I discovered that the voids in the aggregates were not filled by oil but that the particles were thoroughly coated with oil. Examining portions of other oiled roads that bled or rolled up in corrugations, on old county roads of ill repute, we found that invariably the voids between the particles were filled with oil. ..." "... we finally believed that we could make a road every bit as good as the "marvelous ten miles near Chambless ..." "... within two years the road all the way to Needles could be traveled at 35 miles per hour by the average car"

"Superintendents, foremen, and equipment operations were sent all over District VII to observe successful jobs and all soon learned the technique"

"... Engineers were sent to us from all the Western States by the Bureau of Public Roads ... to be schooled. The Bureau of Public Roads later on sent engineers to us from all over the world to observe our work. They came from Egypt, Australia, South Africa, Chile, Peru, wherever there were desert roads and lack of finances to construct

conventional pavements”

“Last week I took another look at this ‘marvelous’ old stretch of oiling. It is still there and in fairly good condition”

Mike Boultinghouse and Rick Roam, co-chairmen of the Old Trails Road Association of California, provided the text of Mr. Sullivan’s recollection. They added:

The excellent reputation of Sullivan’s work on the National Old Trails Road soon spread throughout the area and motorists changed their opinions of driving over this road. Once this route meant nothing more than dirt, sand and ruts in a trackless desert, but thanks to Sullivan and his crews, that had all changed for the better. These improvements, which included natural drainage during rainy periods with the road being placed between the flow lines of all the washes, allowed motorists to increase their speed from 10 to 35 miles per hour, which was really barreling along in those days. A drive from San Bernardino to Needles no longer meant a 2-1/2 day drive over terrible desert roads, seeking water stops or continuously having worn out or broken auto parts along a previously “rough” route over the National Old Trails Road.

They also commented:

With county and state road improvements now in progress across the desert from San Bernardino to the river crossing at Topock, things were starting to improve and the National Old Trails Road was getting a much needed “facelift.” Permanent type paving and wider roads had been completed as far as Daggett by July of 1927 along with other road improvements on into Needles.

California highway officials designated the State’s segment of the National Old Trails Road as a primary highway for Federal-aid purposes. [Boultinghouse , Mike, and Roam, Rick, Letter to Bureau of Land Management, October 28, 1994, copy in FHWA file]

Cannon Ball Baker - 1923

Erwin George Baker, better known as Cannon Ball Baker, was a famous automobile and motorcycle stunt driver. He often took on challenges from automobile or motorcycle companies to demonstrate the durability of their machine on long-distance trips. During his dozens of cross-country trips, he periodically traveled the National Old Trails Road, as happened in October 1923.

At 11:30 a.m. on October 8, 1923, he drove from Columbus Circle in New York City for his latest cross-country journey. As the words printed on the side of his Oldsmobile Six Phaeton, Model 30, proclaimed, he was going all the way from “New York to Los Angeles in High Gear.” The low, second, and reverse gears had been removed, and high gear “officially” sealed.

Motor West described the trip:

Baker can drive anything drivable But Baker does no stunts with lame ducks. No. He's a demon demonstrator of what a really good motor vehicle can do; and his latest, this Oldsmobile stunt, said to be the first time any car whatever has crossed the continent in high gear, surely proved its power. Mud nor mountains could make it quit. Relatively as wonderful a trip as when in October, 1903, twenty years ago, the first automobile trip across the country was made.

On this, Baker's 62d cross-country journey, the car covered 3674 miles at an average of 28.8 miles per gallon of gasoline. The oil reservoir, holding 6 quarts, was drained 5 times. The car had the regular axle ratio of 5 1/10-to-1. No repairs were made on the engine, clutch, transmission, universal joints or differential during the run. S-o-m-e run.

The route from New York was via Philadelphia, Cumberland, Md., Uniontown, Pa., Wheeling, W. Va., crossing the Cumberland Mountains; then through Columbus, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Dodge City, Raton Pass, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Flagstaff, Needles, San Bernardino, to Los Angeles. Boulevards, mountains, mud, rain, snow, mountains, desert, boulevard.

As indicated, the majority of the run would be on the National Old Trails Road:

A cordon of New York motorcycle police escorted "Bake" through New Jersey. In Philadelphia, a huge parade was staged and a greeting by the mayor-elect. Then an all-night drive, over the Cumberlands to Uniontown – some grades 16 to 21 per cent, taken at 25 to 35 per, in heavy fog. Took the famous Uniontown Hill at 27 per. Through Ohio and to Indianapolis on the 10th. To St. Louis on the 11th. Probably 150,000 persons saw the rolling advertisement during the 861 miles to Missouri. No water taken, so far.

On the 12th and 13th – Missouri rains, Missouri mud. On the 14th, 6 hours to plow through the last 18 miles into Kansas City. A \$3,000,000-damage storm. On the 17th, Topeka. Mud-bound there the 18th. Kinsley, 150 miles, reached on the 19th – at 28.7 per gallon of gas, despite the mire, deep ruts, need of building cross-overs, etc. Snow and rain mixed. Had to chop ice off headlights. To Kinsley, only 9 ounces of oil used. On the 20th, out of Kinsley. Up grade all day, sometimes 15 per cent. Makeshift roads. Washouts. La Junta that night. On the 21st, rotten traveling – and up, up, up to Raton Pass, 7888 feet elevation. Snow-capped peaks all around, but hot in the pass. Hundreds of Sunday-outing cars, in second, boiling. That evening, Las Vegas, N.M., 2234 miles. On the 22d, Albuquerque, 2585 miles, after many stiff climbs. On the 23d, Holbrook, in the Rockies. Hard pulls? One of 6 miles, grades 10 to 17 per cent – over the top at 25 per. Continental Divide – 8300 feet elevation. Night. Blinding snow storm. On the 24th, bits like a 70 mile climb to Flagstaff, and on to Needles, Cal. On the 25th, across Mojave Desert to San Bernardino. On the 26th, boulevards to Los Angeles.

Eleven o'clock in the morning, October 26, at the City Hall, Los Angeles. Baker still at the bat. Handing Mayor Cryer a letter sent by Al Reeves, general manager of National Automobile Chamber of Commerce. A 3674 mile trip, in 18 days. High gear all the way. ["All the Way in High Gear," *Motor West*, November 1, 1923, page 42, final

paragraph shifted from its original placement in the article]

The point of the trip was reflected in an advertisement that appeared in newspapers:

COAST TO COAST IN HIGH GEAR!

New Oldsmobile Six demonstrates new degree
of engine flexibility and motor car stamina

The first car to cross the American continent in high gear! Driven by “Cannonball” Baker, holder of numerous road records, a new Oldsmobile Six (stock car with standard gear ratio) traveled 3,674 miles under every conceivable road and weather condition. Rain, snow, mud, rock-strewn passes and washed-out roads were encountered. Grades ranging from 5 to 17 per cent were negotiated. Yet, during this test, the car averages 28.7 miles per gallon of gasoline.

This run was planned to demonstrate the great flexibility and stamina of the new Oldsmobile Six by subjecting the car to the most unreasonable driving conditions. The 12½ days of the trip were equivalent to years of average driving. The fact that the car came through this grueling test with only minor adjustments and no recourse to the emergency kit, is proof of the car’s ability to give satisfaction in the hands of owners.

See the new Oldsmobile Six at our showroom. [*The Sunday Star* (Washington, D.C.), November 18, 1923, page 63]

Baker traveled parts or most of the National Old Trails Road in many of his transcontinental runs. He had, for example, traveled part of the road in his first transcontinental drive. Already successful as a racer, Baker decided to set a new record for crossing the country by motorcycle. With sponsorship for his Indian Motorcycle, he left San Diego, California, on May 3, 1914. Following a 210-mile southern route, he arrived in Phoenix, Arizona, 13 hours and 10 minutes after leaving San Diego. His ride to Springerville took 12 hours – his longest day thus far.

From Springerville, he stayed on the National Old Trails Road all the way to Uniontown, Pennsylvania. He picked up the Lincoln Highway for the ride into New York City, which he reached on May 14 around midnight after 11 Days, 14 hours, and 10 minutes. In article for *The Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* (May 26, 1914), he gave due credit to his motorcycle. He had carefully selected his route based on the towns he would pass through, checking weather patterns over a 10-year period, and concluded that May was the best month for the run:

The weather ran true to form, and I did not hit rain until after I had gotten east of the Mississippi Valley, at which point I struck gravelly roads which absorbed moisture readily and gave me minimum trouble. This was just as I had planned. I followed behind a storm area trailing from west to east and struck no storm until another one finally caught up with me. During the rainy period I covered one stage of 72 miles through wind and water in 1 hour and 55 minutes

In all the distance of 3,497 miles I had no mechanical difficulties whatever and I encountered all the different road conditions known to travel. Between Mammoth, Cal. and Glamis I rode 64 miles on the railroad ties, crossing trestles and bridges. In a 1,027-mile desert stretch of sand, cactus, heat, thirst and desolateness, I traveled 115 miles without seeing a single living thing – except Gila monsters and snakes.

Four mountain ranges were negotiated. At one point at the northern end of Arizona I climbed from 200 feet below sea level to an altitude of 9,647 feet into the mountain snows

When I struck Indiana the authorities raised the speed limit for one day, so that I could do my best. And I did, making 376 miles in 11½ hours. I am a Hoosier, and welcome any encouragement which the people of my home state gave me as I passed from town to town with a generous and appreciated demonstration.

From Columbus, Oh., to Greensburg, Pa. the going was bad. I ploughed my way through 232 miles of mud – and was mighty glad to get out of it onto firm ground again.

My final dash was a 418-mile one from Greensburg, Pa. to New York City. This I did in 20 hours, 16 of which was actual riding. Total time for the trip was 11 days, 12 hours and 10 minutes, during which I took only 46 hours' sleep – about 4 hours per day. Average mileage per day was 304. [Emde Don, *Finding Cannon Ball's Trail*, Emde Books, 2016, pages 96-97]

During a cross-country drive in 1920, Cannon Ball Baker ran into a speed trap on the National Old Trails Road set up especially for him. While trying to break his own record for a New York-to-Los Angeles run, he reached California on August 4. As he raced across the Mojave Desert, he was well ahead of the record by about 7 and a half hours, despite heavy rain and the inevitable muddy roads of Kansas and Colorado. The new record was only a few hours away as he raced up to Cajon Pass.

He did not know that Governor William D. Stephens had objected to the many automobile races taking place on California's highways. In response to the Governor's concern, Motor Vehicle Superintendent Charles J. Chenu decided to make an example of Cannon Ball Baker on Cajon Pass where the speed limit was 15 miles per hour.

State Traffic Officer Jay Boone was waiting to catch Baker, who was driving 45 miles per hour. The *San Bernardino Sun* reported, "As Baker sped down the mountain road, Boone, who was secreted behind a tree, gave chase. Baker was arrested and cited to appear before Justice of the Peace Edward Wall in this city." Having done his duty, Boone escorted Baker to Los Angeles "setting a pace which was all that the law would allow."

With Boone's help on the last stretch, Baker completed his drive of 3,378 miles in 6 days, 17 minutes. He had broken his own record by 18 hours.

Superintendent Chenu praised Boone and told *The Sacramento Bee* on August 10 that, "We are

going to prosecute Baker and prosecute vigorously. If the judge in San Bernardino will fix a jail sentence instead of a fine, we may be able to stop this racing over roads.”

Chenu did not know that Baker had appeared a day earlier before Judge Edward Wall. Baker pleaded guilty, explaining, “if he had been informed he would not be permitted to exceed the speed limit in California as he did in other states,” he would not have gone so fast. Judge Wall fined Baker \$10. Baker paid the fine and headed off to his next adventure. [Blackstock, Joe, “Cajon Pass speed trap was too much for even ‘Cannonball’ Baker,” *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*, September 28, 2020]

Zero Milestones for the National Old Trails Road

Judge Lowe sent a copy of the association’s October 1923 bulletin to chambers of commerce, commercial clubs, and D.A.R. chapters in every town of consequence along the road. He urged them to erect sign posts or granite monuments “in each town of consequence”:

There will come a time when this Association will cease to exist, but there will never be a time when this road will fade away or be blotted out In order to ascertain the exact mileage, I would suggest that we count it from the Capital [sic] in Washington, and thence West, and in Baltimore, Washington Monument, Washington Place, North Charles St., and Mt. Vernon Place. These official mile-stones or monuments accurately placed will give the tourist not only definite information, but the people of each community as well, and will also reflect the spirit of the age in which we have lived.

This interest in milestones resulted from the dedication of the Zero Milestone on the Ellipse in Washington, D.C. President Harding presided over the dedication on June 4, 1923. The monument read: POINT FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF DISTANCES FROM WASHINGTON ON HIGHWAYS OF THE UNITED STATES. Inscriptions on the side noted that the Zero Milestone marked the start of the first transcontinental army convoy (July 7 to September 6, 1919, via the Lincoln Highway) and the second (June 14 to October 6, 1920, via the Bankhead Highway).

Dr. S. M. Johnson of Roswell, New Mexico, had conceived the idea for the Zero Milestone based on the similar marker in ancient Rome. Dr. Johnson had been involved with the Southern National Highway Association, but he is best remembered as the head of the Lee Highway Association (Washington to San Diego). He had proposed the idea of a Zero Milestone in a letter on June 7, 1919, to Colonel J. M. Ritchie of the Motor Transport Corps:

It seems to me the time has come when the Government should designate a point at which the road system of the United States takes its beginning, and that the spot should be marked by an initial milestone, from which all road distances in the United States and throughout the Western hemisphere should be reckoned.

Rome marked the beginning of her system of highways which bound her widely scattered people together by a golden milestone in the Forum If that golden milestone in Rome still has power to fire the imagination of men, how much greater will be the appeal

of the Washington milestone as time goes on and American history grows ever richer in deeds of service to humanity.

A temporary marker was placed at the site of the Zero Milestone in a ceremony before the first convoy began; Dr. Johnson accompanied the convoy to deliver good roads speeches in towns along the way. In June 1920, a Federal law authorized the Secretary of War to erect a Zero Milestone, at no cost to the government. The ceremony included speeches by President Harding, Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, Chief MacDonald, Roy Chapin, and Dr. Johnson.

By September 1923, backers were supporting milestones for every State, hence Judge Lowe's interest.

(The idea of the Zero Milestone soon proved impractical. It has mainly been forgotten, but remains standing on the Ellipse, at an ideal location for tourists to stand while they take pictures of the southern side of the White House.)

Judge Lowe, in his bulletin, emphasized:

The cost of such a monument will be negligible, but ought to be so permanent as not to require re-placement within the next several generations. In the meantime, in co-operation with the Auto Club of Southern California at Los Angeles, we are signposting the road from ocean to ocean. Indicating the amount of travel on this road last year, the Auto Club . . . states, that last year there arrived in that city over the National Old Trails Road 27,830 cars, over the Lincoln Highway, 14,987 cars, over the Bankhead Highway 6,800 cars and over the Midland Trail, 9,125 cars, thus showing that nearly as many cars reached Southern California last year over the National Old Trails Road, averaging four people to each car, as came over all other roads combined, and the travel this year will be double over what it was last year. The Officials of this club estimate that the tourists this year will leave \$240,000,000 in the western states, more than half of them coming over this road (or \$120,000,000) estimating that each car carries four passengers, and spends \$4.00 a day each, and remains in the state sixty days. Is this worth while? If this is true now, what may we expect when the road is paved all the way? \$120,000,000 benefit in last year – it will never be less. But people travel East as well; suppose the benefit to the twelve states through which it runs, not counting California, be as much, the benefit to the twelve states will be \$240,000,000.

To illustrate his point, Judge Lowe referred to two letters he had received. Colonel E. R. Moses of Great Bend, Kansas, and a member of the National Old Trails Association's executive committee, had traveled by automobile through the New England States:

We traveled by auto through all of them, in the interior and the coast line, and they had elegant roads, kept up just like a railroad. They had to, if they got the [sic] travel, as they claim they took fifty-three million dollars from the tourists this year.

He also quoted a letter from B. A. Matthews of Columbus, Ohio, a State vice president of the National Old Trails Road Association:

Just arrived from a trip to Washington, D.C., over the National Old Trails Road. It is a wonderful road – like a city pavement all the way.”

Judge Lowe commented, “It makes life worth living when we receive such encouraging letters as these.”

He also quoted a news item:

Denver, Oct. 4.- Four and one-half million tourists visited Colorado this season and spent on an average of \$10 each, or a total of 45 million dollars, according to estimates made today by the Denver tourist bureau. Frank A. Bare, president, who announced the figures, said the number of motor car tourists increased in the 1923 season from 514,000 to 643,000.

Judge Lowe expressed the point:

The former State Highway Engineer of Colorado proved by accurate figures some years ago that the N. O. T. Road would pay for its construction across the state in one year. There is not a state through which this road runs but could pay the entire cost of construction and receive a handsome dividend each year on the investment, whereas, each state pays only one-half the cost [under the Federal-aid highway program].

However, disregarding every other argument for improved roads, let’s consider the question from the economical or commercial side only; it is agreed by all authorities, and generally accepted, that the saving in transportation charges of a good over a bad road amounts to 20 cents per ton per mile, but for the purposes of this argument let’s be over conservative and assume that the saving would be one-half, or 10 cents per mile.

The most intelligent action taken by any State Engineer or Highway Board which had come under my observation, is in Colorado, where the Engineer put men out on all the roads constituting their State Highway system and kept a count of the amount of wheeled vehicle traffic for a period of two months at different seasons of the year and then made an estimate based upon these reports of the amount of traffic on each of the 113 roads constituting a mileage of 3827, with the result that the National Old Trails Highway from the Kansas State line to Pueblo, covering a distance of 168 miles carried more than half the tonnage of the whole State system.

Having learned of some criticisms having been made upon this report, I had some correspondence with the State Engineer and asked him to make a calculation based upon 10c saving per ton per mile, estimating the cost of construction to be \$25,000 per mile, particularly as it related to the National Old Trails Road. His statement was that if 10c per ton per mile were to be accepted instead of 20c the generally accepted estimate, was made, that it would pay for itself in a single year.

In addition to his commentary in the bulletin, Judge Lowe included a press release from AAA for

release on September 14, 1923. The headline:

SATURATION POINT
IS NOT IN SIGHT
Report of Auto Registrations for First Six Months of 1923.
Shows Big Increase in Leading States.
New York Again Leads in Licenses –
Ohio Goes Ahead of California.

The point of the press release was that, “There are no indications that the United States or any of the individual States are approaching the point of saturation in number of motor vehicles.”

The press release ended:

The total number of motor vehicles registered in all of the States during the six months period was 13,002,427 as against 12,238,375 for the entire year of 1922. The total revenue from registration was \$167,240,937.76 for the first six months as compared to \$152,047,823.74. In addition to the revenue from registrations the States collected from the motorists \$8,669,174.02 in taxes on gasoline during the six months period of this year, as compared to a total collection of \$11,923,442.61 for 1922. As the gasoline tax is collected as the fuel is used, the record for the year 1923 may be expected to double that of 1922. The gasoline tax in some of the States did not go into effect until late in the years

The final record of 1923 will indicate that motorists will have paid direct taxes in registration fees to the States and gasoline taxes approximately \$200,000,000 according to the Good Roads Board of the A.A.A. This will not include the personal property tax or special registration or gasoline taxes imposed by cities, counties and townships.

Judge Lowe continued:

May we add to the above illuminating statement, that the suggestion of appropriating this immense and immensely growing sum to the States to be used as a guarantee fund against a State Bond Issue, was suggested as early as the 2nd of May, 1912, BY THIS ASSOCIATION. In the states adopting this plan they are **Building Roads**. By this plan the Automobile owner nor the manufacturer does not add one penny to his taxes. The State simply sets aside this tax and applies it to the road fund, where it ought to go. These figures are illuminating too, indicating the most active states in building roads. It illustrates also that within the next five years such states as Missouri and Kansas will each have a road fund, from this source alone, of not less than the state of Michigan, or 624,590 cars, and if the license fee be \$10.00 per car this will amount to \$6,245,900 with the gasoline tax to be added, annually. It is a safe estimate to multiply this by two, within the five year period. Neither does this plan of providing a road fund add one penny to the taxes of the farmer, the chief beneficiary, for, after all is said, in the entire process of road construction, the land-owner is chiefly benefitted. It will double the value of every acre of land bordering on any through or National Road. Were it not for the purblindness of

this class of people, supported and encouraged by pig-headed road officials and crooked Politicians, the whole problem of road construction would be solved over night. It is not the purpose to levy a tax, but to appropriate a tax already levied. We repeat this is not a purpose to levy a tax, but an effort to see that a tax already levied shall go into the building of roads where it belongs and not into politics where it does not belong. Kentucky now has a campaign for a \$50,000,000 fund which will undoubtedly carry, and so will Tennessee for \$75,000,000.

Because “easy money” is thus in sight, we must guard against a saturnalia of extravagance and waste. We must regard this as a sacred fund and protect it from being robbed by crooked contractors, material interests, or unscrupulous, inefficient and untrustworthy officials. It seems we must still guard ourselves against the silly nonsense that that road is best which costs the most money. A gravel pit in McPherson County, Kas., it is claimed, will supply the material to pave the entire state system of roads in that state. It is claimed that this gravel cements itself, and does not RUT or WASH. Many of the other states no doubt have this same quality of gravel. Wichita, Kansas, has put on a Bus line to Los Angeles! After all “the World do move.” The distance between Wichita and Los Angeles is about 1800 miles. The Secretary of this Association, Mr. Geo. L. L. Gann of Pueblo, also a member of the State Highway Board of Colorado, informs me that there is practically an inexhaustible supply of limestone shale right on this road between La Junta and Trinidad which is superior for road surfacing to the best known quality of cement.

He referred to a speech by Chief MacDonald in which he divided roads into three classes:

- 1st – Cement-Concrete
- 2nd – Asphalt, and
- 3rd – Gravel.

“It is unnecessary,” Judge Lowe wrote, “to say we would not have thus classified them but, McDonald [sic] has the last guess.”

He also addressed a common concern:

It is claimed that this is an inopportune time to build roads because the farmers have been struck hard by the depressed conditions now prevailing. This fallacy is of easy solution. The farms do not contribute one penny to the road construction fund. If they did, when times are hard and agricultural industries suffering, it seems would be the most opportune moment to employ an army of men in road construction. It is no remedy for dull times to sit down and cry over the situation. Moreover, if this fund does not go into roads, it will be dissipated and distributed among a vast throng of political parasites. Which shall it be?

Judge Lowe also took the opportunity to criticize the highly publicized “Ideal Section” of the Lincoln Highway. The named trail associations, in general, were promotional organizations; they did not build or pay for construction of their roads. The Lincoln Highway Association was

unusual in providing resources for “seedling miles” as object lessons to encourage State and local officials to improve the road along the same lines. The most famous “seedling” and one of the most talked about portions of the Lincoln Highway at the time was the 1.3-mile “Ideal Section” between Dyer and Schererville in Lake County, Indiana. In 1920, the association decided to develop a model section of road that would be adequate not only for current traffic but for highway transportation over the following 2 decades. The association assembled 17 of the country's foremost highway experts for meetings in December 1920 and February 1921 to decide design details of the Ideal Section. They agreed on such features as:

- A 110-foot right-of-way;
- A 40-foot wide concrete pavement 10 inches thick (maximum loads of 8,000 pounds per wheel were the basis for the pavement design);
- Minimum radius for curves of 1,000 feet, with guardrail at all embankments;
- Curves superelevated (i.e., banked) for a speed of 35 miles per hour;
- No grade crossings or advertising signs; and
- A footpath for pedestrians.

The Ideal Section was built during 1922 and 1923, with funds from the Federal-aid highway program, the State highway agency, and Lake County as well as a \$130,000 contribution by the United States Rubber Company (company president C. B. Seger was one of the founders of the Lincoln Highway Association). In magazines and newspapers, the Ideal Section was hailed as a vision of the future. Highway officials from around the country visited the Ideal Section, and discussed it in papers read before technical societies in this country and abroad.

Judge Lowe had his own view of the Ideal Section as expressed in his October 1923 bulletin:

The “Ideal Section” mentioned, if it even demonstrates its endurance, will also demonstrate its uselessness, because its cost is prohibitive. Our opinion is that the “Ideal Road” of the future will be so resilient as to absorb the shock and blow of modern traffic, no matter how heavy the load, or severe the shock. But, our opinion is now what it has always been, to wit: to build with the best available material and to build better and better as the years go by.

We heartily endorse Theodore Gary’s definition that “Road Building is a Process.”

(Today, the Ideal Section is still in use between Dyer and Schererville, an early attempt to envision the type of highway that would evolve into today's Interstate superhighways.)

To further illustrate the point, Judge Lowe reprinted a letter dated September 28, 1923, from George W. Jones, Road Commissioner, Los Angeles County, regarding Harbor Boulevard in San Pedro. He described how the road had been flooded and damaged over the years from 1910 to

1918, and was impassable at times, after which:

June, nineteen-nineteen, additional disintegrated granite was placed over surface to level same on which five inch Willite Pavement was laid in two courses of three inches foundation and two inch top.

Subsequent investigation along edge of pavement shows many voids in base which is still subject to settlement of filler.

Traffic at date of Willite construction six thousand tons per day with gradual increase to date of seventeen thousand eight hundred tons per day. Pavement at present time in excellent condition. Total maintenance to date approximately two hundred fifty dollars. We are satisfied with it and building more. Decomposed granite used on this job FRIABLE material secured from Country pit.

Judge Lowe added, "May we add, this stretch of road has received greater punishment and required less maintenance than any road in the United States, BAR NONE.

Next, he reprinted a list of historic dates for the National Old Trails Road beginning with 1606:

New Mexico section established.....	1606
Eastern Section conceived by George Washington prior to.....	1800
Financed by Act of Congress admitting Ohio into the Union.....	1802
Established by Act of Congress.....	1806
Established and extended by Congress to Santa Fe, New Mexico..	1825
Constructed and extended by Congress to the Mississippi River and maintained until.....	1837
Its restoration and construction by "The Mo. Old Trails Association" in convention assembled.....	1907
Taken over, adopted and named, "National Old Trail Road" at Kansas City, Mo., in Convention assembled.....	1912

Judge Lowe reprinted an article he had written for BREEZES, the magazine of the Kansas City Automobile club. The title and subtitle were:

THE HISTORIC "NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD"
Conceived by George Washington and, Following
Civilization Westward Under Various Acts of Congress,
Now Reaches From Ocean to Ocean

He repeated the history of the Cumberland Road and other segments of the National Old Trails

Road, ending with the founding of the named trail in 1912:

We cannot dwell further upon the historic features surrounding it but hasten to a conclusion by saying that today it is completely hard surfaced from the Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi at St. Louis. It has now been taken over practically throughout its entire length across this state [Missouri] as the first interstate highway to be built under the late Act of the Missouri legislature. This insures its completion in the near future to Kansas City. Very much of the road between Kansas City and Los Angeles has already been built, and is in good travelable condition.

It is hoped that the road West from the Mississippi will be 20 feet wide. The road from Kansas City west will be uniformly paved twenty feet wide. It is already practically all graded and bridged. It is the only road you can take at the Mississippi River and reach the Atlantic Seaboard over a hard surfaced road. It is the only National Road ever established in the history of this country, and will be the first to be completed.

Finally, he reprinted his remarks his remarks to the Highway Congress of the Highway Industries and American Association of State Highway Officials on December 12, 1918. In doing so, he asked, "The Chicago Compromise – has it been kept? Lest we forget." He also reprinted the resolutions adopted at the time. (See part 3 for more information.)

Completing the Road in Indiana

In 1923, Indiana was working to complete its segment of the National Old Trails Road, classified as State Road 3. In July, Director John D. Williams of the Indiana State Highway Commission announced that the road was now open from Indianapolis west to Mt. Meridian. *Good Roads* reported:

Mr. Williams points out that since work started this year closing the last gaps in the road, traffic has detoured at a point about 4 miles west of Stilesville.

The National road will be opened to traffic over the new Reelesville cut-off by August 15 which will mark the elimination of all detours on this road west of Indianapolis.

On Labor Day, September 3, 1923, a scout car from a motor club traveled the road from Terre Haute to Indianapolis. Main Street in Richmond, Washington Avenue in Indianapolis, and Wabash Avenue in Terre Haute, "together with all the main streets of all points in between, are now tied up as all one thoroughfare, state-wide in scope and a part of a mainly-hard-surfaced highway extending from St. Louis on the west to Washington, D.C., and the Atlantic Seaboard as the result of the lifting by the State Highway Commission of detours between Indianapolis and Terre Haute. New construction east of Richmond to the Ohio State line is expected to be completed early this fall":

The National Old Trails Road is thus stepping forward as the main contender for cross-continent touring and Indiana cities and towns hold strategic positions on this famous route. At the present time the pavement is complete on the route between Indianapolis and Terre Haute with the exception of three places, but in such instances the old macadam has been left in passable condition. A motor club road scout who traversed the

National Road from Terre Haute to Indianapolis shortly after the last detour barricade had been removed, states that on these short stretches the going is none too smooth. This situation will exist for only a short time, it is believed, pending the construction of viaducts over railroad tracks at Glenn crossing just east of Terre Haute and at Putnamville. A relocation including a new bridge is not yet complete near Mt. Meridian but the old route is useable, it is stated. The road in the eastern city limits of Brazil is now undergoing hard surface pavement, but only one-half of the roadway alongside trolley car tracks is being paved at a time, leaving the other side of macadam still open to traffic. The Reelsville hill and the two death trap grade crossings are eliminated by the well-paved cut-off.

The report issued a speed warning:

On Labor Day holiday when our road scout car passed over this route, it was an almost continuous procession all the way from Terre Haute to Indianapolis. It was noted that many drivers in the procession on this new highway were taking deadly chances by dashing around a curve in the middle of the road or to the left, or rushing up a hill near the top, past another car. The motorist who takes chances on this sort of driving is only inviting an accident that is apt to have very serious consequences. ["Condition of National Road From Terre Haute to Richmond," *The Hoosier Motorist*, October 1923, page 32]

Director Williams opened bids on July 24, 1923, for construction of 37 bridges in 20 counties. One of the bridges was a grade crossing over the Pennsylvania Railroad on the National Old Trails Road 3 miles east of Terre Haute. The Indiana State Highway Commission and the railroad company were to divide the cost.

In addition, Williams opened bids on August 10, 1923, for grading and structures on approximately 49 miles of secondary roads in southern Indiana and for hard surfacing 8 miles of the National Old Trails Road in Vigo County. The project involved resurfacing 1.2 miles of brick pavement from west of Terre Haute to the city. The Indiana State Highway Commission would provide cement to the contractor. ["Indiana to Open Bids for 57 miles of Roads," *Good Roads*, August 8, 1923, page 53]

A September report on Indiana's good roads work explained:

The National Road will be the first transcontinental highway completed in Indiana's modern road system, and will be opened its entire length across this state from Richmond through Indianapolis to Terre Haute about September 15. Indiana highway officials plan to commemorate the event with a fitting celebration to include a parade over the route. Governors of Illinois, Ohio and Indiana will be asked to participate, and various industrial concerns, farmers, motor firms and citizens of towns on the road, together with chambers of commerce and automobile clubs will join to make the event notable in Hoosier road progress. It is proposed that pioneer methods of travel such as ox teams, horseback riders and prairie schooners be portrayed, followed by the evolution of antiquated gasoline chariots of a few decades ago to the luxurious automotive creations

of today that, through good roads, annihilate distances and symbolize progress. [Parrish, C. H., "Indiana's Good Road Program," *Good Roads*, September 5, 1923, page 70]

Chief Engineer C. Gray, in his annual report for 1923 stated:

All paving contracts have been completed on the National Road, designated as State Route No. 3, east and west through the central part of the state. The pavement is continuous except for three small gaps, each of which is approximately three-quarters of a mile in length, the paving of which has been omitted to provide for the construction of grade separations with railroads.

Notable bridges completed during the year included "the 280 foot reinforced concrete arch bridge (3 spans at 72 feet) over the Eel River on what is known as the Reelsville Cut-off, on Road 3, the National Road, between Brazil and Greencastle" and "the 325 foot open-spandrel reinforced concrete arch bridge (4 spans at 65 feet) over Deer Creek on a slight relocation of Road 3, at a point just south of Greencastle."

Several larger bridges had been awarded in 1923, but were still incomplete, including, "the 125 foot concrete-encased steel plate girder bridge (1 span at 33 feet and 2 spans at 44 feet) over the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad on Route 3, the National Road, just east of Terre Haute." Upon completion of this bridge over the double tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad, "there will be removed from the National Road the last of the grade crossings with steam railroads, except those within the corporate limits of cities and towns and two crossings with the Pennsylvania Railroad where the visibility is good and the separation of which will require an unusually large expense." [*Yearbook of the State of Indiana for the Year 1923*," The Legislative Reference Bureau, 1924, pages 1034, 1049-1051, 1110]

The Federal-Aid System

Under the Federal Highway Act of 1921, BPR was assigned the task of working with State highway officials to identify roads that would be eligible for Federal-aid highway funds. The roads, which could not exceed 7 percent of all public roads in each State, were to be further divided into two classes. Up to three-sevenths of each State's system were to be primary or interstate highways, with the States able to spend up to 60 percent of Federal-aid funds on these roads. The Secretary of Agriculture was to give preference to projects that would expedite "completion of an adequate and connected system of highways interstate in character."

The second class of eligible roads was to consist of secondary or intercounty highway.

Chief MacDonald considered the selection of the two classes of eligible roads one of the most important tasks ever assigned to BPR. As discussed in part 3 of this history, he established a task force to devise ways to evaluate how well each State's proposed system met the statutory requirements. In his annual report for FY 1923, MacDonald explained that proposed systems had been submitted by the States or proposed by BPR for all States:

As the result of conferences with officials of the several States and groups of States, 35 of

these systems had been definitely approved by the Secretary at the close of the fiscal year, and it was anticipated that the systems of the remaining States would be approved by the fall of 1923.

The total mileage of highways existing in the United States at the time of the passage of the Federal highway act (Nov. 9, 1921), as certified by the State highway departments, was 2,859,575 miles. The maximum mileage that can be included in the system for the whole country, being 7 per cent of the total mileage, is 200,170 miles. The mileage included in the 35 systems approved up to the end of the fiscal year was 111,699 miles; and as the permissible 7 per cent of existing mileage is, in general, not being included in the system as initially approved, it is not likely that the initial program will include more than 180,000 miles.

He emphasized that the approved system would cross the western mountains “at practically every one of the important passes. “These passes are the controlling points on the transcontinental routes westward. They are the passages through which the national roads must cross the mountain barriers.” Among the passes across the Rockies was Raton Pass on the Colorado/New Mexico line. Several named trails used Raton Pass, including the Colorado to Gulf Highway, the Buffalo Highway, and the National Old Trails Road.

System designation was completed on November 1, 1923, with the issuance of a Federal-aid system map. The initial map, published in a relatively small edition, covered 168,881 miles. Several States subsequently increased their mileage, bringing the total to 171,687 miles at the end of the fiscal year. BPR then published a larger edition of the maps consisting of 18 sheets, each sheet comprising several States. Most of the approved mileage was consistent with the mileage BPR’s task force had identified.

By then, three States – Delaware, Maryland, and Rhode Island – had reported they had completed their systems. Maryland’s original system, for example, of 1,036.7 miles was recognized by the Secretary of Agriculture as completed or provided for on August 23, 1923, at which time the Secretary approved additional mileage. [*Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture* for the Year Ended June 30, October 15, 1923, pages 464-465; Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, *Report of the Secretary 1924*, pages 1-2; *America’s Highways 1776-1976*, pages 108-109]

Colorado had almost left a segment of the National Old Trails Road from Trinidad to La Junta off its primary system. *Colorado Highways* magazine explained:

Everybody in that section of the state was disappointed when the first draft of the seven per cent system for Colorado was announced.

This draft did not include the historic old roadway.

However, it had not been forgotten in the shuffle. L. D. Blauvelt, the state highway engineer, all the time had had the road in mind.

He ordered a recheck of the figures before they were finally submitted to the Federal Bureau of Public Roads for approval.

In the recheck it was found that an error had been made in the original figures. This made it possible to include the old Santa Fe Trail in the seven per cent system, which gives this highway the benefit of federal aid funds.

As the article added, the addition of the section to the seven percent system “was good news, to put it mildly,” adding:

Work of improving the Santa Fe Trail already is under way. During the tourist season, hundreds of autoists pass over this road, and with the improvements contemplated, it will attract still a greater number of visitors each year.

The trail is used particularly by transcontinental auto parties in the early spring and fall and during the winter months, when the more northern routes are made difficult from rain and snow. [“Historic Road Gets Federal Aid,” *Colorado Highways*, April 1922, page 6]

The Arizona System

From the early days of the National Old Trails Road, advocates for the alternative Arizona-New Mexico links had battled for traffic. New Mexico had placed the Gallup-to-Lupton on its seven per cent system, as had Arizona although with BPR prodding. Even after Arizona’s Federal-aid system had been approved, the Holbrook-Lupton connection with Gallup, New Mexico, remained controversial, at least in Springerville, as the Mangums explained:

Springerville’s Gustav Becker was chairman of the Apache County Highway Commission and a long-time good roads activist, powerfully connected. He declared war on the Lupton Road, and both sides went to battle with a will. Editorials, letters to the editor and other propaganda filled the air.

The north reacted vigorously, opposing southern Arizona’s persistent efforts to stonewall the construction of the Holbrook to Lupton road. Judge Root of Needles went on a promotional tour, visiting each of the towns along the line, speaking to various civic groups and alerting them to the issue. He proposed that they unite across Arizona and join groups in California and New Mexico to urge building of the Holbrook-Lupton Road. The groups passed resolutions, wrote to their Congressmen, to the Bureau of Public Roads and to others, demanding that the Holbrook-Lupton Road be built. At the behest of the Gallup people the New Mexico-Arizona Good Roads Association was created to see that a suitable road was built.

In early 1922, Apache County residents approved a bond issue to build the road. “The State Engineer refused to build it and had to be goaded again by federal engineers to take action.” The Mangums reported:

The pro-Lupton forces had prevailed and a true road was built in 1922. In the Arizona

Engineer's report to the governor for the year, he reported:

Adamma-Lupton

State is now improving this road parallel to the railroad. Work does not comply with Federal standards, but the location is good, so we hope we can improve it to standards later. It was surveyed in 1920, then relocated, cutting 7 miles off. There are two bridges over the Puerco in this proposed project, eliminating the present fords. Bridges have been designed and contract let for building them. Work will be done with state road funds and Apache County bonds. [Mangums, pages 108-109]

At the end of 1922, the administration of Governor Thomas E. Campbell came to an end after he lost his reelection bid. Governor George W. P. Hunt took office on January 1, 1923; he had been the State of Arizona's first Governor, taking office on February 14, 1917, and would ultimately serve seven terms.

A report dated December 15, 1922, appeared in *Western Highway Builder* magazine:

Thanks either to good luck or good management (the reader must decide for himself) the outgoing State highway administration is able to turn over to its successors a practically continuous stretch of improved highway from the Colorado river at Topock to Flagstaff, Arizona.

This road is a portion of the Old Trails Highway across northern Arizona, a route of surpassing picturesqueness and one which has increased in popularity with the transcontinental travelers from month to month as mile after mile has been surfaced with volcanic cinders, an ideal surfacing material which abounds in this section.

The last three miles have been finished by State forces under Maintenance Foreman J. B. Bristol, and just in time to make possible the turning over of a completed job, for with the spreading of the last yard of cinders snow began to fall and 19 inches of "the beautiful" was piled up on the level before King Winter decided that was about enough to put a crimp in road operations for the year.

This last 3-mile job, located between Flagstaff and Williams on the great Arizona divide, was put through in about two weeks' actual working time between storms. But for a combination of circumstances and strenuous effort the big storm would have found the work unfinished and the road would have been impassable until spring. As it was the gasoline shovel in the cinder pit, the 20-dump-bodied trucks, the caterpillars and rollers were kept going night and day while Bristol and his crew worked like demons in the race against time and the elements.

The same crew had undertaken cinder surfacing a month earlier between Ash Fork and Seligman:

It was then a question as to whether the camp with its \$75,000 worth of equipment should

be moved up onto the 7,000-foot elevation in Coconino County, where remained the three incompleting miles. It was fully realized that snow might come at any time to halt operations, but against this was the record of several previous years when the weather had remained open until the holidays. Despite the indeterminate weather conditions, it was decided by the State Engineer to chance the elements and the move was ordered.

Hardly had the new camp been established up among the pine “on top of the world,” as the Coconinans like to say, when along came a storm which tied things up a bit. Again the question arose as to whether it was advisable to keep the camp intact or abandon operations. Still hopeful of two or three weeks of good weather, the State Engineer decided to hold the camp and the men were put to work felling trees on the south side of the highway to prevent the shade forming icy patches on the road.

By the time this work was completed, the weather cleared, the road dried sufficiently for hauling and the cindering operations were started with a vim and a push which saw no slackening until Old Man Winter blew his blast and ‘twas “tally” for the year.

Good luck or good management – which? Or maybe good hard work had something to do with it, too. [Rollins, Ralph, “Northern Arizona Road Improved,” *Western Highways Builder*, January 1923, pages 16-17]

In Colorado

On June 16, 1923, the Arkansas Valley Association of County Commissioners met at the Pueblo County courthouse. George L. L. Gann of the advisory board of the State Highway Department and secretary of the National Old Trails Road Association, addressed the gathering about the importance of keeping the Santa Fe Trail/National Old Trails Road in good condition. He urged the counties that the trail passed through to give the road special attention in view of its status as part of a major national highway open from coast to coast. He emphasized the history of the National Old Trails Road, its many scenic segments, and its role in the country’s westward movement. It was, he added, well marked in red, white, and blue.

Overall, 2.8 miles of concrete paving of the Santa Fe Trail east of Pueblo had been completed, joining 3 miles laid between Pueblo and Blende. Another 2.5-mile segment of concrete paving had been submitted to BPR. When the project was constructed, Pueblo County would have a continuous concrete road from Pueblo to Vineland, which carried more traffic than any other highway in southern Colorado.

The county commissioners also were concerned about the capability of contractors. They appointed a committee to confer with State Highway Engineer Blauvelt about contractors who failed to complete projects as specified in contracts. Some segments of State highways had been closed as much as a year because of contractor delays. The commissioners planned to recommend that time limits be made on all contracts, and that when the contractors failed to complete the work on time, that they should be fined or penalized in some other way. [“Gann Urges Commissioners to Keep Historic Santa Fe Trail Smooth,” *Colorado Highways*, July 1923, page 8]

In New Mexico

In 1923, New Mexico highway officials were concerned about the cost of maintaining the gravel road from Albuquerque north to the Bernalillo County line on the National Old Trails Road:

Although the road north from Albuquerque had been improved with a gravel surface, the state highway department found itself confronted with rapidly mounting maintenance costs as the daily traffic reached 1,000 motor vehicles. Under the present system of maintenance patrol by truck as used on the 3,000 miles of primary roads that make up the state highway system, it was possible to keep the road in fair repair, but looking ahead it was evident that hard surfacing would soon be necessary. Accordingly, a federal aid project agreement was drawn up and contract let to the Lee Moor Construction Company of El Paso, Texas, for a 16-foot concrete road from Albuquerque to the north county line. This stretch is known locally as Roosevelt Road, but is a part of State Highway No. 1 and of the transcontinental National Old Trails Road. The New Mexico Auto Club has marked all of the state highways so that they can be followed between cities by numbers alone.

The road was on the east bank of the Rio Grande River “through a productive irrigated district, and passes many old adobe dwellings as well as the modern homes of the ranchers.” Because of the high level of the water table along the river, “precautions were taken to prevent injury to the slab through insufficient supporting power of the subgrade”:

At such points, an eight-inch layer of gravel secured from deposits near the road was spread over the subgrade and rolled before the concrete was placed. In all cases the grade was raised at least two feet above the surrounding country, and at some places it was made considerably higher to give room for irrigation ditches, which at many points cross under the road through inverted siphons. Where the ground water level was three feet below the subgrade, no gravel layer was considered necessary. While there are occasional cold snaps in the winter season, frost does not penetrate into the ground. Mesh reinforcement was placed two inches below the surface of the concrete as an additional precaution where there was any doubt as to the stability of the subgrade, and particularly over all irrigation and drainage structure.

These details, and others, were necessary to protect the road:

In five years' time, through traffic on the National Old Trails Road near Albuquerque has increased from 50 motor vehicles daily to about 600. As the many interesting points reached along this route become more widely known, inter-city and interstate travel is sure to increase greatly. Picturesque Indian pueblos hundreds of years old, prehistoric cliff dwellings, deep canyons and snow-capped mountains, all are to be found along the way. Local traffic is now about equal in volume to through traffic, giving 1,200 motor vehicles a day. This includes a number of trucks used largely in delivery service and produce hauling. Already the City Electric Company has placed in operation a truck line to Alameda, seven miles north over the finished concrete, and will supplement its street

car service by a passenger bus line north to several small villages as soon as the paved road is completed to the county line.

Eventually, all the State's "main highways will doubtless have to be paved." [Sellers, Col. D. K. B., "Albuquerque Linked to Santa Fe by Concrete-Paved National Old Trails Road," *Concrete Highway Magazine*, December 1923, pages 280-282]

In Arizona

State highway officials conducted a census of traffic on September 22, 1923, as reported in Flagstaff's *The Coconino Sun*:

That the National Old Trails highway east and west through Flagstaff – the transcontinental highway that offers much more of interest to auto tourists than any other – leads all other highways in number of tourist cars that use it is abundantly proven by a census taken on September 22 by State Highway Engineer Frank Goodman of the auto traffic on each of the leading highways of the state.

The census shows that on our Old Trails that day – despite flood conditions that entirely closed the Winslow-Holbrook section east of here and that held many hundreds of cars headed in either direction in California and east of Holbrook – 346 tourist cars used the highway between Flagstaff and Williams. The next heaviest tourist traffic in the state was the Seligman-Peach Springs section of the Old Trails; the third heaviest in the Ashfork-Seligman section of the National Old Trails; the fourth heaviest on the Williams-Ashfork section. The Phoenix-Mesa route (paved) then breaks in as fifth. The sixth heaviest made for the day was on the National Old Trails, on the Kingman-Oatman section.

The census illustrated where the tourist travel is:

At the 14 various points of observation in the northern section crossed by the Old Trails there were 2,082 tourist cars on September 22; while there were only 959 at the 20 observation points in the southwestern district, 395 at the 8 observation points in the central part of the state and 1,399 at the 15 observation points in the southeastern part of the state. If, as is generally conceded, Arizona's greatest source of future revenue is tourist travel – which is also generally conceded to be our greatest asset in getting outsiders acquainted with us and influencing them to settle permanently here – then the fact that the National Old Trails highway through northern Arizona is their favorite route should be taken into consideration by the rest of Arizona in mapping out any general program for road improvement. Also, it may as well be understood by the rest of the state that the climatic and scenic attractions of the National Old Trails will keep the bulk of tourist travel along this highway no matter how much effort may be wasted in trying to get it into and across the state over some other route.

The sensible thing for Arizonans generally to strive for is more perfect road conditions along the National Old Trails; then for good roads leading from it to other sections.

A paved highway through southern Arizona would not detract from travel along the National Old Trails. But if the latter were paved, or even well surfaced from state line to state line, it would mean an immediate and tremendous increase in tourist traffic that would be beneficial to the central and southern parts of Arizona as well as to the northern section.

The census broke the traffic into segments of interest to Flagstaff:

St. Johns-Springerville road, 242 autos, 146 being foreign.
St. Johns-Holbrook, 255 cars, 164 being foreign.
Adamana-Lupton, 216 cars, 208 being foreign.
Holbrook-Winslow, road closed.
Flagstaff-Williams (the observer being stationed 13 miles east of Williams) 456 autos, 346 being foreign.
Williams-Ashfork, 400 autos, 273 being foreign.
Ashfork-Seligman, 317 autos, 276 being foreign.
Seligman-Peach Springs, 351 cars, 314 being foreign.
Kingman-Oatman, 310 cars, 225 being foreign.

[“There’s Lesson in the Fact Old Trails Leads Every Road of State By a Big Margin in Tourist Travel,” *The Coconino Sun*, October 12, 1923, pages 1, 3]

Senator Jones’s Transcontinental Trip

The March, April, and June 1924 issues of AAA’s *American Motorist* carried a series of articles by Senator Wesley L. Jones about his transcontinental motor trip. In 1923, he and his wife decided to make a round-trip automobile journey from Washington, D.C., to their home in Seattle, Washington. (In the three-part article, Senator Jones did not mention his wife’s name. She was the former Minda Nelson.)

Senator Jones, a Republican and chairman of the Committee on Commerce, had been in Congress since winning election to the House of Representatives in 1898. He became a Senator in 1909, but would lose his reelection bid in the Democratic wave election of 1932 that gave incoming President Franklin D. Roosevelt large Democratic majorities in the House and Senate. Shortly after his election loss, Senator Jones died on November 19, 1932, at the age of 69.

The first part of the trip was along the National Old Trails Road. Senator Jones began by recalling the growth of the automobile:

Twenty years ago the automobile was a curiosity. Ten years later pioneer drivers began to cross the continent. Such trips were deemed very dangerous and when made were thought wonderful achievements. If it had been suggested to me that I would drive to Seattle from Washington and back, I would have ridiculed the idea. Now thousands of people make the trip each year and the number is increasing rapidly.

While the idea now seemed reasonable, he acknowledged his inexperience:

I know nothing of mechanics and have learned nothing of the philosophy of a car. If anything goes wrong short of a flat tire or broken rod, I am helpless. I don't know where to look for trouble, and I don't know it when I see it and I don't know what to do when it is pointed out to me. I know how to steer a car, clean a spark plug, change a tire if there is an extra one around and fill and turn grease cups. With this lack of knowledge, it may have been a reckless thing for me to try to make this trip and especially to take Mrs. Jones along, but she was game If I could drive across the country and back again, anyone who can steer a car can do the same thing.

I had all sorts of advice before I started. Much of it was rather discouraging One friend said I might run into a cyclone, and another had me stuck in the mud many miles from help; one saw me marooned in the desert with a flat tire and no extra one to put on; another predicted sickness with a doctor many miles away; one saw rain storms making roads impassable ahead, and another saw highwaymen . . . coming on from behind, and all said I could not stand driving day after day for a month. Thus did good friends help us on our way

The weather had been rainy and the Joneses "were determined to leave Washington on a clear, bright day." They had their car serviced to ensure it was in shape for their trip. Finally, the day arrived. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover met with the couple to wish them "good luck" on their trip:

We left Washington, D.C., Monday morning, April 9, and stopped 40 miles west of St. Louis Thursday evening about 6 o'clock. This part of the trip was uneventful but very enjoyable. The road was the "National Old Trail" and is paved all the way. I made 314 miles one day with but little effort. It is no trouble to follow the road through the cities, as it is the main street in all of them and plainly marked.

The road through the Alleghany Mountains are cultivated here and there to twelve in number, going down one side almost to the level where one starts up on the other, in this respect differing very much from the mountains of the West. These mountains are cultivated here and there to the top and the trip through them when everything is green is entrancing. Aside from going into the Yosemite Park, the heaviest grades and hardest pull going across the country are those through here from about forty miles west of Cumberland to Wheeling, W. Va. Gasoline and repair stations are all along the way every few miles, and camping grounds may be found at frequent intervals, some free and some where a small charge is made. Frequent warning signs are seen and if they are heeded there is little danger of accidents.

They traveled "along this splendid pavement" for almost a thousand miles. He envied the easterners:

They are nearer the big markets of the country and have at their service a network of steam and electric railways, in addition to the network of gravel or hard-surfaced roads.

Things began to change west of St. Louis when the hard-surfaced road came to an end:

Thursday evening it began to rain about 10 o'clock and rained hard until 4 or 5 o'clock Friday afternoon. The pavement was behind us and the dirt roads of Missouri were in front of us. Missouri people do not talk of the roads they have, but of the roads they expect to have when the one hundred and twenty-two millions of dollars now available are spent. They expect to have a concrete road completed from St. Louis to Kansas City within twelve or eighteen months. We found about ten miles of this concrete road completed on our return to Washington six months later.

When the rain ceased, the sun came out. There was considerable wind and the road dried rapidly. We started on our way Saturday morning, but after going about twenty miles we concluded to stay over for another day, as the roads had been recently worked and were slick and rutty and we were told of some very deep holes a little way ahead.

Senator Jones and his wife left the next morning around 10 a.m. Driving to Kansas City, they found the mudholes, but had no difficulty "in getting through in low gear, and 20 rods in distance would cover all the really bad road we had to Kansas City":

We were often told of the bad roads ahead and it is peculiar how bad they make roads in telling of them. We looked forward many times with considerable anxiety to the roads we had been told about, but we never found any of them as bad as we expected.

In Missouri, they found sufficient gas stations, as well as stops for meals and lodging:

From Kansas City two or three different routes can be taken to Colorado, one just about as good as the other in the same kind of weather. We took the route through Ottawa, Emporia and Dodge City.

They followed the New Santa Fe Trail, not the National Old Trails Road:

We had just enough bad road to appreciate what Kansas roads are when wet. Three or four miles from Ottawa a shower had passed through during the night and for about a mile the road was as if it had been soaped. We went into low gear and could hardly keep out of the side ditches, not having put on our chains. After a couple of miles there was less rain. The road was drying up and after another mile we had a good dry road and we had no more wet roads until we struck our own State of Washington.

He summed up the experience in the two States:

Kansas and Missouri at the present time are uncertain states for the autoist. If it rains, the roads are bad, but they soon dry and one will not be long delayed, unless the rain continues from day to day. The farther west you go in Kansas the less danger of rain. We had little dust during the entire trip but doubtless there is considerable as the dry

weather continues.

They made it from Dodge City to La Junta, Colorado, “easily in a day,” a distance of 255 miles.

At this point in his narrative, Senator Jones discussed the cost of travel:

Talk of profiteering – it ends after you leave Cumberland going west and it begins at Wheeling coming east. Outside of these places as indicated the cost of living is cut in two. At Cumberland we paid \$7.00 for a room and bath for the two of us. At Zanesville we had a larger room, better beds, a better bath, had a fine supper and breakfast for both and it all cost just \$6.50. Garage storage dropped from a dollar a night to 50 cents and at some places it was 35 cents. At La Junta, Colo., for dinner for the two of us we had two good steaks, corn, rice, potatoes, a fruit salad, spring onions, two pieces of blackberry pie, a baked apple, glass of milk, biscuits, rye bread and butter and the entire cost was \$1.20. We can motor across the country at less expense, and live better, than if we had stayed in Washington.

The road through Colorado and Raton Pass was good, mostly gravel. He concluded that “barring a very hard rain, [it] must be good most of the year,” adding that Raton Pass is “kept open all the year”:

The elevation of this pass is seventy-eight hundred feet, but the rise is so gradual that the summit is easily reached in high gear, barring forced stops.

Senator and Mrs. Jones found the road good all the way to Santa Fe, although they followed detours in some places where road construction was underway. They took 2 days, “although we could have made it in one very easily.” The good roads were interrupted as they neared Santa Fe. “About 20 miles out from Santa Fe there were a few miles of rather rough roads which would be really dangerous if wet.” The bad spot was in Glorieta Canyon.

They stayed in the Santa Fe area for 3 days of sightseeing. Part one ended with Senator Jones musing:

The dreamer, the poet and the archaeologist can revel among the mysteries of this enchanted land and dream and speculate about a people who lived and struggled and fought and died and passed away without leaving a line or word to tell us of themselves. [Jones, Senator Wesley L, “Motoring Across the Continent is Easy,” *American Motorist*, April 1924, pages 24-26]

Part 2 began:

The road to Albuquerque is fine and one can make almost any desired speed From there to Holbrook you can take either of two roads, one being about eighty-six miles shorter than the other. We took the short road by Gallup. It was slow driving, but the road was not bad. Some of it was a fine dirt and gravel road, but there was a great deal of detouring on account of road work going on. The entire road should be in fine shape by

next year and almost the entire distance through New Mexico and Arizona should be in splendid shape, and almost like a boulevard. We saw some places where it has been quite muddy a short while before we passed along, showing that rains do come in this section. The chances are, however, that you will have dry weather, but, if you strike it when it is raining, there are places in the road that may be quite bad.

From Gallup to Holbrook it was very windy and the air was full of sand and dust. The sand drifts during these winds like snow. We came near sticking in a sand drift at one place, and coming up the bank of a dry wash we were stuck with our rear wheels in the drifted sand. We played like children in the sand for a while scratching it away from the wheels. We pulled some sage brush and laid it down to give our wheels a purchase and so got out all right. You can imagine what happened to Mrs. Jones when she pushed at the back of the automobile while I put on the power and the wheels turned swiftly without moving the car forward. It would have been laughable to any onlooker, but no one came by until just after we had gotten out.

They reached Holbrook about 7:30 p.m., “with the air full of dust and sand and wind blowing a gale.” They visited one of the area’s petrified forests before returning to the road west:

In going to Holbrook from Gallup you go within about a mile and a half of it and can easily turn off and see it before going into Holbrook. It was so windy and dusty, however, that we did not turn off, consequently we had to drive back to it.

The two roads from Albuquerque united at Holbrook, “and there is one main line to California:

For a considerable distance you pass through a barren desert section, comparatively level. We had been told by several persons that there was twenty or thirty miles of extremely bad road beyond Winslow and we had been approaching it with considerable dread. However, we were advised at Holbrook to detour through Leupp, and we did so and found the road good.

Just beyond Flagstaff, they took the road to Grand Canyon, around 60 miles from the National Old Trails Road:

The road passes largely through national forests and there are no gasoline stations or garages along this road. This was the longest stretch anywhere on the trip without these places.

They spent 3 days in Grand Canyon National Park, before returning to the main road and continuing their journey:

The road to the Colorado River is fine, being largely gravel and almost as good as pavement. Across the river for about fifteen or twenty-five miles to Needles, we had a rather rough road through a sandy section that would be rather disagreeable and probably somewhat difficult if the wind should be flowing very hard.

They encountered bad roads in California:

The country from Needles to Barstow contains more real desert than any other section of the trip. It was warm, but I suppose nothing like it would be later in the summer. We stayed all night at Ludlow, about one hundred and twenty miles from Needles.

We had twenty-five miles of bad, worn-out asphalt road, narrow, bumpy, and very sandy on the sides, so that if you had to turn out you would have trouble in getting back on the road. One should be careful about water for the radiator, but there are stations every fifteen or twenty miles, where you can get water if needed.

From Ludlow it is about sixty miles to Barstow, with twenty-five or thirty miles of the worst road of the trip. It is rocky, bumpy, and narrow, with a great deal of sand on the side. We made about 10 miles an hour. I understand this road will be paved the whole distance from Barstow to the Colorado River beyond Needles in the near future.

The Joneses found a very good road from Barstow to Victorville, though it was not paved. They struck pavement again in Victorville, "and from here on for about nine hundred miles to Redding, California, we had paved roads or their equivalent":

One who has driven over the road from St. Louis to Victorville, California, knows the real pleasure of a paved road.

After a few days in the Los Angeles area, they left the National Old Trails Road and turned toward their home in Seattle:

As we neared the end of our journey and coasted down the grade overlooking Seattle, an arrow-shaped rock which we had evidently picked up somewhere in California gave us a flat tire. While putting on a new one, we feasted our eyes on our home city, and the end of our own journey, thinking what a wonderful trip we had made and how fine to be home. Tired? Not a bit.

Our speedometer registered 5,200 miles from Washington City. [Jones, Senator Wesley L, "On Our Way to Seattle from Albuquerque," *American Motorist*, April 1924, pages 10-11, 40]

Part 3, in the June 1923 issue, covered their return to Washington. With the 65th Congress set to begin on December 3, 1923, Senator Jones intended to drive back to Washington in the middle of September, but was delayed. They finally left Seattle on October 13. Their trip took them through Walla Walla, Washington; Ontario, Oregon; Twin Falls, Idaho; Salt Lake City, Utah; Granger, Rawlins and Cheyenne, Wyoming; Fort Collins, and Denver, Colorado; and Colby and Topeka, Kansas. They crossed Kansas on the Golden Belt Highway to Topeka:

There had been considerable rain a week or two before and the good roads agency in Denver feared we might have bad roads, but we got along very well, making from one hundred and seventy to two hundred miles a day until we got to Glasco, where we caught

up with a rainstorm and had to put up for a few extra hours. The Kansas roads dry very quickly after a rain if the sun comes out. We got into Glasco about four o'clock in the afternoon with the roads so slippery that one could make only three or four miles an hour and then we had great trouble in keeping out of the ditches along the roadside.

From Kansas City, the Joneses continued east in the morning "and got along very well, making fifteen to twenty miles an hour." They made it 80 miles to Manhattan where they spent the night:

"We had very good roads to Topeka, where we struck pavement reaching into Kansas City and found ourselves lucky again in crossing Missouri. There had been no rain for four or five days and we found the roads fairly good. The second night in Missouri we stopped sixty miles west of St. Louis, at the homelike little hotel where we had put up on our way west. We had no further worries because we knew that a paved road to Washington, D. C., was but a few miles ahead of us.

Our speedometer registered 3,800 miles from Seattle when we reached Washington. We had taken thirty days for the trip. Though our car was an open one we had not put up a single curtain. We had no mechanical trouble of any kind, not even a tire puncture. We reached Washington about five o'clock, picked up a couple of friends and went to dinner and then took a pleasant ride around the Speedway, feeling as fit as the day we left Seattle.

(The members of the Road Drivers and Riders' Association, formed by horse lovers in 1903, wanted a roadway where they could speed their horses. The association called it the Speedway. The Speedway, which opened in May 1904, extended from the Tidal Basin to 26th Street, SW. It would be reconstructed and extended through East Potomac Park as Riverside Drive. In 1949, Ohio's congressional delegation succeeded in renaming the road Ohio Drive.)

Senator Jones ended his series with general observations based on his experiences. He found "garage men" to be pleasant and reasonable in their charges, "although I had to call upon them for very little service." Similarly, hotel charges "were reasonable and accommodations generally good":

With ordinary care in planning from one day to another, good stopping places can be reached so as to avoid driving after dark.

With reasonable care in filling your radiator and gasoline tank, you need not carry any water or extra gasoline, although during the summer it may be very wise to carry some water through Wyoming, New Mexico, Arizona, and on the stretch in California from Needles to Barstow.

There are no really difficult or dangerous hills or mountain climbs on the way, unless it be the climb to the summit on the Hill Road between Los Angeles and Bakersfield, and that is not dangerous, nor is it really difficult, but your car may heat up considerably before you get to the top. The worst road in this respect is through the Alleghenies.

There is little danger of getting off the road, as it is well marked where marking is needed, although I must say that the road that we followed coming east is not so well marked or easily followed as the road going west. We had but little trouble in the towns and cities when we gave careful attention to the signs and directions. [Jones, Senator Wesley L., "Summer Best Time for Transcontinental Tour," *American Motorist*, June, 1925, pages 9-10, 52]

Judge Lowe included the first part of Senator Jones's narrative in the 1924 edition of *National Old Trails Road: The Great Historic Highway of America* (pages 240-245). He did not reprint the article in the revised 1925 edition.

Motor Tour by the Old Trails Highway

Around the time the first part of Senator Jones's article appeared in the April 1923 issue, *The New York Times* offered advice on transcontinental travel on the National Old Trails Road. The article began:

One of the great transcontinental highways extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific is the National Old Trails Road. It has been called "The Broadway of America." It traverses mountains, plain and forest and is rich in varied scenery, while offering splendid road conditions and very little desert country. By many motorists it is regarded as the most practicable of all highways for transcontinental tourists.

Its importance as a through highway is evidenced by the fact that it is traveled by thousands of motorists, who come from the Pacific Coast direct to New York and from there into the New England States. There is also a great volume of travel from States in the Mississippi Valley and from the South to New York and New England. It also affords a direct route from the large centres of population in the East to Southern California and the Southwestern States.

Although the official eastern terminus was Baltimore-Washington, the National Old Trails Road Association often referred to New York City as an eastern terminus. The *Times* article described the route as starting in New York and going in a westerly direction "over a hard-surfaced road by way of Washington or Philadelphia":

It is hard-surfaced from St. Louis east to New York. West of St. Louis, particularly across Missouri and Kansas, weather conditions govern the traveling. In rainy weather across these two States skid chains should be carried, and when overtaken by sudden storms the motorist would do well to lay over a day or two in the nearest town, as the roads dry off quickly after storms.

As for supplies, "it is no longer necessary carry large supplies of gasoline." Two backup quarts of oil "may be carried, but gasoline supply stations are found all along the roads. Motorists are advised to keep the tank filled at all times." As for other equipment, the article recommended the following:

One set of skid chains, one good horn for use on mountain curves, one set of tools, one jack, good cutting pliers, two extra casings, four extra inner tubes, tube patches, three spark plugs, 1 to 2 gallon water bag or canteen, one flashlight, one axe, one small shovel, radiator hose connections, lamp bulbs, one motormeter and one tow rope or a short cable.

Good hotel accommodations were available and auto campgrounds “will be found in almost every city, and the mountain regions of Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona natural camp sites can be found along some stream, close to the highway, at almost every necessary stop.” The camps usually charged from 25 to 50 cents per day. [“Pacific Coast Motor Tour by Old Trails Highway,” *The New York Times*, April 6, 1924, page XX12]

A week later, the *Times* returned to the subject of cross-country motoring. The best roads at the time were “the Lincoln Highway and the National Old Trails.” Both went “through historic and interesting country.”

Motorists should consider practical matters:

Care should be taken in selecting a camping place. A good place to camp is in a level spot where water is obtainable. Ascertain whether there are flies around, for they are very annoying. The ground should be fairly dry. Park the car in the direction of the wind. Then make camp on the other side of the car.

For tourists making their first trip, it may be well to advise them not to permit a car coming in the opposite direction to push you off the road, for it is often very difficult to get back, especially in many parts of the West, where the roads are none too wide. Road hogs will be encountered now and then. Do not be misled by people who are employed by stores and garages off the main road to go the way they direct for a short cut, as those roads are invariably longer and in a worse condition than the main one.

When purchasing anything in a small store always bargain if you think the prices are too steep, as some storekeepers try to take advantage of motor travelers. It is well to carry money in American Bankers’ Association or American Express checks and have them in ten-dollar denominations so as to avoid carrying too much cash.

It is advisable to carry a revolver. It is seldom used, but still an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. When driving keep it on the seat beside you, when sleeping have it close at hand. When sleeping it is wise to take the key out of the car.

A reliable road map is, of course, absolutely essential and they are readily obtainable from many automobile organizations. A general map of the United States will also be helpful. [“Cross-Country Motoring Will Be Heavy This Year,” *The New York Times*, April 13, 1924, page XX15]

The Baltimore Sun carried a variation of the *Times* article, based on the idea that spring was accompanied by thoughts of “the open road and some even extend over the 3,050 miles between

Baltimore and Los Angeles” along the National Old Trails Road. The article restated the *Times* advice that the road was hard-surfaced to St. Louis, but after that, conditions would vary. In addition to the cautions and advice from the earlier article, the *Sun* warned motorists:

Never ford a stream until testing the nature of the bottom and the depth. Go in under low gear and drive slowly. Pitch camp on high ground near good water and boil any water that seems at all suspicious. Build small fires and extinguish them carefully before going to bed and when breaking camp

The year of 1924 is going to be a banner year for transcontinental motor travel, and better road conditions along the main arteries of travel is one of the basis reasons for the substantial increase in the volume of travelers journeying both ways across the Continent.

The *Sun* estimated that, “The entire expense of a trip should not be more than \$5 a day per passenger. [“Road Data To Coast Is Given,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 13, 1924, page F10]

On August 20, 1924, the *Sun* carried a contrary view in its letter-to-the-editor column. L. D. Davis of Towson in Baltimore County, Maryland, explained that his State took pride in its roads:

It was therefore a surprise to me in motoring from St. Louis, over the National Old Trails route to find that in some respects there is room for improvement.

Anyone who goes over this route will notice that west of Frederick and through Pennsylvania and West Virginia the road is not so good as most of the way through Ohio and far inferior to this route in Illinois, where the entire distance across the State one travels on a wide and well-graded and banked concrete road. Now, part of this route west of Frederick is in Maryland. Beyond Hagerstown it is narrow, very high crowned and frightfully rough at the edges.

But the most marked difference is to be found in the system of marking the route and traffic directions. In Illinois and Ohio a uniform way of doing this has been adopted. The signs are neat. Coming into Maryland you immediately meet old, dilapidated, unreadable signs. You notice very soon that there is no uniformity. Why not adopt a uniform sign and use that in all cases, showing by the wording that a curve is ahead, a road crossing, etc. Then the motorist knows what sign to look to for traffic directions. Why not have such a sign at entrance to towns, giving the name, at bridges over important streams, giving the name of the stream.

I hope the Highway Commission has plans for improving the marking of the State roads. Now this route, traveled by cars from every State, is both poorly and slovenly marked. [Davis, L. D., “Thinks The Marking Of The State Roads Should Be Improved,” *The Baltimore Sun*, August 20, 1924, page 8]

D.A.R. Congress – 1924

As D.A.R. convenient for its Thirty-Second Continental Congress in April 1924, its Committee

on the National Old Trails Road had a new chairman. Mrs. Arline B. N. Moss of St. Louis, also known as Mrs. John Trigg Moss, had been silent for several months after accepting the position of National Chairman of the committee while she adjusted her thinking:

It was late in the summer before the files of this committee were received by the National Chairman. After very careful inspection and the reading of numerous letters, etc. etc., that took weeks of time, your National Chairman decided that she could not follow the policy of previous committees and continue to ask the Chapters for contributions to mark or "sign" the National Old Trails Road with the markers stipulated by the previous committee. In the first place, the cost of same was to be an amount that she considered decidedly prohibitive, taking into consideration the style of marker and the service they were to render to the people at large. In the second place, such markers, interspersed among the thousand and one other markers already placed along the highway, would reflect no credit to our Society and certainly would detract from, rather than carry the high honor intended to confer.

In view of the need for the committee to change directions, she had submitted a report to the National Board that was discussed during the October Board Meeting, as follows:

I believe almost every other National Chairman has complied with the request of the President General and has sent out instructions to State Chairmen and have a program planned for their committee work for the coming year. I am chagrined to think that I have not been able to do likewise, but under the existing circumstances I felt that it was not my prerogative to continue the policy that had been outlined to me by the past National Chairman as one that I should follow, until the matter has been discussed thoroughly in the board and I had the consent of the National Board to either continue the work or to discontinue the work, until such future time that legal action might be taken. This matter of raising thousands of dollars for Committee work is a very serious responsibility that I shall not assume alone, but if directed to do so by the National Board I shall consider this great co-operative force is back of me and proceed to the best of my ability.

She did not want to give the impression she was criticizing past National Chairmen. "I think the past National Chairman and their Committees were untiring in their labors and as earnest in their endeavors as they could possibly have been." She simply saw things differently, based on three facts. First, the bill introduced in each Congress to designate the National Old Trails Road a national highway had never passed, and might never pass. The committee, therefore, was asking "the Chapters to mark a National Highway not yet in permanent existence with a permanent name and the interest does not seem to be exceedingly keen." Since 1917, the committee had raised \$3,505. "The amount alone stands out as a goodly sum when not compared to the actual cost of the markers, stipulated as those we must use."

Second, the cost of the markers was \$14,786.40, "and this does not include the cost of freight from one end of the United States to the other, nor does it include the labor of erecting the said markers, which amount will be equal to the cost of the 'signs' themselves":

This means another \$14,000.00, making a total of \$28,000.00, and this is no doubt a very conservative estimate. The above figures are for three thousand and fifty signs or markers to be placed every mile from Ocean to Ocean, and I am told that these signs were to be accepted by the National Congress of 1917 and must be used.

Third, she could not find any record that D.A.R. had ever pledged to sign the National Old Trails Road. Each Continental Congress had accepted the committee's reports, but "without recommendations, etc., and there is no recommendation on this matter on record that I can find during Congress, 1913, and the same applies to Congress, 1917.

Mrs. McCleary, the late chairman, had confirmed this fact in a letter. Mrs. McCleary had never found a record of the D.A.R. receiving a permit, State or national, to post signs along the National Old Trails Road. She had written, "Until we have some authority for such proceedings or the United States Congress passes the Bill you have had introduced, I feel it a waste of money to sign-post it." She had asked, "What is to prevent any other organization from deciding to combine these roads or a part of them into one Highway and mark it with the title they choose?" Mrs. McCleary thought the focus should be on getting the bill through Congress.

Mrs. Moss wrote in her report that the plan for the committee had been "mapped out, signed, and sealed by pledge, ten years ago, to be explicit." Many changes had taken place in 10 years:

We have had a World War and almost every phase of our work has taken on a different angle. Originally we were to ask that this National Old Trails Road be made a great Memorial Highway and we were to mark this memorial highway in honor of our pioneers. This original program mapped out ten years ago under different circumstances may be far from suitable now and possibly far from being practical. The ten years past is long enough to outlaw any pledge, if pledge was given, and who of us can look forward ten years and say we would likely want to pledge to do the things we are planning to do and consider most vital right now at this day and time?

During those years, the States, counties, and cities had proceeded with building the National Old Trails Road, which "is on a fair way to completion without the Government stamp being placed upon it as the great 'Memorial Highway'":

The National Old Trails Association [sic] has spent time and money as have the Automobile Associations also in marking this Highway and remarking it. You can go from one end of the country to the other and where the two above associations have not marked the road, the state has put markers of its own. In many places there is an overabundance of markers.

Was D.A.R. operating on sentiment alone for a 10-year old plan? "Are we not builded instead on solid facts backed up by the highest patriotic ideals and purposes?" D.A.R. had initiated the idea of an Old Trails Road, but Mrs. Moss did not believe sentiment alone was behind the idea, "nor should we advance the sentimental side of the question now, losing sight of the common sense, conservative and practical side":

I want to ask the members of this Board if it is conservative, if it is practical, if it is patriotic, to mark a road or “sign” it with over three thousand signs that will, in the end, cost Thirty Thousand Dollars in all probability, when every sign is bound to be a duplication. We are to do this in honor of our Revolutionary Ancestors. Will it be such an honor, after all, to erect signs with no direct purpose, and they will not be put to any definite use? Would it not be more honor and more in keeping with the dignity of our Society to place markers of more pretentious proportions along this Highway at certain chosen spots that might well be commemorated for sake of historical interest. Is it the wish of the Board that I continue the present program with the perfect understanding on their part that I am seeking contributions from the Chapters to the extent of at least Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars or is it their wish that I work out a more practical program along a more practical line and present it for legal action at some future date.

As a result of Mrs. Moss’s presentation, the board approved the following motion on October 16, 1923:

That the National Chairman of Old Trails Road Committee formulate plans for the coming year’s work according to her own ideas, delaying, if necessary, any further work in ‘signing’ the road until such time as will be more propitious, when she shall present a more practical and complete program for this work.

Based on the board’s action, Mrs. Moss asked all State Societies in the National Society five questions:

1. How much money has your State contributed to date toward the markers or signs that were to be erected every mile of the Ocean-to-Ocean National Old Trails Road?
2. Knowing that the cost of erecting these markers will be \$30,000.00, conservatively speaking, will your State vote to continue this plan of marking, thereby pledging their support and their full per capita contribution toward this \$30,000.00?
3. Will your State vote to hold the fund you have already contributed for these “Mile Posts” or “signs” (funds now in the hand of the Treasurer General) until such time as your present National Committee, Old Trails Board, shall have formulated plans for a dignified and a more practical and up-to-date marking system?
4. Will your State favor a plan to place markers along the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway fewer in number, each marker erected to mark some historical spot, or commemorate some great act of historical interest?
5. Will you come to Congress, ready to vote on this matter and give your National Committee all the assistance you can?

She introduced a resolution for consideration by the continental congress that used a series of “Whereas” introductions to lay out the facts just stated in support of adopting the following:

Be it Resolved, To erect in each one of the twelve States through which the National Old Trails Road passes, namely: Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, one marker of dignified and pretentious proportions, to cost approximately one thousand dollars each,

these markers to be as nearly alike in size and design as will be consistent with the location and surroundings and each marker to definitely mark a historic spot or commemorate some great act of historical interest of the Revolutionary period, these markers to bear with other inscriptions the insignia of the N.S.D.A.R. and to be known as the National Old Trails Road Memorial Markers, and

Be it Further Resolved, That the funds contributed by Chapters and State Societies toward the Old Trails Marker Fund, amount reported by the Treasurer General to date as \$4,876.65, be applied to the cost of erecting the markers as stipulated in the new plan, and that chapters and state Societies be requested to continue their contributions toward this fund.

Respectfully submitted, The National Old Trails Road Committee. (Applause.)

By motion of the President General, Mrs. Moss's motion was referred to the resolutions committee. [*Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution*, April 14-19, 1924, pages 126-130]

The resolution was adopted.

La Bajada Hill

For motorists on the National Old Trails Road, La Bajada Hill (the "descent" or "the drop" in Spanish) in New Mexico between Santa Fe and Socorro was an expected test of their nerves and their motor vehicle's capability. Judge Lowe often cited this section of the National Old Trails Road as the oldest road on the continent, part of El Camino Real. In the 1924 edition of his compilation of material, Judge Lowe helpfully explained that the name was pronounced "Ba Hoddah" [page 126]

In an article about the La Bajada Mesa, the National Park Service says:

Beyond its importance as a geological landmark, La Bajada escarpment is a major cultural landmark. The routes built to cross La Bajada between 1598 and 1932 follow precontact pathways across the mesa, indicating its importance to native cultures who utilized natural topography, grade changes and drainage systems to best utilize the mesa top. Following the arrival of Spaniards in the region, La Bajada stood as the dividing line between New Mexico's primary economic and governmental districts: the Río Abajo (lower river) and the Río Arriba (upper river).

For those traveling the north-south El Camino Real between the districts, there were three clear routes: one gave travelers the choice of scaling the basalt behemoth, another followed the Santa Fe River through the yawning canyon of Las Bocas (the Mouths), and the third required another, longer trek around La Bajada through the Galisteo Basin. Initially, the La Bajada option was limited solely to pedestrians or livestock. Despite legends to the contrary, the heavy supply wagons and commercial caravans that traveled El Camino Real could not take the La Bajada route until the 1860s, when the U.S. Army made improvements that allowed for wagon passage.

Archeological evidence indicates that, despite its challenges, the La Bajada route was an attractive option. A water hole in a canyon directly adjacent to El Camino Real highlights a system of handmade dams that formed a deep plunge pool. A trail leading from El Camino Real to and from the pool indicates continuous human and livestock traffic. By the early 1700s, Spanish settlers had established the small village of La Bajada at the base of the escarpment. The settlement sat beside the Santa Fe River, close to an abandoned pueblo village that was still occupied when Don Juan de Oñate led the first colonizing expedition to northern New Mexico in 1598.

Diverse voices have referred to La Bajada, the place and the landmark, throughout history. In 1776, a Franciscan priest, Fray Atanasio Domínguez, described La Bajada Mesa as “a mesa [that] rises . . . flattening out on top . . . to a very steep slope . . .” In 1807, explorer Zebulon Pike mentioned both the village and the escarpment as he detailed his journey across La Bajada Mesa on his way to Mexico, writing, “We ascended a hill and galloped on until about ten o’clock, snowing hard all the time, when we came to a precipice which we descended, meeting with great difficulty, from the obscurity of the night to the small village where we put up in the quarters of the priest . . .”

Chroniclers of the early Territorial period made less frequent reference to the El Camino Real-La Bajada route as traffic through Las Bocas and the Galisteo Basin became more common. With Mexico’s victory over Spanish lands in 1821, and the strengthening of trade connections between Mexico and the U.S. via the Santa Fe Trail and El Camino Real-Chihuahua Trail, the La Bajada route regained traction as the most direct path to and from Santa Fe. Little La Bajada village, whose population peaked at 300, emerged as another important trading center, freight depot, stage stop and rest stop for El Camino Real travelers heading north and south. With the American occupation of New Mexico in 1846, the U.S. Army took note of the route’s potential, finally improving the roadway for heavy wagon use.

Even with the improvements, La Bajada remained a grueling excursion. In 1869, U.S. Army Lieutenant John Bourke described the descent as “. . . so risky that stage passengers always alighted and made their way on foot, while the driver found abundant occupation in taking care of his train and slowly creeping down with a heavy brake on the wheels locked and shod and the conductors at the head of the leaders....”

Three years later, John Handson Beadle recalled his trip south across the mesa to the escarpment on a freight wagon, writing, “Crossing the high mesa, level as the sea, we approach an irregular line of rocks, rising like turrets ten or twenty feet above the plain, which we find to be a sort of natural battlement along the edge of the big hill. Reaching the cliff we see, at an angle of forty-five degrees below us, in a narrow valley, the town of La Bajada. Down the face of this frightful hill the road winds in a series of zigzags, bounded in the worst places by rocky walls, descending fifteen hundred feet in three-quarters of a mile.”

El Camino Real was abandoned as a major commercial corridor with the 1881 arrival of the railroad, but La Bajada Mesa’s importance as a transportation corridor continued.

Not long after the wagons stopped running there, Model A automobiles began lumbering along the path. Between 1903 and 1926, a segment of the mesa trail as it approaches the escarpment edge became New Mexico Highway 1, part of the National Old Trails Road Highway system. During the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego celebrating the opening of the Panama Canal, scores of vehicles a day are estimated to have traversed the mesa path on the way to California. Between 1926 and 1932, the same area became the avenue of the fabled Route 66. Adventurous tourists of the period traveled the roads with the famous Harvey House Indian Detours while on their way to explore area pueblos and other cultural sites. By the time the route was abandoned and moved a few miles to the east where the interstate is located, an estimated 1,200 vehicles were traversing La Bajada Mesa a day.

The article was illustrated with a postcard image of the switchback Automobile Road on La Bajada Hill.” [<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/new-mexico-la-bajada-mesa.htm>]

Judge Lowe, in his 1924 compilation, published a photograph of a vehicle on a narrow path between two cliffs in La Bajada, calling it:

A Section of the Oldest Road in North America, Established in 1606

Labajada (pronounced Bahoddah) [sic], a section of the National Old Trails Road in New Mexico between Santa Fe and Socorro about one hundred and fifty miles in length. The oldest established road on the North American Continent. The picture makes the walls look like granite and experience has shown that they are really about as substantial. I doubt if this piece of road was ever graded except by the traffic that passed over it. But the Highway Board of that State is now engaged in widening and grading this pass.

On May 11, 1924, the Santa Fe and Albuquerque Kiwanis Club held a celebration of the opening of the rebuilt La Bajada:

The opening of the new road on La Bajada hill on Sunday, May 11, was attended by fully 1,000 people from Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

The hill is about 20 miles southwest of Santa Fe on the main highway to Albuquerque. It rises abruptly to a heighth [sic] of about 1,000 feet. The road winds up the side in a series of turns and switchbacks.

The road was widened and the outer edge lined with a rock wall, and partly relocated to reduce the grade. To climb this hill “in high” has been an ambition accomplished by few motor car drivers, but now it is considerably less of a feat. When it rains torrents rush down the hillside and, to carry the water off and save the new road, a large number of culverts were put in – spaced at frequent intervals.

The work was done by convict labor at a cost of \$11,000. Speaking on the occasion of the opening, Governor James F. Hinkle said the work if done as a Federal Aid project

would have cost \$250,000. [“La Bajada Hill Road is Rebuilt,” *Western Highways Builder*, June 1924, page 30]

Author Joe Sonderman, writing in the 2010s, explained that the road dropped 800 feet in 1.6 miles and included 23 “razor-sharp switchbacks,” with only an occasional guardrail. A skull-and-crossbones sign warned motorists of the danger. Another sign warned motorists, “The road is not foolproof but safe for a sane driver.” A bypass in 1932 spared later motorists from the dangers of “the drop.” He discussed La Bajada today:

La Bajada has served as little more than a cowpath for 85 years, so to say the road is a little rough is putting it mildly. The road is impassable by vehicles. In 2017, the Cochiti Pueblo blocked access to La Bajada from the bottom. The top half remains accessible from Santa Fe and can be explored on foot. But the heat can be brutal, rattlesnakes are common, and it’s been decades since anyone has seen a tow truck out here.

The photograph Sonderman used to illustrate the item (identified as circa 1920) depicted the same switchback section as the postcard the National Park Service used, then and now. [Sonderman, Joe, *Route 66 Then and Now*®, Pavilion Books, 2018, page 94]

Opening the Boonville Bridge

The Boonville Bridge, also known as the Old Trails Bridge, across the Missouri River opened on July 4, 1924. It consisted of six steel truss spans and ten concrete approach spans, with an overall length of 2,666 feet. A contemporary news account began:

A salute of forty-eight guns, fired from the river bluffs at 4:32 o’clock yesterday morning, ushered in the day set aside for the formal dedication of the Old Trails bridge at Boonville, which marked the culmination of the efforts of the progressive citizens of Boonville for the last fifty years.

Early in the morning a continually growing stream of vehicles began to pour their hundreds of passengers into the town, and the bridge, center of attraction, was lined with spectators where, at 12 o’clock, Mayor W. G. Pendleton of Boonville and a party of citizens representing New Franklin, met and shook hands in the middle of the structure to symbolize the union of Cooper and Howard counties, made possible by the crossing. The United States army dirigible TC-3 from Scott Field circled over the town while the ceremonies were in progress.

Officials held a dedicatory ceremony on the courthouse lawn. Colonel T. A. Johnston, superintendent of the Kemper Military School at Boonville, presided over the ceremony, which included speeches by Governor Hyde, Chairman Gary of the Missouri State Highway Commission; Chief Highway Engineer Peipmeier; and Judge Richard Field of Lexington. Governor Hyde offered his congratulations to Boonville and Cooper County, adding:

The State of Missouri is most of all to be congratulated on this enterprise. I rejoice in this structure because, together with other bridges, it will weave Missouri together, generating

a new State patriotism and a new State pride.

Here is a great river. Sixty years ago it carried a mighty cargo. The most magnificent waterway in the world, excepting the Mississippi, it ought to be carrying the commerce of the Nation. It ought to be reducing the freight rates for farmers of the Mississippi Valley, but the only cargo it carries now is mud. The Missouri remains to be developed as our great artery of commerce. As it is, it is the greatest source of waste we have.

Chairman Gary called for support of Amendment No. 2, which voters would act on in November. It called for maintenance of the 7,640 miles of good roads provided for under the \$60 million bond issue. "If it comes to a question of building more roads or maintaining those already built, we will do the latter."

With the bridge a key link in State Route 2, Peipmeier estimated that the road, when completed, will carry 2,000 vehicles a day, all of which would cross the Boonville bridge. The bridge, he said, cost about \$200 a foot, "and is to be maintained at State expense by indirect taxation. The automobile owners will pay the bills out of their license fees."

After the ceremony multiple parades took place, including a military parade and one of automobiles, one of industrial floats, and a Mardi Gras-themed parade in the evening. The day included acrobats on Main Street, two aviators doing stunts, and a dance in the gymnasium of the Kemper Military Academy. ["Celebration at Boonville Draws Crowd," *The Columbia Missourian*, July 4, 1914, page 1]

At some point in the celebration, Judge Lowe addressed the crowd assembled for the opening ceremony. He began:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen – I congratulate you upon this red-letter day in the history of Boonville. Some of you, no doubt, have looked forward to this great day with fond but doubtful anticipation for a great, great while. If there be those who pay little regard to celebrations and dedications like this, I do not agree with them. If there be those who deem it unwise to mix "sentiment" with the every-day-affairs of life, I do not agree with them. If there be those whose sordid souls never rise above a very limited horizon, and regard "Idealism" as only fit for the indulgence of women and "visionaries," I do not belong with them. If there be those backward looking, pessimistic souls whose horizon is limited by their front dooryard, I do not agree with them.

He recalled the day in 1907 when State officials in Jefferson City met "in one of the greatest conventions of any character that ever called the people together" to select the cross-State highway. "What a wonderful day that was, and how we love to recall it!" He also recalled "that other red-letter day in the history of this road" on April 16-17, 1912, that "launched the *first* National Organization pledged to the building of a great paved highway from Washington City to Los Angeles on the Pacific, and christened it 'The National Old Trails Road':

So we were the *first* in organizing a State Good Roads Association; we were *first* in the organization of a National Association which had for its purpose the building and

maintenance of a great National Highway System through the length and breadth of the United States, in April, 1912.

He recalled the history of the National or Cumberland Road, dating to President Jefferson in 1806, and stated that the National Old Trails Road was completely paved to St. Louis in 1923, “one half of the states through which it runs.”

The Boonville Bridge was, he said, “one of the essential links in this great Highway.” He traced the origins of the structure to a banquet in Columbia “when the first steps were really taken toward the construction of this splendid and magnificent bridge.” Colonel Johnston gave a “brief and eloquent address” before announcing he was ready to subscribe \$10,000 toward construction of the bridge, “and we came so near tearing the house down with the applause which followed that I knew the question was settled, and this bridge would speedily follow.” Funds for the bridge were readily subscribed “and steps were immediately taken for its construction.”

He resented any implication that the State of Missouri had financed construction of the bridge under the Federal-aid highway program:

Let me state with emphasis that this is not true. The State of Missouri from its \$60,000,000 road fund, or from any other source, has never contributed one dollar toward the building of this bridge, of either of the other three bridges now in process of construction at Glasgow, Waverly and Lexington. On the contrary, it is but fair to claim and to state the truth, that they were financed by the National Old Trails Road counties and towns through which the road runs, and by individual contributions, together with Federal Aid.

The 130 miles between Boonville and Kansas City would soon include not only the Boonville Bridge but the three other “magnificent bridges along side the National Old Trails Road between Boonville and Kansas City, with the prospect of soon taking over the Toll Bridge at St. Charles and making it free – thus tying together not only the Interstate roads crossing the State, but the entire road system of the State”:

What, let me ask, has materialized these great movements, except the Idealism of the people who so early enlisted in this great campaign, and who have adhered to it until its consummation is well nigh complete?

He denounced the “pessimistic, non-sentimental crowd” who “would now hawk at, desecrate, and destroy this great work in which we, and a great host of others, have labored so long to develop and perpetuate.” (The reference is unclear, but he may have been talking about those who decided not to include the entire National Old Trails Road in Missouri in State Route 2.) They would “be swept away into that oblivion to which they are so well entitled.” These “laggards and drones who forever hang on the outskirts of the march of civilization . . . have never won a victory on any of life’s great battle fields.” They “never gave birth to a great purpose.” He lived by the vision, “Keep your eyes toward the sunrise, and your wagon hitched to a star.” He recalled the motto from Victor Hugo: “My motto is: Always forward – if God had wanted man to go backward he would have put an eye in the back of his head. Let us always

look toward the Sunrise, Development, Birth.” The “Sunrise of Hope” has no night:

Standing by the side of this Old Road and looking down toward the “end of the Trail,” I see it paved at least fifty feet in width, widened by the addition of at least one hundred feet in depth on either side of it; splendidly parked and ornamented with trees, shrubbery, and flowers; monumented and marked along its borders with appropriate devices.

He spoke of the association:

A great writer has said, “What kills propaganda, (in general) is the obvious purpose behind it. One little admixture of self interest and your effort is wasted.” This was the foundation principle upon which our Association has stood from the beginning. Some small people said in criticism of us: “It is true that they stand for the construction of one road, but we favor an enlarged system of roads.” Why, bless their hearts, this Association introduced the first bill in Congress since 1824, declaring in favor of establishing a great splendid system of National Highways to be built and maintained forever by the Government throughout the whole of the United States. Then, we stood staunchly and earnestly for the \$60,000,000 bond issue in this State, to be applied to the building of a great State System of roads, and now, when a final campaign is on to increase the Automobile Tax fifty per cent, and to level a two cent per gallon tax on gasoline for the purpose of raising an additional fund to go toward completion of this State System, we appeal to those in charge of that movement that we will gladly get behind it with all the power we possess.

This Association has had no ax to grind, no selfish interests to serve, no salaried officers, no one trying to make this a stepping stone to political preference, no side issues to maintain. We have made no appeal for support in order that some one may be personally benefited thereby, nor has this Association any selfish interests behind it, nor has it received one dollar, knowingly, from any selfish source, but has relied solely on the contributions of those living along its line. Founded upon a great principle like this, we have never worried about the indifference of the multitude, nor the criticisms of the unfair.

(The “great writer” Judge Lowe referred to was Henry Ford, who included the reference in *Ford Ideals*, The Dearborn Publishing Company, 1922, page 266.)

He concluded:

Let our friends tie their fortunes to this fact! In due time it will find its place. Agreements do not make facts, but facts make agreements. People who do not agree with the truth get bumped by it. It is not our place to do the bumping – the truth takes care of that. The only legitimate propaganda along all lines of material and spiritual endeavor is the ascertainment and establishment of true principles. A true solution of any worth while question is as permanent as the fixed stars. Winter nor indifference will not freeze it; summer nor heated opposition will not melt it; apathetic and sordid pessimism will not affect it.

I cannot close without asking you to join me in giving three cheers to Theodore Gary, chairman of the State Highway Commission, who has so helpfully, so successfully, so loyally supported the best interests of the state; and also to the great State Highway Commission's Chief Engineer, Mr. B. H. Piepmeier. [*National Old Trails Road: The Great Historic Highway of America*, 1925, pages 261-265]

Promoting the Road

One purpose of each named trail association was to promote its road. Sometimes, the associations relied on allies, as in the case of the National Old Trails Road Association and the Automobile Club of Southern California. In April 1924, the Automobile Club announced publication of the 137-page book titled *National Old Trails Road*. It answered the "thousands of inquiries that come to the organization from motorists contemplating the transcontinental trip over this particular highway":

Sixty-nine strip maps are used on which, in addition to the highway, are marked the garages, hotels, filling stations, auto parks, mileage and other information desired by the tourists. Opposite each of these maps is a description of the road traversed, with notes on the history, legendry and romance of the continuous territory.

Transcontinental motoring to California has averaged a fifty per cent increase annually for the past four years, so the new volume was prepared to meet a definite and growing demand. Motorists actually contemplating a tour across the continent will be furnished a free copy of "National Old Trails Road: by addressing headquarters of the Automobile Club of Southern California. ["Automobile Club Issues Old Trails Highway Book," *The Windsor Mail*, April 11, 1924, page 1]

Perhaps because of Judge Lowe's poor health, others stepped in to do some of the promotional work that he and the National Old Trails Road Association had undertaken.

On July 31, 1925, for example, *The Winslow Mail* reported:

One month ago a daily newspaper, The National Old Trails Tourists' Daily News, created expressly for tourist distribution, was started by the publishers of the Winslow Mail. The initial copies, 600 in number, were sent to distributors along the line of the National Old Trails from Los Lunas, N.M., to Needles, Calif.

During the month, distribution has been extended until now it embraces many points between Kansas City and Albuquerque on the east and San Bernardino on the west.

Distribution consists of nearly 1, 200 per day – almost twice the circulation a month ago.

The papers are put into the hands of the tourists at service stations, garages, hotels and camp grounds along the line between the cities mentioned.

An endeavor is made to provide each tourist party at least one copy of *The News* every day, while they are on this particular section of the highway.

The object of *The National Old Trails Tourists' Daily News* is obvious. It is to acquaint the travelers with conditions presented along the route, to enumerate and describe the scenic attractions, and advertise and direct attention to the conveniences provided for him at the different towns, and to describe to him the great advantages presented by this all-year route over any of the other transcontinental highways.

Many motorists from the eastern and middle western States had been convinced that "the arid country of the southwest, spoken of in school textbooks as the Great American Desert, is a region of perils to travelers, and a section of the country good to keep away from." Tourist travel stemming from the "See America First" movement was "handicapped by fear of people of the eastern states to attempt auto passage across the thousand-mile section between the fertile plains and the Pacific coast." *The Daily News* was intended to "allay, in a measure, this fear" by providing truthful information about the conditions motorists can expect:

That the service, which is entirely new and unprecedented, has met with the approval of the tourists themselves, who appreciate the accurate maps and detailed description of the country, tables of distances and other classified information, is manifested by the many inquiries received from people in eastern and coast cities, who have seen copies carried there by tourists who have previously passed this way.

The article discussed the concern leading to *The Daily News*:

There are now an average of 250 cars per day traversing this section of the National Old Trails. During 1922 the average per day during the touring season was in excess of 500. In 1924 the average fell to below 400 per day. This year it has fallen off again.

There are possibly several reasons for the decline in travel on this route. One of the most important is that competing highways have been successful in drawing tourists to other roads. Systematic advertising has resulted in other highways becoming better known.

However, the advantages of the National Old Trails are too manifest, to people who are aware of them, for other roads to be exploited long to the detriment of this highway.

Following, as it does, close to the right of way of the greatest transcontinental railway system, providing quick access to other transportation in case of accident; its high elevation and consequently cool summer climate, and its southern latitude, which insures mild climate in winter; its well-built grade and constantly improving surface; its splendidly mapped and signed conveniences, and many other factors make this great highway the superior of all transcontinental roads.

The economic value of the tourist trade is enormous, and constitutes one of the assets of the region through which the National Old Trails passes. ["The Tourist Paper," *The Windsor Mail*, July 31, 1925, page 2]

An early example was titled “In the Land of Enchantment” by Indian Miller (“Crazy Thunder”):

This is the land of enchantment!

A spell has been cast upon this region. From Gallup to Williams lies this land of wonders, bound by silver chains of enchantment. Ho!

The silent ruins of thousands of ancient villages and of tens of thousands of isolated dwellings lie under this turquoise sky. Around about these ruins lie the things these dwellers left behind. Pottery bearing artistic designs wonderfully executed, yucca sandals of a people gone on, grinding utensils which bespeak an agricultural people, reservoirs which bespeak a provident people, dainty arrowheads of petrified wood apparently made by a people who could distinguish the beautiful from the ugly – these are some of the things they left behind.

And they left their graves here in this soil. With beautiful pottery around their heads the skeletons lie unnumbered through the land.

Were they ever to rise again our population would increase at least a hundredfold.

Who were these wonderful people who were prosperous and artistic agriculturists in this land where the white man can not raise a hill of beans?

They were red children of the Creator, the forefathers of the Hopis and the Zuñis, peoples who still thrive and are happy and artistic and graceful and musical in this land of wonders.

To them the land is not enchanted. For them the rains never fail to fall; for the white man the rains fail to fall, because the land is enchanted. But the day will come when the chains of enchantment shall be broken, and white men may thrive as the Indians do.

It will still be a land of wonders. The Painted Desert, the Grand Canyon, the cliff dwellings, Meteor Mountain, and many other wonderful things of this region will never be common things. They will always be world wonders.

The mirages may cease to be miracles when the chain is broken, but they will always cause wonderment.

The walls of the ancient ruins will always be sacred, though marred by the scribblings of a rude race.

Let the chains be broken, let fancy and the imagination be wrecked, this region will still be a land of world's wonders. [Miller, Indian, “In the Land of Enchantment,” *The Winslow Mail*, July 21, 1925]

Another example of the information contained the *Tourist Daily News* involved Meteor Mountain:

Did you know that, once upon a time, a star collided with the earth, and dealt it what must have been the greatest blow it ever received? That the scar of the impact is still visible? That the heavenly visitor is now buried beneath the arid soil of Northern Arizona, and that you might, with a little effort, find fragments scattered over a wide area a few miles west of Winslow? That looking down into the pit is one of the most remarkable sights on this earth – one that awes the beholder with its mystery?

Fifty or a hundred times as fast as a bullet flies, the million ton meteor blazed out of the blue sky collided with the earth, showered an area of 75 square miles with many thousands of white hot iron, nickel and platinum missiles, after the manner of a huge shrapnel letting go, tore a stupendous hole in the solid rock surface and imbedded its metallic head far beneath. The appalling planetary crash, which left the earth wound that is a world wonder centuries ago.

Winslow derives its slogan, “The Meteor City,” from this unique and bizarre work of nature.

For more than 25 years mining operations have been conducted in the hope of locating the great mass of valuable ore. Thousands of pounds of surface specimens have been picked up, and within recent weeks one 200-pound piece was found on the desert five miles away from the pit. Every day there are minute fragments found. A 400-pound specimen is on display before the sales room of the Payne & Funk Studebaker agency in Winslow, and several are to be found at the court house at Flagstaff. Museums all over the world have purchased the [sic] most of the large pieces discovered.

Within a radius of ten miles of the pit has been found more meteoric iron than on all the rest of the earth’s surface. The sunken meteorite is estimated to be at least 300 feet in diameter and to weigh 1,000,000 tons. Some experts who have studied the subject would double, treble, and even quintuple these figures.

Its impact gouged a basin nearly four-fifths of a mile in diameter and 1,250 feet deep, but now the bottom is partly filled with sediment, and the average depth is 570 feet, with a level bottom of about 300 acres, and a rim 120 to 160 feet above the level of the surrounding country, sloping outward from 600 to 1,700 yards. More than 300,000,000 tons of stone were broken, crushed and expelled by the inconceivable pressure, and half as much more violently displaced. On the south side for half a mile along the rim all the strata were vertically lifted as a mass 105 feet above their original position, turned outward sharply on edge, and so remain.

A number of years ago a drill rig was erected by the Guggenheim mining interests to explore for the main body of the meteor. At a depth of 1,600 feet a mass of some substance far too hard for the drills to penetrate was discovered, and it is thought the drills reached the meteor, but no practicable means was ever devised to continue the

explorations through the crumbled and pulverized strata above. The derrick is still standing and is visible for 20 miles in all directions. Most tourists scowl or smile at the thought of “another wildcat oil well,” little realizing that the tower is a monument to a strenuous endeavor to solve one of the most perplexing riddles of the universe. Good roads lead up to the very edge of the gigantic pit, and tourists are more and more learning to visit this supernatural appearing spectacle, which has for its only counterpart the craters of the moon.—Tourists’ Daily News. [“Meteor Mountain Crater Made by Celestial Visitor,” *The Winslow Mail*, June 11, 1926, page 10]

Another article informed tourists about the Painted Desert:

Within the year past nine miles north of Adamana, on the edge of the Painted Desert, there has been erected the Painted Desert Inn, the cost of which has been \$28,000. It is the last place one would look for such an investment but the patronage of tourists and others has more than justified the undertaking. It is perhaps the only building in the world constructed from petrified wood taken from forests that grow in a remote geological era of the earth long before the advent of the human race. One might go to the uttermost corners of the earth and not find the duplication either of nature’s work or man’s work such as is found here.

The erection of this building was the conception of H. D. Lore, of Holbrook, who was in Gallup Monday. Mr. Lore says that on last Sunday there were 65 cars at the Inn and the travel that way is increasing as one gets a good view of the Painted Desert, a vast stretch of forbidding country but marvelously picturesque – a miniature of the Grand Canyon itself.

Two educated Hopi Indians, man and wife, are in charge of the Inn, Mr. Lore only occasionally visiting the place and checking up on the business. He says that the Hopis are entirely reliable and tourists who visit the Inn see and deal only with the Indians. It only takes a little more than two hours’ drive to reach the Inn from Gallup. Tourists’ Daily News. [“Painted Desert Inn is Built of Petrified Wood,” *The Windsor Mail*, June 25, 1926, page 7]

To assist in publicity for the road, AAA announced on March 12 that in line with its plans for mapping the great transcontinental routes, it had just undertaken a thorough survey and logging of the National Old Trails Road. The tour book was to be released on May 31, 1926, in time to aid the summer travel season:

“One by one, the bogies of transcontinental travel are disappearing,” says the National Touring division of the A.A.A. “The Missouri mud is a thing of the past and hand in hand with the opening of new highways comes up-to-date mapping and road information.

“The diffusion of this information through every section of the country will be made possible through the fact that the A.A.A. tour books are uniformly accepted as standard and are used by the 775 motor clubs – 95 per cent of all the actively-functioning motor clubs in America – affiliated with the national motoring body. The publication of the

National Old Trails Tour Book will make it virtually impossible to give misleading information to motorists traveling through the region it covers, as the Tour Book and the accompanying maps will be available at all the A.A.A. clubs located on the highway.”

Reporting on this news, *The Winslow Mail*’s article began:

The National Headquarters of the American Automobile Association broadcast an announcement today that for the first time in the history of the country justice is to be done to one of the nation’s most famous highways, namely, the National Old Trails which girdles the continent from Washington and Baltimore to the Pacific coast. [“Old Trails Highway to Receive Just Recognition,” *The Winslow Mail*, March 12, 1926, pages 1, 12]

Numbers versus Names

For interstate motorists in the 1920s, the named trails were the way to navigate around the country. A 1923 road atlas included a one-page “Midget Map of the Transcontinental Trails of the United States.” It showed the line of the following named interstate trails:

Atlantic Highway	Atlantic Pacific Highway
Bankhead Highway	Black and Yellow Trail
Colorado to Gulf Highway	Columbia River Highway
Custer Battlefield Highway	Dallas Canadian Denver
Detroit-Lincoln-Denver	Dixie Highway
Dixie Overland Highway	Evergreen National Highway
George Washington	
National Highway	Jackson Highway
Jefferson Highway	King of Trails Highway
Kings Transcontinental	
Highway	Lee Highway
Lincoln Highway	Lone Star Route
Lone Star Trail	Meridian Highway
Mississippi Valley Highway	National Old Trails Road
National Park to Park Highway	National Parks Highway
National Roosevelt Midland	
Trail	Old Oregon Trail
Old Spanish Trail	Ozark Trails
Pacific Highway	Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway
South West Trail	Theodore Roosevelt International Trail
Victory Highway	Yellowstone Trail.

(The map is on this Website at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/midgetmap.cfm>.)

The named trail associations had served an important purpose in the 1910s when many States lacked a highway department or had an ineffective one. With the growing number of vehicles on the roads, the associations helped focus attention on their condition, identified interstate roads for

use of motorists, and sought increased funding for good roads projects. Starting with the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, but especially after the Federal Highway Act of 1921, the Federal road agency and the State highway agencies, now revitalized and professional, played a strong role in road improvement. Further, the public strongly supported the idea of good roads, and Federal and State road programs were better able to provide them. Basically, they were providing what people at the time thought of as the interstate system of two-lane paved roads.

By the early 1920s, as explained in a 1925 report, State and Federal highway officials realized that the named trail associations had outlived their usefulness, in view of “conditions which had existed for several years in connection with the expanding program of highway construction, and which were becoming aggravated as sentiment in favor of road construction spread and the building program assumed a more and more definite order and system”:

The conditions flowed from the well-intended efforts and the enthusiasm of local and commercial interests to secure the obviously desirable and necessary fruition of the road building program of the country. Numerous organizations, commonly known as trail associations, had promoted the marking of through routes, some extending entirely across the United States, some interstate in character and extending across two or more States, others of a more or less local significance only. In some cases the promotion of routes was done for the purpose of furthering road building by arousing, developing and maintaining local public opinion. Some were promoted more or less directly for commercial purposes, many were organized and maintained to promote and advertise some purely localized interest. Frequently the routes selected were chosen to develop scenic beauties, and had little thought of any other commercial value than that of leading tourists through particular sections of the country, and bringing to those sections the advantage of the tourist trade. Occasionally a route was laid out along very direct lines in an effort to secure the construction of short and direct routes between important centers of population. In a great many cases the routes were the result of an entirely selfish promotion to exploit good roads sentiment and provide salaries for paid officials of the various organizations.

These routes were named by their respective organizations after some person of distinction in the locality or in American history, for some place of greater or less note, or for memorial or sentimental reasons. Some undertook to perpetuate historic trails of early fame. In most cases some attempt to mark the routes was made in return for the local support given to the organization; in a few cases actual road construction was furthered by the organization. In most instances, however, a more or less careless marking was all that a community got for its outlay, which ranged from a few hundred dollars annually to as much as \$5,000 in extreme cases.

BPR's files contained evidence of at least 250 named trails:

These were sponsored by at least one hundred regularly organized associations supporting some kind of headquarters and issuing maps, advertising, or other promotion material. It is impossible to estimate the cost to the public of these activities; but when the 150 trails are omitted for which no record of a definite organization appears in the

record, it may conservatively be estimated that the 100 active organizations handled at least \$6,000 per year, or a total of \$600,000.

Over time, several problems had developed. Overlap was one problem. Many trails used the same roadway. In places, such as mountain passes, numerous routes followed the same path. The National Old Trails Road was no exception. For example, the Victory Highway shared the route of the National Old Trails Road in the east. Ben Blow, vice president and manager of the Victory Highway Association, described the origins and goals of the route in a 1924 article:

In the later part of 1921, a little group of road enthusiasts met in Topeka, Kansas, and incorporated The Victory Highway Association for the purpose of developing a new transcontinental highway line between New York and San Francisco as a national memorial undertaking in honor of those men and women who served their country during the World War.

That this undertaking might be worthy, plans were developed for marking the selected line in such a manner as no other road in the highway of the world had ever been marked, the selected design, of everlasting bronze, being an American eagle poised over its nest and young in an attitude of defiance, symbolical of that protection which this country gives its people.

The well-known Lincoln Highway already had a route from New York City to San Francisco that had been identified in 1913. To use the same termini, the new association had to identify a different routing that motorists might prefer to the better known route. The group chose a route from Battery Park in New York City, leaving the city by the St. George ferry to Staten Island, then to New Jersey by the Tottenville-Perth Amboy ferry and across New Jersey to Philadelphia:

From Philadelphia through Chester, Penn., Wilmington, Delaware, and then to Baltimore where connection is made with the National Old Trail as the selected line of the Victory to 50 miles beyond St. Louis, beyond which up to the present time, road improvement has been non-existent but where, now, a highway is in process of development between St. Louis and Kansas City – the Victory Highway line – which is 41 miles shorter than the shortest existent highway and 23 miles shorter than either of the two shortest rail lines. The development of this line was an engineering triumph due to the tenacity of purpose maintained by Theodore Gary, Chairman of the Missouri Highway Commission, who believed that the shortest line between two points was the logical way and who would not permit road deviation to adjacent towns by any political influences, but was governed solely by topographical conditions in aligning State Route 2, the St. Louis-Kansas City section of the Victory Highway. [Blow, Ben, “The Victory Highway,” *Good Roads*, June 1924, pages 159-160, 186]

The Victory Highway was a strong rival to the Lincoln Highway in the western States. The two associations became bitter rivals over designation of a Federal-aid route across the Utah/Nevada border. The Victory Highway won the rivalry by adopting a route across the Great Salt Desert through Wendover. BPR was involved in the unique project known as the Wendover Cut-off. The prominence of the Victory Highway was partly a result of strong support from the California

State Automobile Association (CSAA), the northern equivalent of the Automobile Club of Southern California. The northern group saw the Victory Highway as a way of drawing traffic, and tourist dollars, from the southern part of the State. Although the Victory Highway Association remained based in Topeka, the group appointed a CSAA member to be the western manager and designated the CSAA headquarters as the Victory Highway Association's western headquarters.

The 6-mile Wendover Cut-off was completed across the Great Salt Lake Desert with a ceremony on June 18, 1925, that included Secretary of Agriculture William M. Jardine, Utah Governor George H. Dern, and Nevada Governor J. G. Scrugham. "Dressed in white overalls, the two governors and the Secretary of Agriculture cleared away the last salt barrier in highway traffic between Utah and Nevada." ["Wendover Cut-Off Makes Utah California's Next-Door Neighbor," *American Motorist*, July 1925, pages 8-9, 44, 54])

Other less-prominent named trails also had adopted portions of the National Old Trails Road. In Missouri, parts of it were included in two diagonal transcontinental routes: the George Washington National Highway (Savannah, Georgia, to Seattle, Washington) and the Glacier Trail (Jacksonville, Florida, to Los Angeles). The Atlantic-Pacific Highway, from New York to Los Angeles, shared the National Old Trails Road in several States. From Gallup, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, part of the National Old Trails Road was included in the National Park-to-Park Highway. The Evergreen Highway adopted the National Old Trails Road between Kingman and Seligman, Arizona. Several trails shared Raton Pass, as noted earlier.

The same was true for other routes:

Specific cases were studied . . . in which as much as 70 per cent of the mileage of one route lapped others and sometimes as many as eleven different marked trails were involved in parts of greater or less length in a single trail. One section of road is known to have carried eight different sets of route markers for a considerable distance. Two and three different sets of markers on the same road were common; and four and even five sets of markers were not infrequently found. This confusion finally resulted in complaints from the public that road marking was becoming in many cases more annoying than helpful.

Route duplication was another issue because "it was almost as common to find two or more separate roads bearing the same designation." The Lincoln Highway and Victory Highway were an example, but routes such as the Dixie Highway (on a dual line between Michigan and Florida) and the New and Old Santa Fe Trails were another:

One of the most vigorously promoted routes has at several points three alternate lines, and over most of its length there exists a duplicate location.

This resulted from the fact that in promoting the route and inviting local support interested organizations made their layout where they could secure local support, and being morally too weak to reject financial support offered them by an alternate route, they accepted both routes and both sets of contributions. In a great many cases such

alternate routes exist among the marked trails, and very few of them were entirely free from this objectionable feature. There are also routes which branch and are a collection of routes rather than a single route. This condition of having two or more different roads carrying the same route designation was as confusing as having several designations applying to the same route, and was equally productive of complaint.

Another problem, faulty location, resulted from promoters following “the line of least resistance financially The line was routed where the most financial support could be secured.” As a result, the location and alignment “could not be defended on economic or engineering grounds.”

Further, the named trail associations were resistant to correction or change. The associations often objected to State highway department plans for State highway systems that did not include some or all of the trail. “The interests back of the individual route protested the interests of the community as a whole, and exerted their influence to make good showing to their supporters regardless of the real intrinsic merit of their location. This meant that faulty locations and improperly adjusted priority of construction were threatening to affect seriously the road-building program.”

These concerns applied to the named trails as a whole:

There were conspicuous cases of public spirited work, by men of wide vision, who under careful management were promoting worthily the construction of connected roads, and doing much to improve highway transport conditions in the country, but these organizations working independently and having no co-ordinating agency could not be expected to develop a unified and correlated system of routes. [*Report of Joint Board on Interstate Highways*, October 30, 1925, Approved by the Secretary of Agriculture, November 18, 1925, pages 5-8]

For these and other reasons, State highway officials realized that a new system of marking would have to be found to help motorists travel around the country. On November 24, 1924, AASHO adopted a resolution on marking known as Resolution No. 5:

Whereas, this Association has adopted the report of the Subcommittee on Traffic Control and Safety, recommending the immediate selection of transcontinental and interstate routes from the Federal-aid system, said roads to be continuously designated by means of standard highway marking signs and protected by standard traffic warning signs; and *Whereas*, this system of highways when established and marked will satisfy the demand for marked routes on the part of transcontinental and interstate traffic, thus meeting the need which had been met in the past in a measure by the marked trails established by the reputable trails associations; and

Whereas, many individuals have sought to capitalize the popular demand for interstate or cross-country routes by organizing trails, collecting large sums of money from our citizens and giving practically no service in return, with resulting discredit to the reputable trails associations which have heretofore rendered distinct public service by stimulating highway improvement, maintenance, and marking; now, therefore, be it *Resolved*: That this Association hereby recommends to the several States that the

reputable trails associations now existing be permitted to continue their markings during their period of usefulness, pending the establishment of the proposed marking system, unless such action shall conflict with the marking systems and policies now in force in the several States; and be it further

Resolved: That no trail association be permitted to establish further routes on State or Federal-aid routes; and be it further

Resolved: That we hereby warn the citizens of this nation to investigate carefully the responsibility of trails organizers and demand convincing evidence insuring proper expenditure of funds before contributing to or otherwise supporting such agencies.

[Resolutions Adopted by The American Association of State Highway Officials At Annual Session November 20, 1924, *American Highways*, January 1925, pages 42-43]

AASHO called on the Secretary of Agriculture to appoint a joint board of BPR and State highway officials to "cooperate in formulating and promulgating a system of numbering and marking highways of interstate character.

Resolution No. 5 did not specify the "reputable trails associations" or indicate how to identify them. Susan Croce Kelly, in her biography of Cyrus A. Avery, at the time the chairman of the Oklahoma Department of Highways, speculated that the reputable associations included members of the Associated Highways of America (see part 3 of this history), including three roads that Avery was associated with – Albert Pike Highway (from Hot Springs, Arkansas, to Colorado Springs, Colorado, via Tulsa), Ozark Trails (St. Louis to Las Vegas, New Mexico, via Tulsa), and White River Trail (Branson, Missouri, through Springfield to Tulsa). [Kelly, Susan Croce, *Father of Route 66: The Story of Cy Avery*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2014, page 133]

On February 20, 1925, Secretary of Agriculture Howard M. Gore approved appointment of the Joint Board on Interstate Highways, as recommended by AASHO. He appointed the members of the Joint Board on March 2, just 2 days before becoming Governor of West Virginia. He stated that he was taking this action, at the unanimous request of the State highway agencies because "the general public in traveling over the highways through the several States encounters considerable confusion because of the great variety of direction signs and danger signs." He added:

This move . . . is just another proof that the Federal Government in its cooperation with the States is doing a vital work which would not otherwise be accomplished if entire dependence were placed upon the States themselves.

BPR Chief MacDonald was chairman while BPR's chief of design, E. W. James, would be the Secretary. The BPR's Consulting Highway Engineer, A. B. Fletcher, was the agency's third representative. The State highway agencies were represented by 22 top State officials. AASHO's Executive Secretary, William C. Markham, also attended the Joint Board's meetings.

On February 26, 1925, Judge Lowe wrote to Chief MacDonald to express concern about the proposal:

I am just in receipt of a wire from Washington telling me that pursuant to a resolution adopted at the last Session of the State Highway Boards held at Oakland, California, some action was taken regarding the sign-posting of roads. I was told at the time that they excepted from the provisions of the resolution, the Lincoln Highway and the N. O. T. Road, for the reason, as I understood it, that these two organizations were, and have been from the beginning, actively at work trying to get the road built. Anyway, whatever the exact action may have been at that convention, they now tell me in this telegram that the Agricultural Department is in sympathy with the action of that meeting.

I am writing simply to lay the facts before you, which are, very briefly, that when this Association was organized (the first of its kind in the United States), we began the active agitation not for promoting only, but to build the road. Our efforts have always been to work up public sentiment so as to get the road actually constructed. The progress, under the circumstances, has really been wonderful. That portion of the road from Washington to the Mississippi, is the longest continuously paved road in the world. There is not a break in it, and it will undoubtedly be completed across Missouri this year. We have it, perhaps, three-fourths hard surfaced the balance of the way to the Pacific. We have it sign-posted with metallic signs on steel posts set in cement from Los Angeles to the western line of Ohio, and the Highway Board of Ohio has put a metal plate immediately above the numerals on her sign-posts, "National Road", which is so nearly [an] identical name that it does not mislead the traveling public.

I sympathize altogether with the objections to indiscriminate sign-posting of roads. They are not only annoying, but in many cases misleading. I do not object, of course, to the Highway Boards for adopting the numerical system, that is convenient and if any Trans-Continental Road was numerically sign-posted from beginning to end by the same number, it might answer every purpose. But a road like ours running through twelve states, the average tourist would never know, when he went out of one state into another, whether he was pursuing a Trans-Continental line or some other route, because they are all numbered differently. For this reason, aside from any sentimental reason, it seems to me that the sign-posting of the N.O.T. should not be torn down and destroyed, and I can see no reasonable objection to our continuing to maintain such signs.

Chief Engineer P. St. J. Wilson of BPR replied on March 4 to assure Judge Lowe that:

Your letter will be brought to the attention of the Joint Board at an appropriate time. The members of the Board have just been appointed and the organization is not yet complete.
[National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Developments Along the Road

While BPR and the State highway officials were planning to find an alternative to the named trail method of designating interstate roads, the States the National Old Trails Road passed through continued working on the road.

In early 1925, Division VIII of the California State Highway Commission, in cooperation with the Santa Fe Railroad, completed work on removing a dangerous rail-highway crossing on the National Old Trails Road in San Bernardino County near Oro Grande between Victorville and Barstow:

Some three miles of the state highway have been straightened out and graded and a dangerous grade crossing eliminated by the building of an underpass

Many accidents have occurred at this point in recent years. The railroad crossed the highway after rounding a sharp curve, and likewise the highway approached the railroad on a sharp turn that entirely concealed the tracks.

The Santa Fe Company has been straightening out and double tracking its lines between Los Angeles and the east and an understanding was reached between the commission and the railroad that whenever the work was done in the vicinity of Oro Grande, the state highway would be graded at the same time. The highway followed the winding course of the railroad and crossed it on the curve as described above.

The cost of the underpass, which was built by the railroad company, was shared by the railroad and the state. This expenditure and the three miles of grading being entirely new construction was financed from the state highway fund. Both the railroad and the traveling public will benefit from this important improvement. ["Dangerous Grade Crossing Eliminated on Old Trails Highway," *California Highways*, March 1925]

The *Albuquerque Morning Journal* reported on a challenge of car versus train:

A wager that he could better the time of the California limited between Albuquerque and Winslow was won by E. J. Tilson of Winslow, Ariz., on February 17, according to a letter written by Mr. Tilson to the Morning Journal. In his letter, Mr. Tilson says that he submits the story to the Journal to illustrate the good condition which the roads of New Mexico are now in.

The motorist claims that he completed the 302 miles from Albuquerque to Winslow over various detours and a road with which he was unacquainted, in the actual running time of eight hours and 15 minutes. The actual running time from Albuquerque to Gallup he gives as four hours and 25 minutes, which is fifteen minutes better than that made by train No. 3 on the Santa Fe railroad.

The trip was made in a roadster with the top up. Mr. Tilson said that he had no tire trouble on the trip. He further says that he can verify the run by various parties in Albuquerque, Gallup, Holbrook and Winslow. ["Autoist Races to Beat Time of No. 3 Train," *New Mexico Highway Journal*, March 1925, page 9]

The D.A.R Continental Congress – 1925

When D.A.R. held its annual continental congress in April 1925, Mrs. John Trigg Moss delivered a report on the work of the National Old Trails Road Committee. As reflected in her 1924 report, National Chairman Moss was taking the committee in a different direction than her predecessors. They had some success, as she acknowledged, but their main goals – passage of legislation and posting of road signs – had not been achieved and seemed unlikely to succeed and, in the case of signs, impractical if they did.

Mrs. Moss would prove to be the most successful of the National Chairmen of the National Old Trails Road Committee. The former Arline B. Nichols was born on December 24, 1876, in St. Louis. A biographical sketch stated that, "she had been a teacher of the deaf before her marriage to John Trigg Moss in 1902." She had two sons, John Trigg Moss, Jr. (born March 7, 1903) and Harry Nichols Moss (September 17, 1912). She began her D.A.R. work with the Cornelia Greene D.A.R. Chapter in St. Louis. She was elected State Regent in October 1917 (confirmed April 1918). She retired from that post in 1920, and was elected to the post of Vice-President General during the Thirtieth Annual Congress in April 1921. As noted earlier, the President General, Mrs. Anthony Wayne Cook, appointed Mrs. Moss to the post of National Chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee in 1924. [Bauer, Fern Iola, *The Historic Treasure Chest of the Madonna of the Trail Monuments*, John McEnaney Printing, Revised edition, 1986, pages 6-7, 88]

Mrs. Moss's 1925 report began:

Another year has passed into the realm of yesterdays, and your National Chairman will let you judge the amount of progress made since Congress a year ago. At that time a resolution was unanimously adopted to set aside or discontinue all former plans of erecting markers on the National Old Trails Road and to adopt a new marking system – one that seemed conservative and in keeping with the dignity of our Society; within reason from a financial standpoint and fulfilling the long-expressed desire or pledge to erect markers that would be lasting memorials to our early pioneer ancestors, who blazed the old trails that have become our great system of highways, recognized and approved by the government. The National Old Trails Road (Road No. 1) is the main ocean-to-ocean highway and is termed the "backbone" of the entire system.

The route taken by the National Old Trails Road was not chosen by the Daughters of the American Revolution, nor did they have any voice in the matter. Locating the different trails, or roads, was the work of the National Highways Association, the National Old Trails Road Association, State Highway Commissions, and many other State and national organizations solely interested in the National Highway Movement. If, in their better

judgment, the main cross-country ocean-to-ocean highway, to be known as the National Old Trails Road, comprised Braddock's road, the Old Cumberland Road, the Boone's Lick Road, the Santa Fe Trail, and the Kearney Trail, running from Washington, D.C., to California, then cannot we, Daughters of the American Revolution, accept the route without a question and proceed to mark it as planned, whether or not the road runs through your State, or whether it does not pass through certain States that formerly laid claim to this distinction. It is a national institution and the history of this road remains the history of the development of our country. The Daughters of the American Revolution are marking it for history's sake and as an "In Memoriam" to the great army of Revolutionary ancestors who had the great vision of a great land of life and freedom to hand down to posterity

The time is now at hand for us to definitely take hold and consummate the pledge of last year and of all previous years. Please bear in mind that from the very inception of this National Old Trails work it has always been and still is a national project and does not belong exclusively to those States through which the main ocean-to-ocean highway runs. As a national project, it should have not only the endorsement of, but the earnest support, morally and financially, of every State Society in our organization.

In 1924, Mrs. Moss reported that she had studied the committee's records and determined that its activities were unsustainable. Now, in 1925, she explained her activities since adoption of the resolution:

Last summer your National Chairman turned her attention to the study of every phase of the National Old Trails work, and went to Kansas City for the purpose of conferring with Judge J. M. Lowe, National President of the National Old Trails Road Association, who gave a very hearty and enthusiastic approval of the new plan or program the Daughters had voted to follow.

She then divided the States into five sections, each with a National Vice-Chairmen in charge:

- Mrs. Herbert M. Gault, of Maryland – New England (14 States: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia Maryland, District of Columbia, and Pennsylvania).
- Mrs. Richmond P. Barnes of New Mexico – Southeastern (10 States: Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi).
- Mrs. William R. Van Tuyle of Kansas – Central Section (8 States: Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana).
- Mrs. Lipscomb Norvell of Texas – Middle Western States (8 States: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, and Wyoming).
- Miss Ida Meyers of California – Western Section (9 States: California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, and Montana).

Chairman Moss's idea was a single monument in each National Old Trails State:

Much time has been spent by your National Chairman in considering sizes and shapes and styles of markers and monuments as well as materials of stone, cement, etc. A request was made for designs, to be sent to your National Chairman before April 1925, but to date only one State, namely, Tennessee, submitted two designs. Your National Chairman also has a design to submit, the work of Nancy Coonesman Hahn, the young sculptoress of note, who at the present time lives in St. Louis.

On the first of October, Mrs. Moss had sent a letter to every State Chairman and a copy to each State Regent containing “a copy of the resolution adopted at the Thirty-third Congress and asked for a ten-cent per capita contribution to raise the balance of the necessary amount to erect the twelve markers at approximately one thousand dollars each”:

The Treasurer General’s report for Congress last April gave the amount in the National Old Trail’s fund as \$4,876.65. This year, to April 1, 1925, \$2,475.12 has been contributed, making a total of \$7,351.77

Your National Chairman feels that the first objective should be the completion of the fund, believing that a suitable design can be determined upon and the locations for the markers decided by vote of the States in the several sections as soon as the fund is completed. If the States will come forward and pledge their quotas, we may proceed with the actual work this year. Co-operation is the one word needed here to interpret success in this work – not half-hearted luke-warm co-operation, but interested, whole-hearted, and enthusiastic co-operation, that is consistent with the erection of memorials to our honored forebears:

For don’t we eternally breathe a prayer on the evening breeze
And thank God for our heritage from these?

Mrs. Moss also discussed some of her more routine activities:

Many letters have been written by your National Chairman, and 200 copies of the National Old Trails Map, supplied by the National Old Trails Road Association, together with other printed matter, have been sent to members upon request. A copy of the joint resolution No. 79, as presented to the House of Representatives by Mr. Jost, was sent to each State Chairman. A copy of the “National Old Trails Road,” or “The Great Historic Highway of America,” was sent to each Vice-Chairman and each State Chairman by the author, Judge J. M. Lowe, of Kansas City, Missouri

She recognized that every State had historic old trails, “a relic of those early days, and all of these should be preserved and marked in the course of time.” The D.A.R., however, “should first bend all their efforts to the erection of their memorial markers on the National Old Trails Road and complete this tribute as a national organization.” When that tribute was completed, “let every State follow out a program for the marking of their own historic trails, which time and traditions have made dear to the heart.” [*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the*

American Revolution, April 1925, pages 235-238]

On April 23, D.A.R. members “marched past President and Mrs. Coolidge in a colorful procession representing many States at the reception in their honor given at the White House yesterday.” President General Cook led the procession:

The President and Mrs. Coolidge stood in the blue room to receive these descendants of the heroes of 1776 and a cordial word of greeting and a hand clasp accorded by both to each Daughter. So great was the number received that few could linger to exchange more than a greeting, but the President and Mrs. Coolidge recognized many friends in the Vermont delegation and others of the New England groups.

After passing down the reception line the visitors went out into the grounds of the White House, which had been opened for their benefit, and strolled about the beautiful lawns, enjoying the novel spectacle and particularly the colonial gardens. [“White House Doors Are Open Wide to 5,000 D.A.R. Guests,” *The Washington Post*, April 24, 1925, page 1]

The Joint Board on Interstate Highways

The Joint Board’s first meeting took place on April 20 and 21, 1925, in Chief MacDonald’s office at BPR headquarters in Washington. Chief MacDonald was present, along with BPR’s E. W. James, the Joint Board’s secretary, and 18 State highway officials. Three State members of the Joint Board were not present (from California, Oregon, and West Virginia).

The goal was to decide how to designate interstate routes, adopt a uniform system of marking such routes, including signs for identifying the roads and for traffic control, and secure uniform legislation if needed to provide for such markings.

For designating routes, the agenda covered several points:

Shall trail organizations be recognized by the Board –

1. By hearings?
2. By submitting briefs?
3. By no method?

Shall designated routes be named or numbered?

Shall a mechanical and prearranged system of numbering, or shall a promiscuous system of numbering be adopted?

Shall an effort be made to establish a correlation between other numbered State routes and the designated route?

Shall the Board recommend that after the Interstate routes have been designated, trail associations in good standing, operating without profit, be authorized by permission of the respective State highway departments, to name and mark routes for sentimental, memorial, or patriotic reasons, under restrictions covering:

- Type of sign,
- Avoidance of overlapping routes,
- Choice of a single route,
- Continuity of route,
- Permission of all States concerned and
- Routes to follow single numbered route.

The Joint Board also was to adopt policies regarding signs and markers as well as determine the organization of the Joint Board and the nature of its meetings.

As the meeting began, Chairman MacDonald asked each member to state their views on the proposed agenda. According to minutes of the April 20 meeting, the State officials supported the designation of interstate routes and uniform marking of the selected roads, but several commented on the named trails.

William F. Williams of Massachusetts:

Believes that names such as “Yellowstone Trail” “Gold Star Trail” or “Liberty Trail” should be kept off the highways.

Preston G. Peterson of Utah:

Believes in the elimination of trail organizations.

B. H. Piepmeier of Missouri:

Does not think trail organizations should be recognized, although they have done some good work.

Frank T. Sheets of Illinois:

Believes trail organizations have long ceased to be useful.

Lou A. Boulay of Ohio:

Believes trail organizations should not be recognized.

After the survey of leaders, including Frank F. Rogers, Michigan's commissioner of highways and president of AASHO, the minutes continued:

Discussion by the Joint Board on the elimination of trail organizations.

Mr. F. F. Rogers of Michigan: "I suggest that Mr. James read Resolution No. 5 regarding trail marking, as adopted by the American Association of State Highway Officials at its last annual convention."

Resolution No. 5 read by Mr. James.

Mr. F. T. Sheets of Illinois: "I move that it is the sense of this Body that Resolution No. 5 regarding trail marking, as adopted by the American Association of State Highway Officials at its last annual convention in California, be adopted as the policy of this Board."

Motion made, seconded and carried.

They also discussed whether to publicize the Joint Board's proceedings. "After discussion, it was agreed that such resolutions as were adopted by the Board would be made public."

On the second day, April 21, the Joint Board convened at 9:45 a.m. They discussed selection of routes to be included in the system. E.W. James pointed out:

The original Federal aid system was drawn up only after we had held group meetings. I think if we could have group meetings as a start, inviting to each group meeting not only the members of this Joint Board, but also representative [sic] from each State in the group, it would be advisable.

Frank Sheets put the comment in the form of a motion:

I move that the Chairman of this Joint Board be asked to group the several States in such manner as will best promote the study of the roads to be selected and marked under the supervision of this Board; that group meetings be held at which representatives from each of the States involved and from the Bureau of Public Roads be present, at which meeting or subsequent meeting a study of the proposed routes to be selected and marked in each State be made; that joint meetings of related groups be held when necessary; that these groups report their recommendations to this Board for review, adjustment and ultimate adoption.

Motion made, seconded and carried.

Chairman MacDonald followed up:

When group meetings are called it would be a good idea to notify all the States in a group and tell them if they wish to have a representative present at their own expense they may do so.

With regard to tentative schedule of group meetings: Meeting of Western Group at San Francisco May 15th; Meeting of Mississippi Valley Group at Kansas City May 27th; Meeting of Lakes Group at Chicago June 3rd; Meeting of Southern Group at Atlanta, June 8th; Meeting of North Atlantic Group at New York City June 15th; and Meeting of New England Group at Boston June 18th.

After the first series of group meetings I think we will be very close together.

Susan Croce Kelly commented:

They agreed unanimously that publicity and public hearings would lead only to gridlock and failure, so one of their first decisions was that while they would hold regional meetings, there would be no open-to-the-public discussions and there would be no prepublicity – reports of the meetings would only be distributed afterward. [Kelly, page 138]

The Joint Board also agreed unanimously on a shield design for signs to be placed on the designated highways based on the official U.S. shield. As James later recalled:

At a Board meeting I was sitting at the side of Frank Rogers of Michigan. As we discussed a possible distinctive and unique marker for all the Federal Aid System, he doodled and produced a sort of shield. He handed it to me. I think I improved on his design by drawing a picture of our present shield. He took it back, presented it to the Board as just what was wanted, and that was that. [Kelly, page 140; see “E. W. James on designating the Federal-aid system and developing the U.S. numbered highway plan” on this Website.]

The members of the Joint Board had come to the initial meeting with State maps showing which roads they wanted to include in the plan. James had BPR’s mapping team prepare regional maps showing the members’ choices. He then sent the maps to the members as the starting place for consideration during the regional meetings. [Kelly, page 140; First Full Meeting of The Joint Board For Designating Highways Held in the Office of The Chief of The Bureau Of Public Roads at Washington, D.C., National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

During the course of discussions during the 2-day meeting, the Joint Board adopted several resolutions:

Moved that it be the sense of this meeting that we adopt a uniform system of through routes for the United States, based on numbering and that a uniform shape and type of route marker, to be adopted later, be selected for the marking of these routes.

Moved that it be the sense of this Body that Resolution No. 5 regarding trail marking, as adopted by the American Association of State Highway Officials at its last annual convention in California, be adopted as the policy of this Board.

Moved that the Secretary of this meeting request each State to submit for the consideration of this Board a design for a marker of national significance to be acted on later.

Moved that it be the sense of this Body that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee on Traffic Control and Safety of American Association of State Highway Officials, as adopted by said Association at its last annual meeting at San Francisco be adopted as the preliminary standards for traffic warning signs to be used by this Body; except that the specification as to the use of lemon yellow as the color for the background of said signs be determined after further investigation by this Body; and, be it the sense of this Body further that the standards as finally perfected and adopted by this Body be recommended to the American Association of State Highway Officials and other highway officials having jurisdiction over the highways of this country as standards for their adoption.

Moved that it be the sense of this Body that each State, where the authority does not exist, empower its State Highway Department to provide a uniform system of marking and signing for the roads under State jurisdiction.

Moved that it be the sense of this Body that no discussion along the line of numbers to be adopted for these routes be had until the system of arterial highways for the United States is selected.

Moved that the Chairman of this Joint Board be asked to group the several States in such manner as will best promote the study of the roads to be selected and marked under the supervision of this Board; that group meetings be held at which representatives from each of the States involved and from the Bureau of Public Roads be present, at which meeting or subsequent meeting a study of the proposed routes to be selected and marked in each State be made; that joint meetings of related groups be held when necessary; that those groups report their recommendations to this Board for review, adjustment and ultimate adoption.

Moved that it be the sense of this Board that in laying out the highways to be recommended for adoption as part of the proposed uniformly marked system of interstate highways each State be requested to bear in mind the following purposes:

The connection of important centers with those reasonably direct lines which will be improved at the earliest possible date.

The dispersion of traffic over a sufficient number of alternate routes to promote safety and ease of maintenance.

The selection of approximately 1 per cent or less of the total highway mileage of the State as of greatest importance; of a second 1 per cent approximately as of secondary importance; and a third 1 per cent approximately as of tertiary importance; and that these suggested percentages be increased in sparsely settled States.

Moved that it is the sense of this Board to adopt as a preliminary and tentative standard for the interstate highways to be selected, the following color scheme: For all route markers and directional signs, black lettering on lemon yellow background, and that this tentative recommendation be submitted to each of the States for their comments and recommendations before being finally adopted by this Joint Board.

Moved that it is the sense of this Board that green be used as a luminous sign as indicated in Section A, No. 3, to indicate “go” instead of “look or attention.” (See Recommendation of American Association of State Highway Officials.)

Moved that it is the sense of this Board that the design here suggested be sent out to the different States asking them to submit their comments on this type of design for use as a marker on the interstate highways to be selected. (Copy of the design referred to will be furnished each State Highway Dept.)

Moved that it is the sense of this Board that specifications be drafted for the size and shape of warning signs and that tentative standards be set up for the directional signs. [*Report of Joint Board on Interstate Highways*, pages 14-15, 17-21]

On April 22, 1925, *The New York Times* carried the following article on page 11:

WARNS ON TRAIL FUNDS

Highway Board Advises Public to Investigate Appeals

WASHINGTON, April 21. – A warning was issued today by the Joint Board of State and Federal Highway Officials in session here against certain “trails associations” which, they charge, are in some cases mainly money-raising associations. The offending associations were not named.

“All citizens,” the board said, “are warned to investigate carefully the responsibility of trail organizers and demand convincing evidence insuring proper expenditures of funds before contributing to or otherwise supporting such agencies.

The board decided to permit “reputable trails associations” now existing to continue their markings of highways provided they do not conflict with State and Federal policies.

The officials agreed to adopt a uniform system for marking national highways and standard designs for cautionary and danger signs. Suggestions will be sought from the State highway departments.

An editorial in *The Washington Post* stated that the officials “reached a wise decision when they agreed to create a group of interstate roads to be known as United States highways”:

Good roads are a national asset of the highest importance. The Romans realized this truth fully, and accordingly throughout their far-flung provinces they constructed roads of such durability that many of them are in use to the present day

If good roads were a necessity then, they are a hundredfold more necessary now. The exigencies of an advanced and still advancing civilization require a ready, easy, cheap, and rapid transit for personal transportation and the interchange of commodities. To a large extent such facilities are supplied by railways and in a less degree by waterways; at no distant date they may be supplied by airways. But the highway was never ousted in the past, nor is it likely to be in the future, and at the present time the automobile and the motor truck make highways, and good ones at that, an essential adjunct to commerce and pleasure. The building of new and better roads is therefore imperatively demanded in the general interest both of the people of today and of posterity.

Referring to the plan to hold regional meetings on the new system, the editorial continued:

There is evidence here of good teamwork. They will assemble again in Washington in August to make a final decision on the selection of highways and of the signs by which they will be marked.

A great advance in intelligently coordinated road building may be looked for as the result of the methods and plans now being so carefully laid. [“United States Highways,” *The Washington Post*, April 25, 1925, page 6]

(Information about the Joint Board’s actions is adapted from the article “From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System” on this Website)

Across the Country Nonstop

In June 1925, stunt flier Leigh Wade, famous for his round-the-world flight in 1923, planned a non-stop automobile trip in a Packard 8 from Los Angeles to New York City. Linton Wells, a newspaper writer, would accompany Wade as co-driver. AAA agreed to sponsor the stunt. Wade explained the plan:

By non-stop drive, we mean that over this distance we expect to keep the wheels of the car moving and the motor running, a feat hitherto unattempted so far as we have been able to determine. We do not intend to break any speed records or violate any speed

laws. We hope that we will be able to complete our run within seven days, averaging about twenty miles per hour for the distance.

We plan to receive gasoline, oil, water and food at specified places, slowing down to a few miles an hour and taking it aboard in containers. We do not anticipate tire trouble, having decided to use an oversize balloon of the best possible make.

Wade was to leave Los Angeles, drive to Phoenix, and then turn north to Albuquerque. From there, they would follow the National Old Trails Road to New York City. [“Wade to Start July 16 on Non-Stop Auto Trip,” *The New York Times*, June 18, 1925, page 6]

As planned, Wade and Wells left from Los Angeles on July 16. They arrived in New York City on July 23, as explained in the *Times* the following day:

A crowd of several thousand persons at the headquarters of the Metropolitan Automobile Association, 1773 Broadway, yesterday greeted Lieutenant Leigh Wade, round-the-world flier, and his companion, Linton Wells, at the finish of their non-stop automobile tour from Los Angeles to New York.

Escorted by a platoon of motorcycle police, the mud encrusted car, a Packard eight, rolled up to headquarters just off Columbus Circle at 1:55 o'clock, after 3,963 miles of continuous traveling, without once stopping for oil, gas or water or engine adjustment. The distance from Los Angeles to here was covered in 163 hours and 50 minutes.

During the entire trip Wade slept eighteen hours and Wells sixteen in the back of the car. Both wore a week's growth of beard, and the blood was running from a deep sunburn on Wade's left arm, caused by the hot Kansas sun.

The nonstop drive ran into several situations that nearly forced the pair to stop. The most talked about incident occurred in Arizona, before the pair reached the National Old Trails Road, near

Tucson when they had to change a flat tire, as described in *The Washington Post*:

From Tucson, Ariz., near which city the puncture occurred comes the story of how the thing was done, possibly the first time it ever was attempted. The tire was changed in about 40 minutes with change crew running alongside the big Packard 8 for about 4 miles.

The car was on the pavement when the deflated tire was first detected. Wade was driving. Wells joined the crew from the pilot car and the process of discovering the intricacies of the Dolly pack strapped to the running board was started. This jack, equipped with 4 wheels, had been tested only for the front wheels before the start from Los Angeles. It was found that it would not raise the car quite high enough to clear the tire from the ground. Another mile – and a short piece of plank was fastened to the top of the jack.

By this time the tire had gone down so far that the height of the jack when released plus the thickness of the plank would not permit the jack to go under the axles. Then a big rock was placed under the offending wheel and Wade who had traded places at the wheel with Wells followed the plank-clapped jack as closely as possible to the rear axle. The Packard rolled over the road, Wade shoved the jack in place and as the rock was left behind the car hit a solid position on the jack. An accommodating Phoenix speed cop arrived with a gallon thermo jug of iced water to counteract a temperature of 116 degrees in the shade of a cactus and a working temperature of about 173 ½.

By means of a special individual rear-wheel braking device, the crippled wheel was partially locked and enough traction was thrown to the other rear wheel to propel the car. The hub bolts had been loosened during the difficulties of getting the Packard on the jack. The balance of the toughest tire change that has ever been accomplished consisted of lining up the holes in the disk wheel with those of the hub while the hub itself fitfully released itself from the brake and occasionally took a spasmodic revolution or two en route.

While on the National Old Trails Road, the pair encountered several problems that nearly ended the run:

Near Las Vegas, N. Mex., Lieut. Wade missed the main road, and while following a poorly defined wagon track and hurrying to catch his escort, he hit a high irrigation culvert. The car was thrown into the air, all four wheels leaving the ground, but it landed upright in the irrigation ditch, and, without a stop, Wade ran along in the ditch until he could pull out into a field.

Crossing Missouri presented the usual mud problem:

Crossing Missouri two cloud bursts were encountered, which made the gumbo roads impassable for normal driving. Several times the Packard slid into the ditch and churned its way through the mud and water without a stop. Men from the escort cars had to keep shoveling the mud away as it dammed up in front of the front axle, and by main strength had to hold the wheels in the ruts. Hours were spent with the car traveling only a mile an hour.

Nearing St. Louis gravel roads were encountered and at this point the tire chains which had been put on without a stop in the gumbo mud country threatened to break and lock the rear wheels. Wells took the wheel and drove as slowly as possible. Wade dove under the rear end of the car and hooking one elbow around the rear axle, permitted himself to be dragged on his back over the gravel, while with his free hand he cut the wires with which the chains had been fastened. His clothes were torn off and his back badly lacerated.

After the pair were off the National Old Trails Road heading for New York City, a police officer

nearly halted the nonstop drive. The *Times* reported:

But it was not the Missouri cloudburst nor the sands of the desert that threatened to stop the wheels. It remained for a traffic officer in Irvington-on-Hudson, thirty miles from their destination, to almost upset the non-stop journey. As the transcontinental car with its escort of banner-draped machines and State troopers on motorcycles proceeded down Irvington's Broadway, a traffic policeman, who had not learned of the unique trip, set the "stop" signal. Lieutenant Wade, who was at the wheel, kept right on moving.

He slowed down to explain to the traffic officer who walked beside the car. Finally, without stopping the machine, Wade gave over the wheel to Wells and hopped from the car to receive a summons for violating a traffic ordinance. Wells continued on to New York, Wade overtaking him later in another machine.

At Peekskill, New York, the pair were almost arrested when Wade drove on the wrong side of a traffic tower. "A policeman rode alongside, arguing with them until the purpose of the trip was explained by State police accompanying the machine."

Finally in New York City, "the two men had their first square meals since leaving Los Angeles," having subsisted on a fruit and liquid diet. From the *Times*:

Wade described the trip as a good vacation stunt, much harder than flying, even harder than the world-circling flight, requiring much more physical and mechanical endurance. The reverse, he said, had never been used on the entire trip. The Metropolitan Automobile Association and the affiliated clubs helped them greatly. In the cities through which they passed the clubs furnished them gas, oil and water while in motion and cleared the way through the populated districts

As the result of their experiences Wade and Wells stressed the need of a national code of automobile signals and the uniform marking of the motor roads from coast to coast.

Thanks to the oil rectifier in the Packard, "the trip was made without a change of oil At the end of the 3,965 miles the oil in the crank case showed less than two per cent dilution. Oil was added from time to time, but in the whole trip only 20 quarts were used." The escort cars carried 5-gallon tins of gasoline that was poured into a 40-gallon auxiliary tank in the tonneau. In all, the trip required 323 gallons of gasoline, or about 13 miles per gallon.

When the trip was over, the car was restarted without any repairs, other than the changing of two spark plugs, and ran without a stop for 162 hours and 45 minutes before being shut off to be displayed in a Packard sales room in Boston. ["Non-Stop Tire Change Hit of Transcontinental Run," *The Washington Post*, August 16, 1925, page AT2; "Non-Stop Auto Here From California," *The New York Times*, July 24, 1925, page 6; "Nonstop Auto Trip, Coast to Coast, Ends," *The Washington Post*, July 24, 1925, page 5]

Group Meetings of the Joint Board

The Joint Board's report on its work described the group meetings as being of great interest to the States:

The interest of the States in the matter is clearly shown by the very large percentage of attendance. Of the eleven Western States eight sent personal representatives to group meetings; of the eleven Mississippi Valley States nine had personal representatives; of the six Lakes States all sent representatives; of the nine Southern States all sent representatives; of the five Middle Atlantic States two sent representatives; and of the six New England States all sent representatives. Every Board member was present at his respective group meeting, and in some cases States sent three or four representatives. States not represented in person generally furnished maps and correspondence indicating their choice of routes with the result that in the course of the group meetings all but two States have taken the opportunity to express themselves definitely regarding the routes selected.

The meetings were intended for the State highway departments, as had been the case with the group meetings on the Federal-aid systems following enactment of the Federal Highway Act of 1921. The Joint Board's report summarized the meetings:

Trail associations raised no serious difficulties at any meeting, although at Kansas City, Chicago and Atlanta numerous representatives of these organizations appeared quite evidently expecting to be heard. In no case, however, were any outside representatives permitted to appear before the meetings, but in all cases it was necessary in courtesy to meet these trails representatives outside of the meeting and talk with them regarding the situation. At Kansas City the number of visitors was so large it was suggested that they make arrangements for their own meeting in a separate place where a brief statement might be made to them, explaining the work of the Board. In every case the trails representatives appeared to recognize the difficulties raised by the multiplicity of marked routes, and seemed satisfied that the Board was giving every practicable and fair consideration to the general trails situation throughout the country.

Despite general agreement on the purpose of the Joint Board, State highway officials displayed "no definite attitude" on some of the key issues:

For instance, the Northeastern States hold the attitude toward the system that the routes should be of a transcontinental character and that an interstate route that extended only through two or three States should not be included. It would have clarified the situation somewhat if the conflicting ideas of interstate vs. transcontinental had been given better definition and obviously, if the system as now laid out is to be diminished, a distinction of these ideas will have to be developed.

In the Western group the general attitude was that roads of immediate importance should be included and the understanding seems to prevail that additional routes would be added from time to time. At the Chicago meeting on the other hand the attitude appeared to be that the States of that group were prepared to lay out at this time a system of interstate connections that would comprise all likely routes for an indefinite period, and the other

roads built in the future would be tributary to the system now planned. [*Report of Joint Board on Interstate Highways*, pages 25-26]

The group meetings began in San Francisco with the Western Group assembling on May 15, 1925, in the State Building. "The regular work of the meeting was carried on expeditiously and in entire harmony, and the selection of the major routes was done almost without any difference of opinion." Agreement was reached on the major routes, with the only issues involving routes added after the interstate connections were agreed upon. "There appeared to be a very strong tendency to add such additional routes and I made it clear to the meeting that I believed such additions should be considered tentative and subject to the review of the full Board at the next meeting."

(It is not clear who "I" was.)

The trail associations were in attendance:

No representatives of trails organizations or named routes asked to be heard at San Francisco and representatives of such organizations, whom I saw there, appeared to be very well satisfied that the work of the Board would be fairly done so far as the trails organizations are concerned. Representatives of the Automobile Association of California [the CSAA of northern California] and the Southern California Automobile Association were present, however, and after consultation with Mr. [Robert M.] Morton [California State Highway Engineer] and Mr. [Harvey M.] Toy [chairman, California Highway Commission] it appeared advisable to allow these gentlemen to present their views on the question of signs before the members of the group meeting. An opportunity was, therefore, given to both of these organizations to make a statement of their work which might be affected by the standardization of signs and markers on the interstate highways. There was no discussion whatever with these gentlemen and their statements were accepted as submitted. [*Report of the Joint Board on Interstate Highways*, pages 29-30]

Arizona and New Mexico were included in the Western Group meeting. Arizona's State Engineer, W. C. LeFebvre, attended, while New Mexico's State Highway Engineer, James A. French, attended as a member of the Joint Board. One of the issues to be resolved in designation of interstate highways was the connection between Arizona and New Mexico. The two States had five connections, including the National Old Trail Road's connection from Gallup to Holbrook along the Santa Fe Trail and its connection via Springerville. LeFebvre wrote about the challenge of selecting its interstate connections:

[The] problem of selection of these arteries of travel was very difficult in certain places. One of the questions that came up, that in which Arizona was vitally concerned, was whether the National Old Trails connection from Holbrook to Gallup or the connection from Holbrook to Springerville should be selected as the Arterial Highway through Northern Arizona. New Mexico's population and resources and consequently the development of their highways through their State had been along the Santa Fe [Holbrook-Gallup], while Arizona's population and resources lay mostly along the

Holdbrook-Springerville Highway. This problem was finally solved, after a great deal of discussion, at the Washington conference, by designating both highways as Arterial Highways.

He also discussed the California connection:

The next connection which I will take up is our California connection at Needles, California, on the Old Trails Highway. Recently California has decided that it would build a paved highway from the vicinity of Barstow, California, in a Northeasterly direction to the Nevada State line, proposing that Nevada extend its connection, which it will, to Las Vegas. The object of this connection is to cut off considerable distance for the tourist who is coming from Salt Lake City eastward over the Arrowhead Trail and wishes to go to Los Angeles or Southern California.

It is not the intention of California to do any amount of improvement work on the Old Trails road from Needles west to Barstow. California wishes Arizona to change its seven per cent system and swing northward and connect with the Arrowhead Trail at either Searchlight, Nevada, or some point to the north of Searchlight. This would simply mean that California would be abandoning one of the main arteries of travel East and West.

It is my opinion that the Bureau of Public Roads would support California and Nevada in this connection, which would work a considerable hardship on Arizona, for we have spent a considerable amount of money in the construction of the National Old Trails Highway.

Recently the Highway Department submitted to the Bureau of Public Roads a project for the construction of a road from Oatman west, approximately three miles. The Bureau of Public Roads refused to participate in the construction of this road and gave as its excuse that it desired to wait until it learned what the ultimate development of the Colorado River near Needles would be.

If, with the large amount of work that Arizona has done on this section of road, it is abandoned, and the Bureau of Public Roads decides to throw open this part of the seven per cent system for revision, then Arizona will most certainly take the stand that that part of her seven per cent system shall likewise be open to revision, because the revision proposed is of no benefit to Arizona, being of benefit only to California and Nevada. There will be a conference held between the three States interested and the Bureau of Public Roads shortly, to determine what shall be done with our connection to the west. [LeFebvre, W. C., "Does Arizona Want Tourist Traffic?" *Arizona Highways*, October 1925, pages 16-17, 23]

He was referring to the Joint Board's August meeting. He was not a member of the Joint Board, but French and California's Morton would attend.

Meanwhile, New Mexico had six highways designated for inclusion in the new system. As described in the *New Mexico Highway Journal*, the routes included a north-south route that was

known in the State as “El Camino Real” from Raton, along the old Santa Fe Trail through Santa Fe, Las Vegas, Albuquerque, and south through Las Cruces to El Paso, Texas. One of the main east-west routes crossed El Camino Real at Albuquerque, stretching from Clovis on the east to Gallup on the west, continuing on to Holbrook, Arizona. As a result, the entire National Old Trails Road in New Mexico was included, although divided among two routes. [“Conference Gives New Mexico Six United States Highways,” *New Mexico Highway Journal*, June 1925, page 9]

The Mississippi Valley Group met in Kansas City, Missouri. The meeting was in the Baltimore Hotel, “and again there was practically complete harmony in the selection of the major routes.” The first choices of adjacent States “were not always continuous, but the first and second choices were generally sufficient to secure complete correspondence.” Based on the experience in San Francisco, Joint Board members tried to avoid the tendency of the States to add routes, “and was generally successful, but there was a marked tendency to add, as of major importance, more routes than should in all probability be finally included, and this is a matter which should have careful consideration by the full Board.”

The trail associations were represented:

The meeting at Kansas City appears to have attracted considerable attention among trail organizations and there were between 50 and 60 representatives of various trails in the city to attend the meeting. Mr. Piepmeier announced that a number had made inquiry of him and he had uniformly advised that it was useless for them to attend as the meeting would be executive in character. There was, however, considerable pressure from these organizations to be heard, some of the delegates had come from Oklahoma and Texas understanding that they would be heard, so the announcement was circulated that if all interested persons could arrange to get together in one place that a brief statement would be made to them regarding the work of the Board, the proposed selection of routes, and the uniform marking. Such an informal meeting was held in a room of the hotel other than parlor D where the group meeting occurred, and Mr. James and Mr. Avery, at different times, addressed the representatives of the trail organizations. The statements made seemed to satisfy these organizations and they very clearly agreed that the work proposed by the Board was entirely satisfactory to them and passed a motion to that effect.

On the whole, the trail organizations so far appear to be taking a very sensible and broad attitude toward the work of the Board. [*The Report of Joint Board*, pages 31-32]

Kelly, in her biography of Joint Board member Cyrus Avery of Oklahoma, elaborated on the meeting with the trail associations:

The board had not invited outsiders but by the time of the Kansas City regional meeting, word had spread. About fifty or sixty trails association people descended on the Baltimore Hotel, all concerned that a national highway system meant they were about to lose their identities and, in many cases, their incomes. Both, of course, were true. They made their stand at the Kansas City meeting.

As the Joint Board's host state member, Piepmeier explained to the throng of trails people that the meeting was not open to the public. Nonetheless, the trails people demanded to be heard and refused to leave. Finally, given that they were, after all, highway supporters and that most of them were acquainted with one or more of the AASHO members, the board relented.

Cy and James met with the trails association people in another part of the hotel. Once everyone was settled, they explained the board's plans. They answered questions. They also showed the trails representatives the routes selected so far and explained what the uniform markings would look like. By the time the informal meeting ended, the trails people seemed to be on board and voted to accept the work to date

It is interesting that, with Cy so involved in three trails organizations himself, this was the meeting where the trails groups demanded to be heard. On the other hand, so many of the trails rolled through the Mississippi Valley states that this meeting was an obvious one to attend. The question of how they all knew to converge on Kansas City on May 27, however, still remains open. [Kelly, page 141]

Whether Judge Lowe or another representative of the National Old Trails Road Association was among the 50 or 60 unexpected guests in his home city is unknown, but seems likely.

The Lakes Group met on June 3 in the Kimball Building, Chicago, and was conducted "in entire harmony." The sentiment "inclined toward the selection of practically a complete system at this time rather than the selection of an abbreviated system to be augmented in the future from time to time." They agreed that the system they selected "would be final for a long period of years." The report of the meeting did not mention trail associations. [*The Report of Joint Board*, page 33]

Similar harmony prevailed on June 8 during the Southern Group meeting in Atlanta's Glenn Building. "All connections delivered to this group were at once agreed upon by the States concerned and the work of putting through the main roads was done without any serious disagreement." Two routes remained to be decided, while the States tended to add routes "which did not involve connection with adjacent groups, but which very substantially increased the mileage in several of the States in the Piedmont region." After agreement was reached on the routes, several members anticipated that "a more or less substantial culling of the mileage in this region" would likely be needed. [*The Report of Joint Board*, page 34]

Only two States, New Jersey and Ohio, participated in the North Atlantic States Group meeting in the Engineering Societies Building in New York City on June 15. Correspondence from Delaware "indicated their willingness to accept decisions of the Board." Chairman John N. Mackall of the Maryland State Roads Commission indicated "that the principal roads through Maryland were so obvious that he thought it would be unnecessary for him to be present." Pennsylvania had not sent word.

Superintendent Frederick S. Greene of New York, a Member of the Joint Board, but representing

one of the North Atlantic States, thought the field map brought to this group meeting had too many roads. He “was especially desirous of reducing the mileage and the layout in New York was made accordingly”:

Mr. Greene said he thought he would on his own initiative send a copy of his State map to the other States in order that they could more clearly get his idea of a desirable density of transcontinental routes. He felt that the whole system should be very carefully gone over by the Joint Board with a view to eliminating a large number of alternates, short cuts and cross roads, which could not fairly be considered as of transcontinental significance, or even of major interstate importance.

The summary of the group meeting concluded:

Except for the general difference of attitude there was no lack of harmony at this meeting. All connections delivered to the group were met and carried to the New England line.
[*The Report of Joint Board*, page 35]

The final meeting, of the New England Group, took place on June 18 in the State House, Boston. “All interstate routes delivered to the New England group were continued without question and entire harmony existed with the group in designating through routes.” Maine’s Paul D. Sargent, “suggested extensions of the present Federal Aid Highway System in his State to make Canadian connections and these are shown on the working map.” They agreed on another matter:

There was a general feeling that more routes have been introduced in the country as a whole than should be adopted and in order to make the layout in New England of about the same density as that existing elsewhere in the East, additional roads were inserted within the group, which could be eliminated if necessary on a further consideration of the whole system. [*The Report of Joint Board*, page 36]

The Joint Board’s August Meeting

On August 3, members of the Joint Board met in BPR headquarters for the start of their second full meeting. Avery, who had a commitment to preside over the Albert Pike Highway Association meeting in Colorado Springs on July 29 and 30, asked James to change the date of the meeting. James replied that the date of the meeting had been set during the Joint Board’s initial 2-day meeting in April and could not be changed. After the Albert Pike Highway Association ended, Avery rushed to Washington, but missed the morning session. [Kelly, page 148]

The tentative designations resulting from the group meetings included about 81,000 miles of road.

Acting Chairman E. W. James opened the meeting by requesting a verbal statement from each member on “the general adequacy of the interstate routes selected at the various group meetings . . . and shown on the map presented for the action of the Board.” He also asked the members to comment on “whether the number of these routes should be increased or decreased.”

The comments covered a range of issues, including the topics raised and the relationship of the named trail associations to the designation of routes. The following comments are either from representatives of States along the National Old Trails Road or of related interest.

California's Morton said:

We are satisfied with the mileage for California. I am at a loss to know just exactly the purpose of picking out these routes. California selected their routes on account of interstate importance. It seems to me that some of these other States have selected routes not of interstate importance.

Harry Neal attended the meeting for Ohio in place of Mr. Boulay:

I have come to represent Mr. Boulay and to voice his sentiments. I think he is satisfied with the routes as outlined for Ohio and would not care to have them reduced, except perhaps some minor changes.

Superintendent of Maintenance A. R. Hinkle from the Indiana State Highway Commission, responded:

I advocate a fairly large number of routes. Too few routes will concentrate traffic and bring about a condition contrary to what we are working for. The Mississippi Valley will want to reduce some, but on the whole I would not advocate reducing the mileage to any great extent.

Frank Sheet, Illinois' Chief Highway Engineer, commented:

I believe that in our enthusiasm about this matter we have lost sight of the main issue. We have designated too many roads on this map. I believe that the multiplicity of marking which will result if this plan is carried out as laid out, will be confusing and that it will defeat the object of the marking. I would like to have some State routes left to mark. We think we are going pretty strong with what we propose for Illinois. I think we have need for retrenchment. By reducing the mileage we will add to the value of our nationally marked system, to the importance of it in the minds of the people and a very wholesome condition will result. I believe the Western States' system is all right. I believe the Middle West went wild on the subject.

West Virginia State Roads Commission's C. P. Fortney said:

The layout of West Virginia suits the situation very nicely. I do not believe we want to reduce it. However, if the Board wishes we can reduce it.

One of the longstanding questions was whether the Joint Board was designating transcontinental highways or interstate highways. Commissioner of Public Works William F. Williams of

Massachusetts, who endorsed Sheets's statement, commented on the confusion:

I think we have been confused in our consideration of transcontinental routes with our long interstate routes. On the interstate route scheme we can have as many as we want, but it seems to be the transcontinental routes want to be essentially direct routes for the benefit of the few, the really through tourists who will use them. Massachusetts has but few which would fit in the transcontinental system. Furthermore we must not lose sight of the fact that no matter how many intervening routes we have, we will be obliged to come down to the few of the Pacific and Atlantic Seaboard. I believe the real purpose of this conference will be best met by confining ourselves for the transcontinental system to the few straight through routes east and west and north and south, leaving to the States the marking and designating of those routes which are strictly interstate. Massachusetts has submitted the number of routes it thinks ample. I would be willing to withdraw a portion of these routes to carry out the theory of simplicity and directness.

William G. Sloan, New Jersey's State Highway Engineer, agreed with Sheets and Williams:

It seems to me that the routes as they cross the Middle Western States should be confined to the few of the Atlantic and Pacific Seaboard. The tremendous Middle West mileage bears no relation to the transcontinental system. I am in favor of reducing the mileage very considerably.

Chairman F. O. Hotchkiss of the Wisconsin State Highway Commission identified two things to consider. "We have our knowledge of traffic and the conditions in our various States, and we also have the political problem." He could see that "it might be dangerous for some of us to go home with serious eliminations and serious cuts in that map." The pressure to restore them would be strong. "Every locality that desires to participate in the transcontinental and interstate tourist business is going to demand in no uncertain language that the Federal marked system go through that locality." The map of routes in the Middle West could be reduced and still meet what I believe are the two essential features in laying out this system."

He did not agree with an idea that South Carolina's Moorefield had suggested ("We are perfectly willing to adopt the skeleton layout as proposed, but we are more concerned with an easy procedure in making additions than in making reductions at the present time." Hotchkiss explained;

I think if we do not meet political demands we will make a serious mistake. We will have general dissatisfaction with the results of the work of this board. If we leave the map open, tremendous pressure will be exerted constantly to add to it.

As for the size of the network proposed for Middle Western States, "I believe we can take off some of the routes resulting from the district conferences, but I do not believe we can take off too many."

New Mexico's French said:

I believe there is too much mileage in the middle west and in the eastern States. There might be a little lacking in the far western States which may not amount to much in the next few years but possibly will in the next 50 years. I would approve the system with the exception of the extreme amount of mileage in the middle west and eastern States.

B. H. Piermeier of Missouri was next:

I believe the whole purpose of this interstate marking is brought about on account of trail organizations. As I see it the different trail organizations have been marking transcontinental highways across the States and leading the people in all directions that they should not go. We must have the interstate routes marked intelligently, as the trail organizations will mark them if we do not.

The system as laid out practically represents the routes of travel in Missouri and in adjoining States. There are a few which can be taken off, but no large percentage of them.

We cannot concentrate on a small number of roads. That will show up when we number these routes. Any route that is following out the line of traffic through several States has got to remain in this system. Our preliminary rate is not far wrong.

After all the members had spoken, Acting Chairman James “stated that he believed the designation of these routes was going to run hand in hand with any reduction, revision or alteration in the map.” He asked for suggestions on how to proceed.

They had two maps to review:

1. Map No. 1 showing scheme for numbering of through routes and suggestion for reduction of mileage.
2. Map No. 2 showing routes tentatively adopted by representatives of the various States present at the regional meetings.

Chairman Henry G. Shirley of the Virginia State Highway Commission moved to adopt Map No. 1 “with the understanding that no more than 20 per cent of the mileage as shown on the map be added in any State.” His motion was seconded, but Hotchkiss did not agree. He thought the members should break up into groups, as in the regional meetings, to work out differences.

Piepmeyer commented:

I would like to suggest that we work out a plan from map No. 2 instead of adopting map No. 1. It seems to be the opinion that somewhere between these two maps we will agree. We should be able to work by process of elimination a system of transcontinental highways from this system as laid out here. I would like to see the points north and south and east and west connected by colored strings tacked on the various routes across the map. We can then eliminate the routes that are not a part of this system.

Sheets moved:

I move that it be the sense of this Board that as the first step in the process of considering the system of interstate highways resulting from the action taken at the group meetings, the Bureau of Public Roads call group meetings of this Board from the States here represented, in the same manner as was done when the original system was laid out, and the revisions as made in this series of group meetings of this Board be then submitted back to this Board for consideration, after which we take such steps as wisdom will show.

His motion was seconded by Hinkle and carried. After a few additional comments, the Joint Board divided into groups per the motion.

In the afternoon, with Avery finally in attendance, the groups reported on their decisions, which were to be mapped in time for the August 4 meeting. They then discussed issues involving the signs for marking the routes and the guide and warning signs (STOP, CURVE, HILL 2nd GEAR, 20 MILES SPEED LIMIT, etc.).

They discussed a suggestion from Hotchkiss about sending the current map, with the revisions from the morning groups, to the States to give them a chance to be heard. Perhaps, Piepmeier suggested, BPR could set up a small group to consider any changes from the States before submitting the plan to the Secretary.

Hotchkiss: I move that it be the sense of this Board that the map as it now stands amended, as to the extent and general location of a system of U.S. routes to be marked, be approved by this Board; and that this map be sent out to the various States for their confirmation.

His motion was seconded and carried.

On numbering, C. M. Babcock, Commissioner of Highways in Minnesota suggested:

I would like to offer a motion that the Chairman be authorized to appoint a committee of five, the Acting Chairman of the Joint Board to be Chairman of the Committee, for the purpose of presenting for the approval of a board, a scheme for numbering this system of interstate routes.

After brief discussion of possible numbering plans, the Joint Board seconded Babcock's motion and approved it. Acting Chairman James was to establish a Committee of Five, with himself as chairman, to present a system to the members on August 4 for numbering this system of interstate highways. The Committee of Five consisted of:

Cyrus S. Avery, Oklahoma
Roy A. Klein, Oregon
Charles H. Moorefield, South Carolina
B. H. Piepmeier, Missouri
Frank T. Sheets, Illinois

[*Joint Board on Interstate Highways*, Second Full Meeting, National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

The Committee of Five worked all night on the numbering plan. Kelly pointed out:

The numbering committee went to work on what was considered pretty much a pro forma project. The big job, the one fraught with emotion, had been the actual selection of the highways themselves. How much difficulty could there be in doling out numbers? Not much, initially. [Kelly, page 151]

The Joint Board's Final Meeting

The Joint Board returned on August 4 to complete its work on designations, numbering, and signs.

Overnight, the members had reduced the proposed U.S. numbered highways to approximately 50,100 miles. As amended, the map was approved by the Joint Board, which directed that it be sent to the States for their confirmation. Piepmeier suggested that BPR, with a committee of one or two, should be the final review board for suggestions by the States for modifying the map.

However, James was concerned that "if there were any substantial changes it could be a very serious situation for a committee of 3." He recommended that the maps be sent to the States through the regional groups formed within the Joint Board. The members, who "understand that we want this map to stand as nearly untouched as possible," could then work with the States "and in that way we will have the confirmation by the States constantly under the fingers of the 4 or more members in each group." The Joint Board adopted his idea.

The members also considered what to do with their decisions and conclusions. Rogers suggested that the Joint Board send a report to the States to consider at AASHO's annual meeting, to be held that November in Detroit. Williams pointed out that the former Secretary of Agriculture had created the Joint Board, so the current Secretary should be allowed to submit the report to the States with any suggestions he may choose to make. This plan was adopted. The Joint Board also directed James to appoint a Committee of Three to draft the report, with James as chairman of the committee.

Concluding the morning session, the Joint Board agreed to delay publicizing the selected routes until the Secretary's approval was obtained.

As the afternoon session began, James announced the members of the committee that would draft the Joint Board's report, namely Hotchkiss, Moorefield, and Williams. James would be the primary author and likely the "I" mentioned earlier. James also listed the group chairmen who would transmit the map to the States in their region.

The members discussed some routes, including:

Acting Chairman: With reference to the old and new Santa Fe routes in Kansas.

W. C. Markham, AASHO: The State wants the Old Trail. Why not put an alternate number on the Old Trail?

Cyrus Avery: The Highway Department of Kansas wants the Old Trail and the Secretary of Agriculture wants the other route.

Secretary of Agriculture William M. Jardine, who had succeeded Secretary Gore on March 5, was from Kansas. He had served as director of the State's Agricultural Experiment Station, and was the dean of agriculture at Kansas State College when President Coolidge nominated him to be Secretary. As the eventual judge of the Joint Board's work, his view on this detail was important.

Hotchkiss, Wisconsin: I am opposed to alternate routes. I think this Board should go on record as favoring the route that will serve the greatest number of people; if possible leave the matter of the Santa Fe Trail open so that the Kansas highway department can present, if they desire, reasons why we should change it.

Sheets, Illinois: I move that it be the sense of this Board that the map with respect to the Old and New Santa Fe Trails in Kansas stand as it is now prepared, with the statement formally appended to the motion, that we leave the matter open for the State highway department to present further argument for change if they wish to do so, or of the need of an additional route in that same locality.

Rogers, Michigan: I believe we should accept the map as it is and make no changes in Kansas until it goes to the Secretary.

Sheets, Illinois: I withdraw my motion.

The Committee of Five, presented its report on numbering the selected routes. The minutes state:

Scheme worked out on the map showed 8 main east and west routes and 10 north and south routes. Numbers were then added on next most important routes. There are 32 numbered routes and a large part of the system has been covered.

When the members of the Joint Board had finished reviewing the partially numbered map, James asked if they were satisfied. Klein, a member of the Committee of Five, said he was not. He preferred a system of numbering by zones. Morton agreed. The Joint Board, however, approved a motion by Babcock to return the map to the Committee of Five to complete the marking along the lines shown on the map, to be considered at some later date. Klein was still not satisfied. He wished to be recorded as voting against this action.

In response to Klein's disagreement, Morton offered a motion calling on the Committee of Five to develop a numbering plan based on a zone system. However, Chief MacDonald interrupted.

"There does not seem to be much enthusiasm over either one." He suggested leaving it to the committee to bring in a numbering system that seems to meet both ideas. Based on this suggestion, the Joint Board approved Hotchkiss' motion to refer the matter of selecting a scheme for numbering the U.S. system to the numbering committee "without instructions."

In final actions, the Joint Board approved Rogers' motion that the shield measure 16 inches from tip to tip and a motion by Chief MacDonald disapproving the use of the same number on alternate routes, but leaving the issue to the discretion of the Committee of Five "if no other method seems to meet the exigencies of the situation."

With that last minute flurry, the Joint Board's second and final meeting came to an end.

The Old vs. New Santa Fe Trail

The decision to appoint group chairmen to clear the tentative U.S. numbered highway map with the State highway agencies did not, as James had expected, result in holding the line on expansion. James later acknowledged that "the public seemed to have been aroused to the possibilities." As a result, "the work of the group chairmen in some sections was not of an enviable sort."

One issue of immediate concern was the dispute between the Old Santa Fe Trail and the New Santa Fe Trail. *The Herington Sun* in Kansas carried an article on August 13 about the issue:

So much emphasis has been put upon the location of Federal Highways according to the best interests of the people served, the transcontinental highways to be the shortest and most feasible [sic] route between two points agreed upon by the state interested and the adjoining states that most everyone had come to believe that there really were no politics in the Bureau of Roads.

Last week we quoted from a letter signed by E. W. Jones [sic], secretary of the Joint Board, that, "The action of the group meeting at Kansas City will stand as the expression of the states involved, unless the State Highway departments officially request changes, and such changes would have to be acceptable not only to the immediate state involved, but also to the adjoining states in the route."

No doubt the secretary was quoting a board rule laid down for its guidance in such matters and believed that the joint board would stand by its own rules. But he didn't know of how and when a political pull might upset things.

When influential Kansans with letters and telegrams from certain other influential Kansans appeared at Washington concerning the designation of the New Santa Fe trail as a primary Federal Highway, the fact that the Old Santa Fe trail was the choice of the Kansas Highway commission, and was also approved by the group meeting over the claims of the New Santa Fe trail was entirely disregarded, and the New Santa Fe trail substituted.

Its forming a part of the National Old Trails from Baltimore to Los Angeles as well as its historical significance and importance, as well as the facts that made it the best trail when located a hundred years ago make it the best today were also disregarded.

When the advocates of the New Trail appeared before the State Highway commission and the regional group meeting at Kansas City, their claims were heard and the matter determined in favor of the Old Santa Fe trail by men fully informed concerning all matters at issue.

To save its face, the Bureau of Public Roads proposes to refer the matter back to the several state commissions interested and the regional group meeting for final determination. But what a difference! The matter was considered and decided on its merits against the New Trail before; now it comes before them with, what the friends of the New Trail will hold to be, the approval of the Department of Agriculture and the local people will be expected to bow their necks to the department.

The whole matter, of right, should come before the state Highway commission only. The New Santa Fe trail is a highway wholly within the state of Kansas, that hooks onto the Old Trail at Edgerton, but claims to start from Kansas City. It gets back into the Old Trail at Kinsley.

No objection could be justly made against its designation, as a branch of the Old Trail and so marking it. But every principle of justice and fairdealing [sic], calls for the department sustaining, as its rules called for, the State Highway departments and group meetings.

If it must need be passed on again, let it be on its merits, as it was determined before, and most emphatically not with any order, suggestion or action by the authorities at Washington giving it a predudiced [sic] or unfair standing.

As it now stands those familiar with the history of the location of the Federal Highways in Kansas seem to be justified in questioning the fair dealing of the Department at Washington, assuming the news stories are true and report the matter fully.

W. E. Blackburn, the *Sun*'s editor, sent a copy of the article to Secretary Jardine on August 16 with a letter summarizing the issue:

Just why the Board felt better able to determine this matter than those on the ground as [sic] the Kansas Highway commission and the regional meeting, is not clear.

The matter that concerns us, is the reference of the matter back by Washington, with the added weight in favor of the other roads of the Washingtonian approval, and that based, we feel, on political pull, plus a good deal of plausibility.

In the article, he had tried to “present the matter as it appears to the people along the line of the Old Trail”:

If I am wrong in any material matter, I’d appreciate it if you or the Joint Board would correct same.

Secretary Jardine replied on August 29 with a letter written by James:

I have your letter of August 16, and note what you say regarding the action of the Joint Board on Interstate Highways. I was sorry to see the article published in the “Sun”, because I understand that the Joint Board did, in fact, follow as nearly as it could be ascertained the wishes of the State Highway Department of Kansas. There appears to have been some inconsistency in the communications from that Department. The Board, however, followed what it believed to be the last word as properly representing the final choice of that Department. This was in the form of a map brought to the Board meeting by one of the members, and I understand that this map was followed practically without change.

I think that the Board has acted wisely in referring its selections back to the States for confirmation as this will make it possible to correct within the State those features which, while considered important to the State, will not seriously affect interstate connections.
[National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

The Joint Board’s Report

Meanwhile, James and the Committee of Five were considering a numbering plan. James wrote to the committee members on August 27 enclosing a small map of the United States on which he had shown, he believed, "the possibility of a systematic plan for numbering interstate routes." Many years later, he recalled how he approached the task:

As you know, the U.S. is about twice as wide as it is from North to South, and with this I saw a complete pattern of just what I wished. It stares one in the face, it is so simple and so adjustable. With north-south roads numbered odd from east to west, and east-west roads numbered even from north to south, you at once start a simple, systematic, complete, expandible pattern for a long time development.

All of the "continuous routes" laid out by the committee during the Joint Board's meeting had been numbered. For the principal east-west routes, James assigned two-digit numbers ending in zero. For the principal north-south routes, he assigned numbers ending in 1 or 5. With these base routes numbered, the remaining routes could be numbered accordingly. He thought three-digit numbers, which he considered inevitable, should be assigned to short sections, cutoffs, and crossovers. Logical alternate routes should be given the number of the principal line of traffic, plus 100. Thus, under his original scheme, an alternate for U.S. 55 would be U.S. 155.

On September 25, the Committee of Five met in St. Louis at the Jefferson Hotel to complete the numbering plan. The committee followed James' concept. Transcontinental and principal east-west routes were assigned multiples of 10, with the lowest number along the Canadian border (U.S. 2 chosen to avoid a U.S. 0). The principal north-south routes were given numbers ending in 1, with U.S. 1 along the East Coast. The north-south routes of considerable length but secondary importance were given numbers ending in 5.

The resulting grid was filled in with two-digit numbers for alternates, cut-offs, and connecting routes. Three-digit numbers were assigned to branches, with the figures 1, 2, 3, etc., added as a prefix in sequence along the line of the through route (thus, the first branch of U.S. 20 was U.S. 120, the second U.S. 220, etc.).

For the most part, the plan resulted in a consistent numbering sequence, with room for expansion because some one- and two-digit numbers had not been used (8, 33, 35, 37, 39, 43, 44, 47, 55-59, 66, 68, 72, 79, 82-84, 86, 88, 93, and 98). The Joint Board's final report noted, however, that absolute consistency was neither possible nor desirable:

An unbroken numerical sequence was not possible unless lines of prevailing flow of traffic were to be entirely neglected. Such lines cross each other and demand that numerical order be sacrificed in a few cases.

The most flagrant inconsistency was the route designated U.S. 60. As a multiple of 10, the number should have been assigned to a transcontinental, east-west route between U.S. 50 (Annapolis, Maryland, to Wadsworth, Nevada) and U.S. 70 (Morehead City, North Carolina, to Holbrook, Arizona). However, the Committee of Five assigned the number to a crescent route from Chicago to Los Angeles, with only the routing through the Southwest in correct numerical sequence. Although this route, because it crossed most of the transcontinental highways, would inevitably be one of the most heavily traveled U.S. highways, the fact that three of the States through which it passed were represented on the Committee of Five (Illinois' Sheets, Missouri's Piepmeier, and Oklahoma's Avery) made this exception to the "zero" numbering plan suspicious – and would result in the most contentious battle over approval of the U.S. numbering system as well as creation of what would become one of America's best known highways.

On October 26, 1925, the Joint Board submitted its report to Secretary Jardine. As quoted earlier, the report explained the origins of the Joint Board, from the AASHO resolutions, the rationale for finding a successor to the named trails, and how the Joint Board proceeded to reach decisions. It explained its decision during the April meetings not to hold hearings, a decision that reflected its concern about the importance of the named trail associations:

An important policy of the Board was the decision to hold no hearings. This action was taken advisedly and from developments in the course of the work demonstrated itself to be entirely sound. Had hearings been held a general invitation to trail organizations and to all other civic bodies interested in road construction and promotion must have been issued. The number of such delegations desiring to appear would have prolonged the work of selection unreasonably if, indeed, it would not have defeated the whole

undertaking. To have invited a special group of organizations or local interests to attend hearings to the exclusion of others would have been impossible in an official body like the Board. Questions raised at such hearings would inevitably have resulted in placing the Board in the position of an arbiter among the numerous trail organizations and other local interests; and such an event would have embarrassed the Board to so serious a degree that its purpose would probably have been defeated.

Moreover, there was available through the several state highway departments and in the Bureau of Public Roads a large amount of information available to all States and to the Board in assisting them to arrive at definite conclusions regarding the respective merits of roads or routes under consideration.

Further, had the Board permitted itself to be placed in a position of selecting in toto certain predetermined routes, like the marked trails, because they existed in that particular status, and of similarly rejecting other marked routes, a difficult legal question might have been raised. The Government, at no time and through no agency, had ever officially recognized any system of marked trails or routes except the primary or interstate classification of the federal aid highway system, and no authority had ever been given to any governmental agency to such end. The Joint Board, therefore, felt it necessary, if not indeed imperative, that its task be so handled as to preclude any appearance of giving an official status to any predetermined route or combination of routes.

In other words, the Joint Board would have been forced to give a single number to each transcontinental named trail across its entire length, thus perpetuating what the group was established to eliminate.

The report also discussed the routes selected and numbered:

The Group Meetings produced a tentative system of approximately 81,000 miles of road . . . representing 2.8 per cent of the total public road mileage of the country.

This tentative system was then referred to a meeting of the Board in Washington, August 3-4, and was there adjusted and reduced to approximately 50,100 miles Separate maps of each State were then prepared and submitted to the respective States for confirmation, with the privilege of making such minor alternations and corrections as might to them appear necessary or advisable. Such changes as were made involved generally interstate sections of routes only and in only five instances were any changes required at state line connections. The total mileage . . . is approximately 75,800 miles.

The confirmations by the several States of the tentative routes adopted by the Board at the full meeting of August 3-4 were considered final Attention is called especially to the fact that the procedure of the Board gave every State easy and ample opportunity to submit its own original suggestions and recommendations; to review these after action by the Board in make such adjustments as were deemed necessary or desirable to effect a satisfactory distribution of routes and connections at state lines; and finally to make

additional changes in cases where a State believed the Board had failed to give consideration to all the pertinent facts or had acted on insufficient or faulty data.

One section of the report discussed “The System of Interstate Highways”:

So far as possible the routes selected have adhered to the federal aid highway systems already approved for the several States. Practically all of the States, however, have some small margin within the legal limit of seven per cent which comprises the full federal aid system, and this margin has allowed minor departures from the approved federal aid systems. These new sections, as may be required, can at the request of the respective States, be added to the federal aid systems and in some instances States have already filed applications for such additions.

[It] was obviously necessary to exceed in some States the three per cent prescribed by law for a primary system of roads. To have arbitrarily adhered to the three per cent limit in several Western States would have resulted in omitting many desirable and needed routes. In the country as a whole, however, the total mileage of routes selected by the Joint Board is 2.6 per cent of the total certified public road mileage and, therefore, is within the three per cent primary classification permitted by law.

Having selected a system of routes for uniform marking, the question of designation was considered and an effort made with gratifying success to introduce an orderly arrangement of routes. In general, the scheme involved the use of even numbers for routes carrying east and west bound traffic, and odd numbers for the north and south routes. An unbroken numerical sequence was not possible unless lines of prevailing flow of traffic were to be entirely neglected. Such lines cross each other and demand that numerical order be sacrificed in a few cases. These are, however, so few and slight that the value of the numbering scheme is not diminished for practical purposes. The routes given continuous designations have been carefully considered and so far as possible are those (1) which are carrying on the whole the heaviest long distance traffic, (2) which the States contemplate improving to high standards, and (3) which are in the construction program for early improvement.

The Joint Board’s transmittal to Secretary Jardine concluded:

The Board has had unmistakable evidences during its sittings that the task assigned it was timely and necessary to a proper development of the correlated state highway systems. Its efforts, if successful, will provide a practicable channel for putting into effect recommendations for improving the usefulness, the safety and the convenience of the public highways. [*The Report of Joint Board*, pages 1-13]

The report contained the first log of the proposed U.S. numbered interstate routes, beginning with "Route No. 1" (Fort Kent, Maine, to Miami) and ending with "Route No. 630" (Echo to Ogden, Utah, the sixth branch off of U.S. 30). The report also transmitted the signs approved by the Joint Board, including the U.S. shield (using "56," one of the numbers not assigned to a

route, and the State name "MAINE" as a sample). The Joint Board recommended that the Secretary transmit the report to AASHO, which represented the State highway agencies that owned and operated the U.S. numbered routes.

The Arizona Connections

During the Joint Board's August meeting, State Engineer LeFebvre of Arizona, who was not a member, had discussed the Arizona-New Mexico connections with New Mexico's French. As the members of the Joint Board considered the State maps after the August 3 meeting, LeFebvre and French agreed on the connections. The Mangums discussed the agreement:

As Arizona officials saw it, there were four routes entering Arizona from the east and two from the west that should be suitable for numbered highway designations:

The four roads entering Arizona from New Mexico were:

1. The Old Trails Highway entering the state at Lupton and crossing Arizona parallel to the Santa Fe railroad;
2. The Springerville cutoff, entering the state east of Springerville and joining the Old Trails at Holbrook;
3. The Sunset Route entering at Duncan and crossing by way of Globe and Phoenix to Yuma;
4. The Borderland Route via Douglas, Tombstone, Tucson, and Phoenix.

The routes entering Arizona from the west were:

1. The converged Sunset and Borderland Routes at Yuma
2. The Old Trails at Topock.

As the National Old Trails Road Association had done in 1915, AASHO classified both the Gallup and Springerville roads as arterial highways and as branches of the same road. The Arizona Engineer came away from the meeting believing that the National Old Trails Road with its two eastern branches, one through Lupton and the other through Springerville, would be assigned the number U.S. Highway 60, and began using it on maps. [Mangums, page 117]

The Winslow Mail provided additional context regarding the alternative routings of the National Old Trails Road at the Arizona/New Mexico border:

A dispatch in the Albuquerque Journal of last Friday states that W. C. Lefebvre, state highway engineer of Arizona, is in Washington, and yesterday attended a conference of federal and state highway engineers at which one of the principal items to be discussed was the rerouting of the National Old Trails via Socorro, N. M., instead of following the right-of-way of the Santa Fe railway via Gallup, as at present.

The dispatch stated that New Mexico favors the present route from Albuquerque to Holbrook via Gallup, while Arizona is committed to the Holbrook-Springerville-Socorro route, which lies south of the line favored by New Mexico.

The dispatch further stated that Mr. Lefebvre will urge the south route, on the contention that Socorro is the converging point of roads both from the northeast and the southeast, and that from Socorro the motorist has a direct route both to El Paso and through Albuquerque to the midwest and east. It will be urged, too, that by leaving the National Old Trails at Springerville, the tourist can take the recently constructed Rice-Springerville highway to Miami and Globe and Phoenix, in the southern part of Arizona, and thence by way of Yuma to California.

The dispatch states also that Mr. Lefebvre will urge that the south route from Holbrook to Albuquerque does not materially increase the distance between those two places. The north route is eighty-four miles shorter.

Messages of protest were sent to Washington by Williams, Flagstaff, and Winslow Commercial clubs, against changing the route of the National Old Trails.

The Miami Silver Belt, one of the staunchest supporters for the construction of the link between Springerville and the southern part of the state, in a recent news dispatch, says: "When the Rice-Springerville road is completed, the state of Arizona and the county of Gila will receive back the money which they have expended on its construction ten times over every year in the flood of dollars which will pour into the communities benefitted by tourist traffic over this route.

"There are in New Mexico and Arizona two cities which are the natural distributing points for auto traffic. They are Albuquerque and Phoenix. The Rice-Springerville road is the short and logical route between the two main distributing points. It starts somewhere and goes somewhere.

"The only completed route to the coast is by way of Yuma. It is not likely that any other route to the California coast will be finished for several years. The Rice-Springerville road is the long missing link which will connect transcontinental highways directly with the Yuma route.

The rivalry among the cities was fierce, as reflected in a first page editorial from *The Needles Nugget* as quoted in the *Mail* article:

"Tourists passing through Needles from the east report that they were told that gas stations are sixty-five and seventy-five miles apart; that the water on the desert is unfit to drink; that the heat is so intense many cars have caught fire; that the sand is so hot it melts the tires, and that if one gets off the road it is impossible to get back on the highway.

"That the National Old Trails highway is not carrying its share of the tourists this year

that its superiority over the southern route should warrant is a fact that is recognized by every business man along its route through Arizona, New Mexico and California, and the reason for this condition is due to a well-organized campaign of the interests along the southern route that has been carried on for the last two years, with the result that the southern route by actual check is getting 72 per cent of the westbound tourists, while the National Old Trails highway, a much better road, just as scenic and a shorter route to California, is by the same authority, getting but 28 per cent of the travel.

“The southern highway employs a man who resides at Los Lunas, N. M., the junction point of the two highways, whose sole business it is to proclaim the advantages of the southern highway, and by the same token, perhaps, to misrepresent, if not by actual word of mouth, at least by inference, conditions that obtain along the National Old Trails highway.

“The Needles Chamber of Commerce, as its first important endeavor, is fathering a plan which also contemplates the placing of a man at Los Lunas and the highway committee has already secured a pledge of this town’s proportion of the funds that will be necessary to carry on this work, and several of the towns along the route have signified their willingness to participate in such an undertaking, and there is no doubt but that its success is already assured. Lou Downing, a member of the highway committee from this chamber, is planning a personal interview with similar organizations and business men in the various towns east of here as far as Gallup. N. M.

“Tourists coming this way and finding conditions so much better than they had been led to believe they would find from the lurid tales told them along the road, are justly indignant and express surprise that the cities along this route have not taken action before this to stop this campaign of . . . untruthful statements.” [“Route of the National Old Trails May Favor South,” *The Winslow Mail*, August 4, 1925, pages 1-2]

As Lefebvre had stated, pressure also was being applied to change the connection between Arizona and California. As discussed in *The San Bernardino Sun* on July 7, 1925:

Federal-aid money has been withdrawn from the Old Trails highway between Barstow and Needles and the federal good roads bureau is urging the construction of a new highway designed to cross the Colorado river at a point far to the north of Needles and join the Arrowhead Trail at a point about half-way between Barstow and the Nevada state line

The government is declared to object to what is described as an unnecessary swing from Kingman, Ariz., to the south to reach Needles and then a swing back to the north. Approximately fifty miles could be saved if the road cut due west from Kingman, so it is reported. This saving in mileage would be sufficient to build the new bridge necessary across the Colorado river.

Serious difficulties in solving the situation developed by the government’s attitude are presented. The state legislature has designated the highway via Barstow and Needles to

the Colorado river as a state highway, and the state is maintaining the Old Trails highway as it is now routed. Withdrawal of Federal aid from Barstow to the Colorado river means a financial loss to the state, for it must maintain the highway in proper condition. There is no present provision for the creation of a new state highway along the route suggested by the government.

The issue will soon become of major importance, for Southern California interests are uniting for a drive to secure proper highways on the transcontinental routes leading into Southern California. The condition of the northern routes far surpasses that of the southern routes.

Various sections of San Bernardino county will face the situation with conflicting emotions. Needles will violently protest such a move, for that city is now one of the main supply points on the Old Trails highway. The Redlands interests supporting the project for a cut-off from Amboy to Whitewater will likewise resist the new proposal by the government.

Other sections of the county will either remain neutral or take the position that there must be immediate solution of the matter to the satisfaction of both the state and government highway departments, in order that a comprehensive transcontinental highway program may be worked out immediately. Los Angeles interests are declared to favor the government's suggestion on the theory that the route from the east would be shortened and faster action would be secured by support of the Federal government than through opposition to it.

The Winslow Mail reprinted the Sun's article, adding the commentary that "we infer from the article that Needles may be wiped off the map as far as the National Old Trails highway is concerned It hardly seems probable that the route of the Old Trails road will be changed, a road this is nationally known as it is. The people of Needles will certainly be up and doing if such a thing is attempted. ["Bureau Favors Change of Road Across Desert," *The Winslow Mail*, July 10, 1925, page 1, 6]

Whatever the intent of the officials involved, the Joint Board retained the original location of the National Old Trails Road from Kingman to Los Angeles as part of U.S. 60:

From Chicago, Illinois, to Bloomington, Springfield, St. Louis, Missouri, Rolla, Springfield, Joplin, Vineta, Oklahoma, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, El Reno, Sayre, Amarillo, Texas, Tucumcari, New Mexico, Santa Fe, Los Lunas, Gallup, Hotbrook [sic], Arizona, Flagstaff, Barstow, California, Los Angeles.

Countering the Lies

In July 1925, State highway officials opened the new National Old Trails Road segment from Winslow to Canyon Diablo. Tourist traffic had been using the new road for several days, but the State opened it formally a few days early to accommodate a motorcade from Winslow to Flagstaff for the big "Days of Forty-Nine" celebration. *The Winslow Mail* reported that the road

“is in fine condition, despite the heavy rains in that part of Coconino county. At least one hour will be saved in running time between Winslow and Flagstaff by the opening of this link of the National Old Trails.” [“Open Highway For Benefit of Motorcade to Flagstaff,” *The Winslow Mail*, July 3, 1925, page 1]

A few days later, a contract was awarded for macadamizing a 23.7-mile segment of the National Old Trails Road between the end of the Flagstaff paving and Angel:

The contract is in two parts, one calling for crush malpais rock base with asphaltic binding, more than one and a half gallons of the oil being used to each square yard of surface. This is to be completed next June. Follows a top dressing a half inch deep of finely increased rock and oil, to be rolled in. The completed job is to be ready in October of next year.

It will take 60,000 cubic yards of crushed rock to complete the job, and when done it will be one of the finest stretches of highway along the entire National Old Trails. The grading already done and the concrete culvert work is highly satisfactory.

The winning bid the contract was for \$321,000.

In August, the Automobile Club of Arizona received a consignment of 10 tubular iron posts ten feet long to mount signs along the National Old Trails Road between Winslow and Ashfork. “Signs will be erected as soon as the Automobile club receives the distance between points from the county surveyor of Coconino county.” [“Old Trails Will be Signed Ash Fork to Winslow,” *The Winslow Mail*, August 21, 1925]

While work to improve the road continued, community leaders were well aware of the campaign to divert traffic from the National Old Trails Road. Leaders in the southwestern States were working on a plan, parallel to the *Tourists’ Daily News*, for promoting tourist traffic through the National Old Trails Road cities in New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

In late 1925, local newspapers reported on a meeting in Kingman on October 5, 1925, to establish the National Old Trails Traffic Association. Initiated by the chamber of commerce of Needles, California, many of the 75 participants came from cities along the road in Arizona:

The organization will include memberships from all cities from Albuquerque to San Bernardino. The purpose is to disseminate accurate information concerning the National Old Trails, and to carry on an extensive advertising campaign to inform tourists in all parts of the United States of true conditions pertaining at all times along this route, and to aid in securing state, county and federal aid in its improvement. The original route of the Old Trails through the three states, Albuquerque to Los Angeles, via Gallup, was endorsed, and endorsement was given to the improvement of the original route across the Mohave desert in California, condemning change in routing as has been suggested by federal engineers from Kingman straight west to Goffs, eliminating Oatman, Topock and Needles from the highway

A campaign will be inaugurated immediately to popularize the famous Old Trails and to combat adverse propaganda from every source. The campaign will be conducted by the executive committee. By the first of the year the committee will have prepared a complete and accurate map of the Old Trails extending through the three southwestern states, with information concerning the national parks, monuments, and tourist attractions of all kinds. This will be supplemented by a circular letter or pamphlet giving, in detail the conditions of travel, conveniences of the road and information of the things visitors from other states may be interested in. It was reported that extensive improvements are being planned for the highway at many points between Albuquerque and Los Angeles. The pavement from Victorville to Barstow has been completed, and the pavement of a piece extending 16 miles east of Barstow is about to be contracted for. ["National Old Trails Traffic Association," *The Coconino Sun*, October 9, 1925, pages 1, 13]

A follow up a few weeks later the new association reported:

The members of the executive committee of the National Old Trails Traffic Association, the road organization which was formed in Kingman on the 5th instant, are reporting activities to President L. V. Root [of Kingman]. Considerable finances have already been placed in the treasury and more are in process of collection from the various communities along the National Old Trails road.

Stationery and printed matter is now being gotten out and it is expected that the campaign of the association will be in full swing within a short period. The bringing back to the National Old Trails the motor traffic that it has heretofore enjoyed is the great objective of this association and a plan of publicity will be adopted which will bring before the general public something of the advantages of this route in mileage, scenic attractions and ease of motor travel through its entire length because of its all-season availability, good road conditions and the frequent service stations, camping and hotel accommodations that abound along this line.

The great bug-a-boo of the dangers of the so-called "desert" dangers which do not exist, will receive a knockout blow if publicity of the truth can be gotten to the motoring public. The dangers of this much heralded "desert" lie entirely in the propaganda that is from time to time circulated. The "desert" is no more than a good roadway across a stretch of country with service stations, hotels and small towns every few miles. It is that stretch of country usually designated as lying between Needles and Barstow, California, a distance of 161 miles over which the automobile takes from six to eight hours in driving time and some of those who desire make it in much less time.

There are no difficulties to overcome, no dangers to face and no privations to meet. If it were not for the untruths that have received much publicity the motorist would know nothing of having crossed the desert. Those long stretches of sand where you are told you will be stuck and have to go miles in low gear do not exist except in the minds of those who don't know the truth or have some other motive for such statements. ["National Old Trails Traffic Association Now Becoming Active," *The Coconino Sun*, November 6, 1925, page 12; reprinted from *The Kingman Miner*]

The association held its quarterly meeting in Needles:

The executive committee of the National Old Trails Traffic association, at its regular quarterly meeting held in Needles on Saturday, March 6, formally launched an advertising campaign that will be national in its scope and having for its purpose the dissemination of authentic information in regard to that portion of the National Old Trails highway lying west of Albuquerque and Socorro, N. M., through the three states of New Mexico, Arizona and California. Eventually the organization, which is just now in swaddling clothes but a lusty infant at that, will include in its membership the business interests of the full length of the highway from Baltimore to Los Angeles and it will come without solicitation.

There is no good argument against the just claim that the National Old Trails highway is the shortest and the best all-year route across the continent and it is the purpose of this association to make it also the most popular by looking after the welfare and comfort of its tourists, down to the minutest detail. Reliable information as to road conditions, mileage, accommodations and interesting, worthwhile side trips – in which the Old Trail highway excels – is thought to be of first importance and accordingly this information, kept up-to-date and absolutely reliable, is to be supplied to all member garages, service stations and hotels, in a distinctive emblem-container, so that it may be displayed as a badge of truthfulness and seen by the tourist even before he stops so that he may know that such information is available. Any unusual condition of road or weather will be immediately made known to him for his guidance and in every possible way he is to be made to feel that he is welcome; his business desirable and sought after and his comfort of paramount concern to the association and its individual members.

Supplementing the bulletin service will be accurate road maps and booklets descriptive of the various cities and places of scenic beauty and historical interest, of which there are many along the route. [“Old Trails to be Widely Advertised,” *The Coconino Sun*, March 12, 1926, page 14]

The Next Steps

The maps that the Joint Board agreed to on August 4 were not the final maps. As noted, the Joint Board members were to take the maps back to their States to work with members of their group of States on final alignments. The Mangums explained:

The Federal subcommittee, considering the roads for Arizona, decided that there should be no Springerville branch on the National Old Trails Road, and recommended that the Holbrook-Lupton-Gallup alignment be the only one

For the first time ever, there was a numbered and coordinated U.S. highway system, and in Arizona the northern east-west highway would go from Holbrook to Lupton, omitting Springerville. The road across northern Arizona from Lupton to Topock was given the number U.S. Highway 60. The road from Springerville was assigned U.S. Highway 70.

Springerville was never dropped from the National Old Trails Road, but once the highway names were discontinued and all roads were identified by numbers only, Springerville was located on Highway 70 and Lupton was located on Highway 60.

U.S. 70 was a near-transcontinental route beginning in Morehead City, North Carolina, and ending in Holbrook.

Overall, the National Old Trails Road, like all the long-distance named trails, had been broken into segments by number. Much of the National Old Trails Road was part of U.S. 40, a transcontinental route from Wilmington, Delaware to San Francisco. The second longest stretch, from Romeroville, New Mexico (near Las Vegas), to Los Angeles, was included in U.S. 60. [Mangums, pages 116-118]

Meanwhile, Missouri's Chief Engineer Piepmeier informed officials in his group of States about the Joint Board's decisions. On October 27, he wrote to O. M. Wilhite of Emporia, Kansas, chairman of the Good Roads Committee of the Emporia Chamber of Commerce, to inform him:

The numbering committee on the Joint Board designating United States Highways selected the road from Kinsley through Hutchinson, Newton, to Kansas City as Route 50 and the alternate route from Great Bend, Marion to Kansas City as 150 [sic, 250]. This report is being submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture for his approval. It will be acted upon by the American Association of Highway Officials [sic] at its meeting in Detroit, on November 18.

U.S. 50 was designated from Annapolis, Maryland, to Wadsworth, Nevada. U.S. 250, a route entirely in Kansas, ran from Baldwin, Kansas, to Emporia, Newton, Hutchinson, Dodge City, Garden City.

Wilhite wrote to BPR Chief MacDonald on October 30, citing Piepmeier's letter:

Mr. Piepmeir [sic] has re-assured us of that statement by letter, a copy of which I am enclosing. We are reliably informed that the Highway Department of Kansas has reversed the numbers.

I feel sure, Mr. MacDonald, that you understand the local conditions out here, and as the Joint Board is endeavoring to select and number routes which follow the prevailing flow of traffic, it seems to us that a mistake would be made in giving the alternate number to our route.

We would like to know if there has been any changes made in your department since the information given us by Mr. Piepmeir.

In Chief MacDonald's absence, E. W. James replied on November 9:

Both the selected routes and the scheme of numbering them in Kansas were submitted to the State Highway Department and the Board was given to understand that the adjustments made were satisfactory.

The work of the Board is completed and its report was submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture on October 30.

I am not quite sure what you desire in the way of information regarding changes in this Department since certain information was given you by Mr. Piepmeier. The only change in the personnel of the Board was the appointment of Mr. I. J. Moe of North Dakota, vice Mr. O. A. Brown of that State.

Before receiving James's reply. Wilhite and O. A. Kirkendall, president of the Emporia Chamber of Commerce, wrote to Secretary Jardine on November 3, to object to the proposed numbering:

Mr. B. H. Piepmeier [sic], Highway Engineer of Missouri, informed us immediately after the sub-committee meeting held in St. Louis, Missouri, September 25 for the purpose of selecting numbers for U.S. Highways, that the Hutchinson Route (New Trail) would carry the Coast-to-Coast through number 50, and that the McPherson Route (Old Trail) would carry the alternate number 150 [sic].

He has re-stated it to us, also stating that no State Highway Commission has the right to change numbers – only the Joint Board which meets in Detroit, November 15-18, has that right.

We are reliably informed that some one in Washington or in the Kansas Highway Commission has reversed the numbers. Our understanding was that the Joint Board was to select and number routes which follow the prevailing flow of traffic. The route through Ottawa, Emporia, Newton, Hutchinson and Dodge City, not only takes care of western traffic, but also the south and southwestern. It passes through the larger cities, all having first class hotels – following the Santa Fe Railroad and Harvey Hotel system.

The Emporia Chamber of Commerce is asking you to recommend that U.S. Highway number 50, pass through the above named cities. This route not only has the shorter mileage, and more pavement, but it will be the first to be made a 365 day road through Kansas.

We feel it would be a great mistake not to have this route carry a through number, and we will appreciate your assistance very much.

Secretary Jardine replied to Kirkendall on November 10, again with a letter written by James:

I have your letter of November 3, signed jointly with Mr. O. M. Wilhite, with reference to the marking of the Old and New Santa Fe Trails, so called, across your State.

I recall that representatives of cities on the New Santa Fe Trail brought this matter to my attention, and it seemed clear at the time that the essential detail involved was to provide an interstate route through Ottawa, Emporia, Newton, and Hutchinson, all of which are important centers of population. This desire has been met in the routes selected by the Joint Board on Interstate Highways. The selection was satisfactory to the State Highway Department and likewise, I am informed, that the numbering system is satisfactory to the State. It was submitted to the State and certain adjustments were made to meet alterations which the Highway Department suggested.

It would appear that the real merits in your case have been satisfactorily met in providing an interstate route through the cities mentioned, and I can see no objection to the action taken which appears to be clearly in accord with the desires of the Kansas State Highway Department. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

In contrast with the supporters along the National Old Trails Road Association and the competing Santa Fe Trails, Cy Avery was satisfied, as Kelly explained:

He had managed to number seven national highways through Oklahoma, including three through Tulsa. These three were north-south U.S. Highway 75l from the Canadian border near St. Vincent, Minnesota, to Galveston; east-west U.S. Highway 64, the Albert Pike Highway; and diagonal U.S. Highway 60, which was partly the Ozark Trail. Back at home he returned his attention to building highways and bridges. [Kelly, page 152]

A New Record

While the Joint Board was changing the landscape for the Nation's interstate roads, the Federal-aid highway program was at its peak, despite President Coolidge's opposition to the Federal-aid concept. In BPR's annual report for FY 1925, Chief MacDonald began:

By completing 11,328.6 miles of Federal-aid roads during the fiscal year 1925 the cooperating Federal and State governments established a new record. The greatest mileage previously completed in any one fiscal year was the 10,247 miles completed in 1922. The new record exceeds by 30 per cent the mileage completed in the fiscal year 1924, and by more than 50 per cent the aggregate mileage completed during the first five years of work under the Federal-aid plan.

The year's work brings the total of mileage completed since the passage of the first Federal-aid road act in 1916 up to 46,485.5 miles; and in addition to the mileage completed a great deal of work has been done on the 12,462.6 miles which at the close of the year were under construction. The program of work thus far undertaken includes the above mileage completed and under construction and an additional 2,181.6 miles approved for improvement with Federal aid but not yet placed under construction. Including this latter mileage the program of Federal and State cooperation in road building as definitely planned or completed to date involves 61,129.7 miles, of which all but 3,570 miles undertaken prior to the passage of the Federal highway act in 1921 are

included in the interstate or Federal-aid highway system designated in accordance with the provisions of that act.

He added that the 7-percent system included 178,797 miles of roads. "Of this mileage . . . approximately 57,560 miles has already been improved or undertaken for improvement with Federal aid." Overall, the work included 50 miles of bridges.

He also discussed the designation of transcontinental highways:

As the result of the general improvement in the condition of roads throughout the country and the greatly increased use of motor vehicles the range of travel by highways has been so extended that transcontinental journeys are by no means uncommon. In consequence of this development the early improvement of a limited number of transcontinental routes and the uniform marking of such roads by all States has become one of the most pressing needs.

After summarizing the work of the Joint Board on Interstate Highways, MacDonald continued:

The transcontinental routes designated are all included in the Federal-aid highway system. Their designation and adoption by all States is an accomplishment of the highest order, carried out in a splendid spirit of cooperation by the Federal and State departments. Its immediate effect should be to facilitate compliance with section 6 of the Federal highway act which requires that the Secretary of Agriculture shall give preference in approving projects to those which will expedite the completion of an adequate and connected system of highways interstate in character.

Preferential consideration given to the improvement of the designated transcontinental system should at a very early date result in the complete improvement of the system, and the uniform numbering and signing of the system will be of inestimable value in promoting the safety and convenience of the highways used by interstate traffic. [*Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture for the Year Ended June 30, October 15, 1925, pages 1-4, 25-26*]

On November 19, the Agriculture Department announced that Secretary Jardine had approved the Joint Board's proposal, which was forwarded to AASHO for considered during its annual meeting in Detroit.

AASHO in Detroit

When AASHO met on November 18-21, 1925, E. W. James was called on to report on the Joint Board's work. He began by quoting General George W. Goethals, who had supervised construction of the Panama Canal, as saying that in his experience with official boards, he found them "long, narrow and wooden." By contrast, James absolved the board "of being dilatory, indecisive or faint-hearted in attacking the particular problem it had to deal with." The Joint Board had, he said, met the conflicting demands of the 48 States "on a broad gauge basis."

After outlining the decisions of the Joint Board, and how they had been made, James thanked the members:

The task has been full of pitfalls and might very easily at a number of points have been seriously embarrassed had we had any other than the most unselfish and broad attitude of mind among the members I am confident that no better start could have been made by any group of engineers or administrators in this country.

James then read a November 18 letter from Secretary Jardine to Chief MacDonald acknowledging receipt of the Joint Board's report and commenting on it. Recognizing the task facing the Joint Board, the Secretary had been "impressed with the broad lines, orderliness, and conspicuous fairness" of the work done. He asked that Chief MacDonald transmit the report to AASHO as a body, as well as to the separate State highway departments, and express the Secretary's concurrence with the system of routes proposed and with the plan to mark them uniformly "for the promotion of greater safety and convenience in connection with interstate traffic":

I should be glad also if you would call the attention of all the States to a request which has been officially received from the War Department, and which has a direct connection with the plan covered by the report of the Board. The War Department has adopted a system of marking localities on maps for defense purposes, and the system requires eventually a corresponding marking of locations on the ground, as at cross roads, forks and other points where directional signs might properly be installed. The designation of such local points by the method of marking adopted by the War Department appears to me as thoroughly worthy of consideration by the States. Such a course would no doubt greatly increase the value of the general highway system to the Government.

Adoption by the States of the proposal "will accomplish a marked advance in the highway system," while the designation of important routes of travel "will be a distinct advantage not only in eliminating confusion, but also in furthering systematic and continuous construction." In addition, uniform marking via the system of signs "should promote safety of travel, especially if it can be associated with uniform traffic regulations":

The directness of the through routes will doubtless serve a very large number of our population that travel from one general section of our country to another and will facilitate that freedom of communication which more than anything else binds our States and our country in one united Nation.

He thought the many agencies and groups involved "will find a practical application through the work of the Joint Board which is for this reason, I believe, very timely and adequate." He added:

There appears to be ample authority in the Law for promulgating the plans outlined by the report of the Board, and the interests of the Federal Government in the highway system of the Nation might eventually have produced action essentially like that

originated by the States in the present case. It is gratifying to have the States on their own initiative originate a plan of such broad National aspect and value.

From this point on, the Secretary said, "the results accomplished will rest largely in the hands of the several States under whose direct supervision the recommendations of the Board will be carried out." On that basis, he terminated his predecessor's appointments to the Joint Board and thanked the members for their time and effort, as well as "for the breadth of view they have taken in working out the details." [James, E. W., "Work of the Joint Board of Interstate Highways," *Wyoming Roads*, April 1926, pages 7-8, 14-15; Secretary Jardine's letter, National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

AASHO adopted the Joint Board's report and delegated to its Executive Committee the authority to make minor changes to the recommended system "as appeared necessary or desirable." AASHO asked James to cooperate with Markham on numbering questions. [Kelly, page 153]

The Victory Highway Fights for 40

Reaction to the Joint Board's work was mixed. It was widely applauded. Travel writer William Ullman began an article, "Seventy-five thousand miles of highways and not one cent for promotion!" The plan would "untangle the jumbled network of roads left by the haphazard, incoherent, disjointed activities" of the named trail associations:

The harmless tourist in his flivver doesn't know whether he is going or coming, whether he is a hundred miles from nowhere or on the right road to a good chicken dinner and a night's lodging.

Ullman praised the safety and directional signs as "simple in design, easily remembered and intelligible even to a driver who may not read the language." He added:

The map will be wiped clean of a lot of rubbish and in its stead the new highway map will tell the tourist how to reach his destination, where he is going, when to stop and when to proceed with caution. This, indeed, is a need in motor touring long past due. [Ullman, William, *The Louisville Times*, February 17, 1926]

The *North Dakota Highway Bulletin*, published by the State Highway Department, praised the trail associations for their "splendid spirit and work done," but added that they had "outlived their usefulness." [Moe, I. J., "Trails Associations Now Unnecessary," *North Dakota Highway Bulletin*, September 1925, page 5]

In some cases, praise for the new system was based on how it would affect a State or city. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, in reporting on Secretary Jardine's approval of the Joint Board's report, listed the four major routes that would pass through the city – U.S. 40, 50, 60, and 61 – under the Joint Board's 1925 numbering plan:

St. Louis, the logical "hub" of this great highway system, will, more and more, become

the important center of motor travel. ["Standard Marking System for U.S. Roads Approved," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, November 22, 1925]

Others criticized the plan. Hanna of *Western Highways Builder* commented:

Of all the idealistic proposals yet advanced for the administration of highways, none can equal this for pure imbecility. ["Oppose Road Signing," *Western Highways Builder*, February 1926, page 23]

Meanwhile, Colonel Greene was still upset that the Joint Board had not limited the U.S. routes to transcontinental highways. He told *The New York Times* that, "In many of these states, I found short stretches of road which can by no possible mental gymnastics be called even important state routes; they are merely country roads." By adding more routes approaching New York, he said, some States seemed to think New York would add connections. "This I positively refused to do, thinking that they wanted to justify their great amount of roads by having New York pursue the same ridiculous policy."

In fact, Colonel Greene told *The New York Times*, when AASHO's Executive Committee met in January to consider objections, he planned to advocate eliminating the road on the west side of the Hudson River from New York City to Albany. He wanted to set an example for the other States so they would follow and designate only transcontinental roads that really run across the continent. ["Too Many Roads as U.S. Highways," *The New York Times*, December 20, 1925, page XX11]

Maryland's Mackall, who had chosen not to attend the group meeting for Middle Atlantic States, was highly critical, especially about the role of the Middle West in developing the plan and selected the designated roads:

The whole numbering scheme of highways seems to have been dictated and dominated by the Middle West for and in the interest of that section.

As far as Maryland is concerned, the whole highway designation is wrong in principle and practice. We will not agree to co-operate in the numbering of Maryland roads unless radical modification is made in the plan as far as it concerns Maryland. Road authorities in Pennsylvania, so I am informed, are taking the same position.

Many of the roads in the western States, he pointed out, did not carry 10 percent of the traffic using roads in Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania. He added as an example of absurdity that between Cleveland and New York, the plan called for only one road, while between St. Paul and Kansas City, about the same distance as Cleveland-to-New York, ten roads had been included:

If a proper road system is adopted, bringing in Maryland roads which have been ignored in the plan thus far, the commission will co-operate with the United States Highway Commission in the marking of the roads. In fact, if what we believe to be the proper plan

is adopted this commission expects to supplement the road designations by also numbering and marking every road in the State system. This would be done with different types of numerals to prevent confusion of the State and interstate systems. [Maryland Scores U.S. Highway Plan," *The Sentinel* (Rockville, Maryland), December 4, 1925]

As Mackall stated, Pennsylvania also had doubts about the proposal. J. Clyde Myton, Secretary of the Motor Club of Harrisburg, provided an example resulting from dominance of the Middle West:

The natural route from Indiana east is via Ebensburg and the William Penn Highway. The section from Kittanning to Indiana and from Indiana to Ebensburg is a secondary highway, unimproved. Had the Joint Board seen fit to adopt that route, which is about ten miles shorter than the one it selected, there is reason to believe the State would have placed it on its primary highway system, and scheduled it for early improvement. Rather than follow the route it selected, the Joint Board might have turned north from Delmont on the William Penn Highway over an entirely improvement road to New Castle and Youngstown.

The route selected from Lewistown to Selinsgrove, Sunbury, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton is not a natural travel route.

(In March 1916, the William Penn Highway Association of Pennsylvania chose a highway parallel to the Pennsylvania Railroad from Philadelphia via Harrisburg to Pittsburgh, with an extension to New York City. It was an alternative to the Lincoln Highway. With approval of the U.S. Numbered Highway System, the William Penn Highway essentially became U.S. 22. For information on the evolution of the route, see "U.S. 22 – The William Penn Highway" on this Website.)

William H. Connell, engineering executive of the Pennsylvania Highway Department (and president of ARBA), said his State could accept the Joint Board's proposal only if provision

were made for necessary revisions in the system:

I stated that Pennsylvania agreed in principle to a balanced interstate highway system and to uniform marking and traffic regulations, but I felt that considerable revision would have to be made affecting the State of Pennsylvania before the people of the State would back up such a highway system.

Upon examining the map and report of the joint board it will be seen that it designates a mileage of interstate highways in two midwestern States totalling 5,295 miles, while three of the largest Eastern States with about the same area and with nearly three times the population and very much more traffic have a mileage of interstate highways of only 2,939 miles. The system should not be made up in certain States of a great number of

interstate highways, which are of far less importance than interstate highways in other States not on the interstate system as it stands today.

He said the interstate system “should be limited to important interstate highways of equal importance in all of the States.” The resolution AASHO adopted during its annual meeting in Detroit “provides that any revisions of the system as it now stands should be referred to the Executive Committee . . . for consideration.” This option meant that “a better balanced interstate system” could be accomplished, but “only by thoroughly revising the recently adopted system.”

He added:

President Coolidge, in his message to Congress, stated that Federal aid should be confined to interstate highways. It is obvious, therefore, that the system must be balanced, as it is certainly not the President’s intention to have Federal funds appropriated for a large number of interstate highways in some States and relatively few in other States. [“Too Many Roads as U.S. Highways,” *The New York Times*, December 20, 1925, page XXII; “Officials Plan Revision of United States Highways,” *The New York Times*, December 27, 1925, page XXII]

In this regard, Connell misunderstood the proposal. The Joint Board’s plan involved designation of routes, without any relation to funding. No additional funds were apportioned to the States based on its number of designated routes. The routes were all on the Federal-aid highway system or soon would be added, and were all equally eligible for Federal-aid funding at the choice of the State highway department.

The trend, however, was decidedly in the opposite direction.

Whether the reaction to numbering the Nation's interstate highways was positive or negative, one thing was clear to all observers: this was a major change that would have profound effects not just on motorists but on States, counties, and cities, as well as the named trail associations. This understanding was reflected in the strong, at times bitter, reaction of those who felt cheated by the Joint Board's choice of through routes and numbers. Almost immediately, for example, they accepted the Joint Board's intentions in applying the numbers. Highways assigned two-digit numbers ending in "naught" (multiples of 10) or "1" were seen as first-class highways. Highways with other two-digit numbers, including those ending in "5," were perceived as secondary. A three-digit number seemingly relegated a community to tourist purgatory.

The named trail associations, of course, were not happy. The Joint Board, which wanted to eliminate the trail associations, had not outlawed or eliminated them and had no authority to do so. No action had been taken to prevent them from posting their signs. In fact, the members of the Joint Board had informally agreed that the States could, if they desired, carry the names of the highways on the same standards as the shield adopted for the U.S. numbered highways. However, the Joint Board had also ensured it would not give a single number to any of the multi-State named trails, instead breaking them up among several numbers.

By the time members of AASHO's Executive Committee met in Chicago on January 14-15, coinciding with the American Road Builders Association's (ARBA) Road Show, they were faced with a flood of complaints generated by the named trail associations, communities, other groups, and individuals who were dissatisfied with the number their route received, or the fact that their route or city was left off or situated on a perceived secondary number.

While Maryland and Pennsylvania were threatening not to endorse the plan, many States wanted more mileage. In North Dakota, for example, the State highway agency's bulletin indicated the State was satisfied with its three east-west routes (the National Parks Highway, the Theodore Roosevelt International Highway, and the Yellowstone Trail), but felt that the two north-south routes assigned to the State, U.S. 81 (King of Trails) and U.S. 85 (not aligned along a named trail), were not enough. The State needed three additional U.S. routes, 82-84, and suggested that cities "sharpen their pencils to figure out just where a U.S. road should come" – and keep in mind the old adage, "The early bird gets the worm." ["More U.S. Roads Needed for North Dakota," *North Dakota Highway Bulletin*, February 1926]

Many problems were of a minor nature; the Executive Committee resolved 79 of them during its meeting. But many of the disputes were major and would have to be held over, to be resolved through letter ballot of the States during the remainder of the year. [Kelly, page 155]

Maryland's Mackall was satisfied with the results. After returning from ARBA's Road Show in Chicago, he announced on January 16 that Maryland's roads would be numbered as United States highways in accordance with the Joint Board's plan – as amended in Chicago. *The Baltimore Sun* recalled his opposition to the Joint Board's plan because of the large numbers of designated routes for the Middle Western States compared with the more heavily populated eastern States:

The joint board has been disbanded, Mr. Mackall pointed out yesterday, and the work has been placed in the hands of the executive committee of the Association of State Highway Officials [sic], which body held a special session last week at Chicago in connection with the road builders' association convention.

Essentials of the new plan were discussed last week, Mr. Mackall explained, but the details of the system will not be completed for several weeks.

Under the new plan, he declared, Maryland will double the number of its highways included in the project under the original proposal; Pennsylvania will have four times as many roads in the system as apportioned to it originally, and New York will be granted at least eight times its original allotment.

Highway officials from Maryland, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania will meet in Washington within the next two weeks to draft the final plans of the project and ratification through mail ballots is expected shortly afterward, Mr. Mackall said. ["To Be Numbered as U.S. Highways," *The Baltimore Sun*, January 17, 1926, page 6]

Contrary to Mackall's expectation, resolution of routing and numbering issues would take much of the year. By James's count, the Executive Committee acted on over 60 additional cases through early November 1926. A sampling of the issues provides an idea not only of the complexity of creating a numbering plan but also of how vitally important the decisions were to the combatants.

The longstanding dispute between the Old and New Santa Fe Trails – U.S. 50 versus U.S. 250 – resurfaced soon after the Joint Board's report became public. Kansas had a similar problem with advocates of the Victory Highway who were upset that their route was assigned U.S. 340 (Manhattan, Junction City, Salina, Russell, Oakley, Cheyenne Wells, Kansas, to Limon, Colorado) while the main number, U.S. 40 went to Topeka, Manhattan, Beloit, and Colby to Limon, part of the National Roosevelt Midland Trail, a transcontinental route from Newport News, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

As part of the 40/340 debate, R. J. Brown of Solomon, Kansas, sent a telegram to Secretary Jardine on November 23:

We believe route number forty should continue of [sic] victory highway as it was dedicated to our boys.

Receipt of the telegram was delayed, but on December 5, Secretary Jardine's administrative assistant, H. M. Bain, replied:

In the absence of Secretary Jardine I am acknowledging receipt of your telegram regarding the numbering of the interstate routes through Kansas, in which you suggest that the southerly route through Junction City, Salina and Oakley, be given a continuous number as a through route. A number of other communications also have brought this matter to the attention of the Secretary and on inquiry it is learned that the southern route was originally given the through number, but at the specific request of the State Highway Department a change was made by the Joint Board.

The Board submitted its report to this Department on October 30, and it was transmitted to the Association of State Highway Officials at Detroit on November 19th.

The Joint Board has been dissolved, and in the circumstances it is suggested that any further inquiries regarding the details of the interstate routes be addressed to your State Highway Department at Topeka.

I shall take pleasure in bringing your letter to the Secretary's attention.

Secretary Jardine replied on December 9. He noted that he had received 25 similar telegrams from "Chambers of Commerce and leading men along the Victory Highway in Kansas, with reference to designating Victory Highway as route forty." The Secretary noted that as Bain had explained, the Victory Highway had initially been assigned "40" but "just before the report was concluded, a wire was received from Mr. John W. Gardner, Chairman of the State Highway

Commission of Kansas . . . asking the Committee to transfer the number forty to another route and to assign the number three hundred for forty to Victory Highway.” The Secretary enclosed a copy of the telegram:

COPY.

TELEGRAM

TOPEKA, KANSAS OCT 14, 1925

E W JAMES

CHIEF DIVISION OF DESIGN BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS WASHN DC

KANSAS COMMISSION DESIRES ROUTE MANHATTAN CLAYCENTER BELOIT
COLBY LIMON AS NUMBER FORTY STOP MANHATTAN SALINE OAKLEY
CHEYENNEWELLS LIMON AS THREE HUNDRED FORTY

JOHN W GARDNER
CHAIRMAN KANSAS HIGHWAY COMMISSION

The Secretary’s reply continued:

The desire of this Department has been to O. K. recommendations by State Highway Commissions. At the time I signed this report I had not had an opportunity or the time to examine in detail the recommendations that had been made for all the states. What I did do was ask if the recommendations here made were the recommendations of the respective State Highway Commissions and if they had the general approval of the people of their respective states. I was assured that this was a fact. Some protests came to me before the report was finished and signed. In such instances I always did what I could to straighten things out.

Then he came to the main point, also stressed by Bain:

The matter is out of my hands now. Your only recourse is to make your protest to the State Highway Commission. If you make it strong enough, doubtless, you will get some results. The way has been left open in the report for straightening out injustices, wherever they may occur. I am sorry that I am not in a position at this late date to do very much for you. It is your own State Highway Department that is in a position to do something. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

On December 18, representatives of the named trails associations appeared before the Kansas State Highway Commission. Chairman Gardner explained that he had tried for the split 40 North/South arrangement in September but had been turned down:

The highway commission pointed out it sought to have as many national routes as possible through Kansas and had suggested both routes. Then the commission asked

where optional routes were designated that both be given the same numbers. But the executive committee of the association of highway officials and the federal good roads bureau turned down the state commission and followed the general rule that the north route be given the original number and the alternate route be given the same number, but with a numerical prefix attached.

The highway commission asserted it would use all of its efforts at having both roads given the same number and that it also proposed the same plan be followed on the old and new Santa Fe Trails. The old Santa Fe Trail is now No. 50 and the new trail 250 in Kansas.

Governor Benjamin S. Paulen, who attended the meeting, declared at the close that tourists traveled on roads, not numbers, so the numbers were of little importance. "But if residents on either one of these roads get out and actually construct good highways that people will like to drive over, there isn't any question as to which one will get the traffic," he said. With the issue turned back to State officials, he suggested that Kansas highway officials would meet with AASHO to secure "40" for both routes, with North and South added to differentiate the routes. ["Would Divide 'No. 40'," *Topeka Capital*, December 19, 1925]

News of the proposed North/South split for "40" inspired advocates of the New Santa Fe Trail. *The Topeka Capital* reported:

Milt Wilhite of Emporia; Will C. Austin of Cottonwood Falls, and about 20 others, representing towns along the New Santa Fe Trail attacked the office of Walter V. Black, state highway engineer, in force yesterday afternoon, demanding a "50-50" split on the numbering of the New and Old trail thru Kansas. Under the federal system adopted, the Old trail gets the number 50, and the New trail gets 250.

The arguments were much the same as in the Midland-Victory row of two weeks ago, when the Victory folks protested against giving the Midland Trail 40 and the Victory 240 west of Manhattan. The highway department has promised in both instances to ask federal approval of giving both routes "50" on the Santa Fe trails, and both "40" on the Midland and Victory, but without promising that the numbering will be changed from the way it now stands. ["New Santa Fe Trail Towns Launch Sequel to '40-240' Contest," *Topeka Capital*, file copy dated only December 1925]

On January 8, 1926, Ralph S. Hinman of the Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce wrote to Secretary Jardine, saying among other things:

As we understand it, the number "fifty" was assigned by the Federal authorities to the highway which included the New Santa Fe Trail (so-called); but through some motive the State Highway Commission as we understand it, gave the main designation "fifty" to the roadway running from Edgerton west through Council Grove, Osage City, Marion, Larned, Jetmore, etc., while the subordinate designation of "250" was given to the New Santa Fe Trail, diverging at Edgerton and continuing through Ottawa, Emporia, Florence,

Newton, Hutchinson, Stafford, Kinsley, and Dodge City – converging with “50” at Garden City. It is to be noted that “50” as outlined by the State Highway Commission, touches the home community of Mr. Markham, Mr. Miller (the private secretary of Governor Paulen, passing his ranch), Mr. Gardner (chair of the State Highway Commission), and joins “250” at Garden City, the home of the Governor’s Pardon Clerk, - Judge Hutchison.

Hinman continued that if the idea of 50 North and 50 South was rejected “as impractical or impossible . . . then it is respectfully suggested and urged that the main numeral should be applied to the one now designated by the State Highway Commission as ‘50’ between the point of divergence at Edgerton and the point of convergence at Garden City.”

Secretary Jardin replied on January 29, 1926, saying in part:

The Executive Committee held its meeting in Chicago January 14 and 15, and I am informed that at that meeting the Kansas Highway Department was given a special hearing, and that an adjustment satisfactory to all respects was arrived at as affecting Routes 50 and 250. This involved the assignment of the designation 50 North to the Old Santa Fe Trail and 50 South to the New Santa Fe Trail. This is a solution of several difficulties of the same sort which were found to exist in the Western States, and was applied to Routes 40 and 240 in Kansas, which were designated respectively 40 North and 40 South.

This appeals to me as a very common sense and satisfactory way of meeting the opposing demands of the advocates of different routes within a State, and I think it should be acceptable to the communities in Kansas. [National Archives in College Park, Maryland]

Springerville Fights for 60

Julius W. Becker of Becker Mercantile Company in Springerville wrote to Secretary Jardine on December 5 about the Arizona-New Mexico connection of the National Old Trails Road. As noted earlier, the Joint Board had designated a route from Chicago to Los Angeles, via Gallup-to-Holbrook, as U.S. 60, while U.S. 70 from North Carolina continued via Fort Sumner and Socorro, New Mexico, to Springerville, Arizona, and a terminus at U.S. 60 in Holbrook.

Becker began by regretting he had to write to the Secretary about this matter after efforts at the State level had failed to resolve it. “Our experience, however, has shown us that the big man is more easily approached than the man of a smaller calibre.” He was not seeking “any special favor,” but would base his argument on “fact in as far as New Mexico and East Arizona local conditions are concerned.”

Becker acknowledged the many benefits of the move to recognize a network of interstate roads and to mark them with federally approved signs. However, he asked, “have you ever considered that highways in certain states may be political highways, and that they may be designated by the

State Administration from a selfish standpoint instead of from the standpoint of helping the people of the State in general as much as possible?"

He was referring to New Mexico's previous and current Governors, both Democrats, while the Coolidge Administration was, of course, Republican. Governor James F. Hinkle, born in Missouri, had moved to New Mexico in 1885 and served as Governor from January 1, 1923, to January 1, 1925. His home was in Roswell. He was succeeded by Arthur T. Hannett, the current Governor, who was born in Lyons, New York, but moved to Gallup, New Mexico, in 1911.

You, no doubt, are receiving some complaints from different states since these highways have been designated. No doubt, many of these complaints are not justified, others may be.

In New Mexico the Democratic Governor comes from the town of Gallup. Before becoming Governor he was a great highway booster for his own town. His Highway Engineer, who is a very capable man, has always played politics to a very great extent, and consequently, several good Republican towns have suffered. He has been open and above board in declaring himself against them.

Several towns in New Mexico on routes competitive to those passing through Gallup, and also on routes that Gallup coveted, have enjoyed a wonderful tourist trade for the past thirteen years. They have built good garages, money has been invested in good hotels in order to take care of the traveler, stores have taken on a more prosperous look, and besides this, in a number of sections the farmers have prospered through the market that the tourist furnished. I can name you several towns in the cattle districts where the business houses and many of the people would have gone broke during the period of depression in the cattle industry had it not been for the hundreds of thousands of dollars left in these towns by the travelling public.

Naturally, all of these towns were at the mercy of the present Democratic administration, and if you will kindly look at the map which I will send you under separate cover, you will notice that all routes of any importance and which are travelled by the best class of tourists now lead directly and indirectly into the town that Governor Hannett comes from, and in as much as we feel that the government sign posted highways will be followed by the tourist regardless of the old routes that were travelled, it is easy to be seen that a great many people in towns that enjoyed the traffic in the past will be compelled to lose heavily through this new movement.

Pardon me for making the following suggestion, but don't you think it would be best if the Department of Agriculture were to withhold issuing any maps of designated U.S. Highways and all road markers until impartial investigations can be made of all complaints? Why should people in certain towns be compelled to lose heavy revenues and in fact, all investments that they have made in the past through the fact that they are powerless to protect themselves?

No doubt, you are wondering why an Arizonian is so much interested in New Mexico affairs. That is easily explained. We are so near to the line that for years our interests have been identical with those of New Mexico. Besides this, the shifting of highways and travel in New Mexico affects us to a very great extent also. In fact, we have been leaders, although living in a small town, in the good highway movement both in Arizona and New Mexico (through our affiliations in New Mexico) for a great number of years.

It is true that Springerville has been placed on Route No. 70, but that is just like taking us off of a main street and placing us on a third rate street. For the past thirteen years we have enjoyed traffic off the National Old Trails, as we were a part of that Old Trails, and we have enjoyed traffic off of routes passing through Oklahoma City and Amarillo. The shortest way for the tourist through that section of travel on his way to California was through Springerville.

We have spent thousands of dollars in boosting for good roads. In fact, we have the reputation in this section as being rather radical for roads in general. It did not seem possible to us that through a stroke of the pen we would be compelled to lose a heavy revenue. Naturally, this will mean a big loss to our farmers as well as to the business men. Springerville may show a very small population on the map, but it is surrounded by about a dozen villages, some larger than Springerville, and the farmers in these little places have enjoyed the market which the tourist traffic through our town furnished.

People from different sections of Western and Central New Mexico have suggested that I write this letter. I sincerely hope that it rings true to you. There is absolutely no desire to throw mud at the Governor of New Mexico, however, it was necessary to be definite in order to impress you with the fact that there might be some merit to this letter. My sole object is to convince you that it might be best to withhold any further action in this highway matter until all complaints are in and sifted as to whether they have any merit or not. You have the reputation of being very humane. You always have the reputation of understanding the people in general. A man who has risen from the ranks as you have could not be otherwise. Won't you kindly feel that this letter is not written to gain special favor, but simply to get justice from the Highway Department of the Federal Government where it would be impossible to get it locally?

Becker had not clarified his point, which seemed to be that since the founding of the National Old Trails Road, motorists had traveled through Springerville because it was on the best road between Albuquerque and Holbrook. Now that the Gallup-Holbrook road had been improved, traffic was increasingly taking the shorter alternative in the National Old Trails Road. That shift would continue under the new designated numbers; through motorists already on U.S. 60 would not consider the former alternate route via Springerville as they once had done. The city was now on a completely different long-distance road, U.S. 70.

He wrote again on December 8 to provide the maps mentioned in the earlier letter. "You will notice that the highways for Federal markers vary a great deal in New Mexico from the highways which have been traveled by the tourists for a number of years. These are the natural tourist routes":

We would like very much to have the privilege of showing our side of the story to any impartial representative whom you may designate to look into this matter.

As I have explained to you in my letter of the 5th, there is a reason as far as the New Mexico highway administration is concerned for all important routes to run towards Gallup. The result is apparent, but why should hundreds of people be made to suffer for the sake of a Governor's ambition? Tourists will follow the marked highways regardless of anything else, as they are strangers in the country and you could expect nothing different of them. Those in power have the privilege of using this situation for their own benefit, unless of course, we succeed in getting an impartial investigation and a chance to show our situation and tell our story.

If necessary, some of us will be very glad to have the privilege of coming to Washington to go into this situation more thoroughly.

E. W. James wrote a reply that Assistant Secretary R. M. Dunlop signed on December 17 in his capacity as Acting Secretary. He expressed "much interest" in the matter described in Becker's December 5 letter and the maps submitted on December 8 related to the designation of interstate routes for uniform marking and numbering:

I am somewhat at a loss to understand your letter of the 5th, as neither the map submitted nor the letter itself gave any intimation of the details which you had in mind as underlying your complaint, and a careful examination of the federal aid highway system in New Mexico and eastern Arizona, and of the routes selected for marking in that same area indicated that they could not be characterized as they were in your letter.

Your letter of the 8th with somewhat more elaborate maps on which you indicated some of the details, explained your contentions, but I am inclined to believe that you have misconstrued the situation, as the map in which you showed the routes which you understood are selected for marking is seriously in error. For instance, the north and south route in the Rio Grande Valley south of Los Lunas to El Paso, is entirely omitted, and likewise the route from Clovis to El Paso as well as some others. I am enclosing a section of a map of the United States showing New Mexico and Arizona and the routes proposed as interstate highways. I am inclined to think after examination of this map you will find that the situation is satisfactory.

The Joint Board on Interstate Highways, which had in hand the designation of these routes, submitted its report to the Secretary on October 30. He approved the report and, as recommended by the Board, transmitted it to the association of State Highway Officials, which accepted the report on November 19. I understand that that Association provided a method for making the necessary minor corrections that might appear necessary, and all such matters are to be handled only through the respective State highway departments. I believe that this adjustment is now actually in progress, and that reports have already been received from a number of States. This Department is asking, therefore, that hereafter all further suggestions regarding the interstate system be taken up

directly with the proper State highway department. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

The Numbers Game

Kelly explained the problems facing members of AASHO's Executive Committee, including Avery, when they arrived for a meeting in Chicago's Congress Hotel on January 24, 1926:

[Avery] and his colleagues were confronted with nearly one hundred requests to change either highway routes or numbering. The petitions came from bypassed towns, from trails associations that had lost their identify, from individuals, and from state officials who felt their states had been shortchanged when numbers were handed out.

In the months after AASHO secretary Markham sent the first national highway maps to state officials, the highways with numbers ending in one, five, and zero quickly took on an aura of their own. A community that could boast one of those numbers would be a place that would draw people and business. It would be a community set apart. Every town wanted to be on those numbered roads and those that were not, asked for changes to be made. The executive committee dealt with seventy-nine of the appeals during the one-day meeting. Others that were not so straightforward were held over for a later time, and one became so contentious that it threatened to undo all of the joint board's work of the past year

In addition:

The Kansas people were still at loggerheads over the Old and New Santa Fe Trails and over a numbering switch just past Manhattan, Kansas, in what had been the cross-country Victory Highway. That latter even elicited a telegram from the secretary of agriculture. To address the Victory Highway issue the executive committee split U.S. 40 into U.S. 40 North and U.S. 40 South. They turned U.S. 50 into U.S. 50 North and U.S. 50 South for the two Santa Fe Trails. Neither decision turned out to be the right one, and the issue festered for years.

Kelly's reference to a fight that became "so contentious" involved the battle over "60" which Kentucky, Virginia, and other States knew should have been assigned to them instead of the Chicago-to-Los Angeles route. Governor William J. Fields of Kentucky, a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives and a strong highway booster, "was beside himself that in all the road numbering, Kentucky had not been given even one prestigious single-digit or zero-ending number on any of her primary federal aid highways." Whatever the merit of any complaint he had with the other numbers, he had a strong point on "60," which the Committee of Five had placed outside the numbering plan they had agreed on. Governor Fields, with his State Highway Engineer E. N. Todd, was in Chicago for the showdown over the numbers.

The Executive Committee voted to retain "60" for the Chicago-to-Los Angeles route and tried to placate Governor Fields by assigning the single number 62 to a route from Springfield, Missouri

to Newport News, Virginia. Governor Fields was not placated. Instead, “he stormed to Washington, D.C. He rounded up his state’s whole congressional delegation and paid a heated visit to Chief MacDonald on January 25. There, the Kentuckians pointed out that their state, alone of all the states in the Mississippi Valley, did not have a road designated with a zero ending”:

At that point – seeking the path of least resistance – MacDonald and James changed the numbers. They made U.S. 60 the highway from Springfield to Newport News, and renamed Avery’s route U.S. 62. As they were soon to discover, that was not the easy way out. Cy was furious. He telegraphed his friend and Oklahoma congressman Elmer Thomas in Washington: “Bureau of Roads attempting to change U.S. route number sixty from Chicago to Oklahoma City to Los Angeles This change without notice to us effects [sic] Missouri, Oklahoma and other states. We have had most of our numbers made and ready to put up. Kansas and Kentucky are the states asking for this change See MacDonald and insist on this being left as it was agreed on in Chicago. Wire me collect results of your interview.” Just as Governor Fields had been sure that the Chicago mob was behind the decision not to grant Kentucky a zero highway number, Cy was at least suspicious that disgruntled Santa-Fe Trail Kansans were working against Oklahoma. [Kelly, pages 155-158]

On February 16, 1926, several members of the Executive Committee – not including Avery or Piepmeier – met in Washington to consider the correspondence received on U.S. numbers. A summary of the Executive Committee’s action covered numerous topics, but on the issue of “60” James’s summary explained:

It was agreed that the present arrangement affecting Kentucky and involving Routes 60 and 62 should preferably stand as at present adjusted, that is, 60 from Newport News to Springfield, Missouri, and 62 from Chicago via Springfield to Los Angeles, because the State of Kentucky protested against 62, since all other States north and south were given a number ending in an 0, which adjustment appears to be in line with the understanding had by the Executive Committee, but before submitting the matter in the form of a motion it should be ascertained whether Mr. Piepmeier and Mr. Avery would prefer 60 East from Springfield, Missouri Newport New Virginia, and 60 North from Springfield, Missouri to Chicago, as an alternate to the present proposed arrangement. In case the use of 60 East and 60 North is agreeable to Mr. Piepmeier and Mr. Avery, those present agreed to support a motion to use those numbers in lieu of the present proposed arrangement.

The Executive Committee’s formal report, dated March 4, 1926, to State highway officials did not address the 60/62 controversy. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Kelly explained that this “curious decision . . . may have had more to do with a reluctance to finalize their actions than any question about the outcome.” Avery and Piepmeier were not satisfied. [Kelly 161-164]

As for the National Old Trails Road

In January 1926, *The New York Times* carried an article by author Adolph C. Regli about travel in the western States. It began:

Motorists who long had had visions of a transcontinental tour have often cast aside the idea as being too risky. The West, with its reputation for hazardous desert and mountain highways, has suggested to the uninitiated the picture of a wild, treacherous expanse, hostile to everything but the cowpuncher on horseback.

This, however, is the day of the motor car, and the West is not waiting for the sunset. In another year some of the trails across the United States will have undergone changes and improvement sufficient to make the trip over them as different as was experienced in changing from an ox cart to a spring buggy. In six months last Summer the National Old Trails Highway was improved enough to make the motorist forget most of the difficult, tortuous roads he traveled on his way to the Pacific Coast.

After discussing other routes from New York, including the Lincoln Highway to Chicago and the

Victory Highway, Regli commented on the National Old Trails Road:

The National Old Trails Highway is picked up at Dodge City and carries the tourist through the remainder of the Western States to California. This trail is not advisable through most of Kansas since there are other and better routes from Kansas City to Dodge City. It is well marked from Dodge City west and blazes the best trail through the Southwest to the Pacific. The National Old Trails Highway is advertised as an all-year route, with all mountain passes open during the Winter.

Central and Western Kansas flattens out into great wheat plains and ranches where horses and cattle graze. Despite the apparent barrenness of Southeastern Colorado, the highways are straight and have a gravel surface, which makes motor travel exceptionally fast. An hour's time is gained in Eastern Colorado where the Rocky Mountain time zone begins. Lamar, Los Animas and La Junta are the chief cities on the trail, each a thriving centre.

At La Junta the motorist must decide if he will make a side trip to Pueblo and Colorado Springs, with its Pike's Peak, or go southwestward to Trinidad. The road continues to be graveled to Pueblo and Colorado Springs with the exception of short stretches. The National Old Trails is reached by running directly south from Pueblo to Trinidad.

In traveling from Trinidad, Col., to Raton, N. M., the first mountain driving of the trip will be encountered. The grade to the south is easy and presents no difficulty to any car.

Raton is situated at the base of the pass and is the last community of any size until Las Vegas is reached.

From Raton to Las Vegas, 114 miles, the route is over flat country in which huge cattle ranches and mesquite trees afford most of the scenery. For fifty miles out of Raton the road is graveled; at Colmar the gravel gives way to rough dirt, which becomes worse as Wagon Mount is approached. From Wagon Mound until gravel is again found seventeen miles out of Las Vegas, the drive is a continual bounce and jolt.

With the exception of the first fifteen miles south of Las Vegas, the highway to Santa Fe is good gravel. Between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, which are connected by a fast gravel road, the La Bajada hill is encountered, but it is down grade when one is traveling from east to west. The only concrete pavement in the desert country is found at Albuquerque, eighteen miles running north and twelve miles south. Indian basket weavers and pottery molders take up posts along the Santa Fe-Albuquerque road and offer their wares to every passing motorist.

The entire highway between Albuquerque and Gallup, five or six hours' run, is a good graveled road, with the exception of eighteen miles of stony, very rough dirt road from Grants to Bluewater. The tourist passes several quaint and interesting communities – Las Lunas, Laguna and Cubera – as well as numerous adobe villages where the Indians make their homes. The continental divide is crossed twenty-eight miles east of Gallup, but a small sign beside the road is practically the only evidence of it. Rare scenery is found east and west of Gallup where immense red cliffs, carved and molded by rushing water at some early date, present a noble picture of natural architecture.

Eleven miles of new gravel road west of Gallup were opened for travel last Summer. From there to Holbrook the road is dirt and will be only fair under ordinary conditions, but is exceedingly rough after rains, which are rare but are veritable cloudbursts when they come.

A side trip which the motorist should not deny himself can be made through the petrified forest on the rim from Gallup, N.M., to Holbrook, Ariz. By turning off at Adamana, the traveler can enter the forest from the north and pass through it to a good graveled road and thence to Holbrook. A glimpse of the Painted Desert is also had from the main highway between Navajo and Adamana.

From Holbrook to Winslow a good gravel road permits fast driving. A new road was completed last Summer from Winslow to the Cliff House Canyon, about thirty-five miles west of Winslow. From the end of the new stretch to Padre Canyon, fourteen miles, the worst road of the entire cross-country run confronts the motorist. Besides being painfully rough and crooked, the road is strewn with huge rocks and stones which play havoc with tires.

After this stretch of desert trail is passed, the remaining twenty-five miles into Flagstaff are dirt and stone, fair ordinarily but rough if traveled after rains.

From Flagstaff to the Arizona-California line at the Colorado River, fast time can be made because of long sections of well-graveled and dirt highway. Although the roads are good, too speedy driving should be avoided because of many dips and washes which take the place of bridges and culverts. To hit these while traveling fast will result in a severe jolt which may wreck a car. River beds, usually dry, are crossed and recrossed in Western Arizona.

Not more than sixty-five miles north of the main trail lies the grand Canyon [sic], which offers the finest side trip of the entire journey. A good gravel and dirt road goes northward from Maine, a few miles west of Flagstaff, and the return can be made directly to Williams over a fair highway.

The route through Williams, Seligman, Peach Springs, Hackberry and Kingman brings the traveler over good road to Oatman, a picturesque gold mining city. The motorist has another taste of mountain driving over a fairly easy grade just before Oatman is reached. A short run then brings one to the interstate bridge at Topock, from where a hilly ride carries the tourist into Needles, Cal.

From Needles to Victorville, the motorist made his last run over desert highways in crossing the noted Mojave Desert. Heavy crushed rock and gravel will be found on most of the road, although twenty-five miles of fair asphalt has been laid in the neighborhood of Amboy. The 215-mile drive from Needles to Victorville, where California's famous pavement begins, is not a pleasant one and the tourist is cheered when the black asphalt is sighted. After crossing the easy Cajon Pass, west of Victorville, there is a pleasant run through orange, lemon and olive orchards to San Bernardino, Ontario and Pomona to Los Angeles.

While the drive through the Southwest becomes tiresome at times, the remarkably clear atmosphere, the wide expanse of the horizon, the beautiful sunrises and sunsets and the Western air and geniality of the people give the traveler from the East a new conception of the immensity and grandeur of the United States.

The National Old Trails Road followed the Santa Fe Railroad, "so the traveler has the advantage of being close to aid by rail should it be necessary":

Tourist camps, most of them privately operated, are found in every city and hamlet so that a person touring and camping out can find accommodations without trouble

The West is aware to the traffic it can attract by good roads and is making efforts to provide excellent highways. [Regli, Adolph C., "Far West Offers Good Auto Roads," *The New York Times*, January 10, 1926, page A35]

As Regli's article implied, Missouri and Kansas were a continuing problem for Judge Lowe and the National Old Trails Road Association. However, Assistant State Highway Engineer C. W. Brown of Missouri reported in February 1926:

By the summer of 1926 the National Old Trails Highway will be concrete paved from the Indiana-Ohio line to Topeka, Kansas, which is several hundred miles farther west than any other continuous pavement extends. For the past three years this historically famous road has been undergoing a transformation in Missouri and in a few more months the 256 miles between the post office in St. Louis and the post office in Kansas City will be entirely paved. And 239 of the 246 miles of state highway between these two cities will be Portland cement concrete. The other 7 miles is an old hard surface which has not yet outlived its usefulness.

After summarizing the historic routes of the road known as the St. Louis-Kansas City road or U.S. Route 40, Brown suggested:

Imagine the surprise and delight of Boone and his companions if, in some ghostly centennial of those early days, they should ferry across the Mississippi on a log raft and drive their six-ox teams and heavy, broad wheeled conestoga wagons out upon a concrete road which stretched over all the weary miles they last traveled with such great difficulty.

Yet it is only in the last three years that Boone would have found much change. It is true there were bridges before 1923 and that trees had been cleared and grubbed, fences built and a few miles of gravel surface laid, but there were still many days when six oxen would have found a conestoga wagon a heavy load to pull through hub deep mud and when no man might know at sun-up how far upon his way he would be by dark. For except 13 miles, near St. Louis, built by St. Louis County in 1922, the whole 239 milers of concrete has been laid or contracted for since the summer of 1923.

Following its double policy of improving the most important roads first and of concentrating on a single road, so that during a short period of construction traffic may entirely avoid that road, then use it for all time without detouring, the state highway department put nine contractors to work on Route 40 during 1924 and '25. In those two years, construction was going forward over practically the entire length of the road and at the end of 1925, the pavement was complete except for a few short stretches where inclement fall weather so delayed construction that contractors could not finish, as they had expected, or where differences of opinion concerning the proper location of the highway have caused delay. But there is every reason to believe that by the fall of 1926 cars will be traveling across the state entirely on a paved surface – a notable achievement for three years of construction.

The all-weather surface is not the only improvement which has been made on Route 40, for, while the new road follows the old traveled way in many places there are many miles of relocation where, to straighten curves, save mileage, reduce grades or eliminate railroad crossings, the road was built over virgin soil. So well has this been done that the

steepest grade on the present road rises only six feet in the hundred, while the long grades do not exceed 5 per cent. Except in cities, where relocation was impossible, no curve turns more than 10 feet in 100 feet.

The original distance across the State was 297 miles. "Straightening unnecessary curves, eliminating jogs and avoiding roundabout roads reduced this distance 41 miles, saving the state \$1,557,000 which would have been spent for grading, bridging and concrete surface that additional distance."

The road was "so straight that if a string were stretched between these cities and extended to Kansas City and St. Louis the road would not diverge from the string more than 2 miles at any point. And the route chosen is so direct that it is 23 miles shorter than the shortest railroad between the two terminal points." Fifteen railroad crossings had been eliminated, leaving only two across the entire distance. The engineers were careful in avoiding city streets. "Boonville and St. Charles are the only cities through which the road passes directly and that was necessary because of the river crossings." The two bridges were the only crossings on the roadway. The corporation that built the St. Charles bridge charged a toll for all vehicles or pedestrians, but the Boonville Bridge was toll-free. [Brown, C. W., "Pavement on National Old Trails Highway Strides Westward," *Concrete Highway Magazine*, February 1926, page 40-42]

Although Brown referred to the road as the National Old Trails Road, he was probably referring to State Route 2, which diverged from the named trail as discussed earlier.

On February 12, 1926, E. W. James was in Kansas City for a convention of State highway engineers in the Baltimore Hotel. That same day, Judge Lowe sent a telegram to James:

I regret that continued illness keeps me from attending important session of your association.

At this time the question of correct marking of the Federal highways is one of especial interest to me and I have no doubt but you will solve the problem as you have so many others in perfect harmony with amended Federal aid act which has lead us to the greatest bureau of road construction that the world has ever known. As president of a road organization which has freely given much time and money to the rebuilding of the Old National Highway, I want to congratulate you and express our high appreciation to the highway board of the twelve states through which it runs for the fact among others that it now constitutes the longest continuous paved stretch of road in the world.

But for the patriotic and energetic perseverance of these organizations this unbroken record could not have been believed. Neither could it have been done except for the unanimous and heroic devotion you have given to this act, which in my opinion is by far the greatest single act of Congress on the subject of internal improvements ever promulgated at a given time. The act means that fifty percent of the cost of building and maintaining the system of roads provided for will go on.

The nine northeastern states they can afford to pay their fifty percent because they will gain more than any other section of our country by the building of these highways. They will not gain in the mileage but they will gain in the gravitation of still more wealth to these nine states. Forty percent or more of the cost will be borne by the great cities or centers of population within which lies most of the balance of the wealth of the nation, this being so they can afford to pay this fifty percent because in turn more wealth will gravitate to them by the building of these roads than can possibly come to the rural district that will gain the mileage and pay only 10 percent of the cost in the states where the automobile and gasoline taxes have been appropriated (not levied mark you) appropriated to the building and maintenance of roads.

Entire system of about one hundred and eighty thousand miles of roads can be built without costing the general tax payer a copper cent in taxes. I know this sounds absurd but is the absolute truth as demonstrated in every state where the provision of this act has been followed. [Edited with punctuation and paragraphing for readability]

Judge Lowe did not explain this observation but he apparently was referring to the idea of paying for road improvements by road-user taxes such as license fees.

James replied on February 21, 1926:

I thank you very much for your appreciative telegram of the 12th, which was delivered to me at the session of the State Highway Engineers Convention at the Baltimore Hotel.

I think there is no doubt of those truly and intelligently interested in the larger aspects of highway transportation that the proposals to introduce a uniform system of marking routes, which will be subject to general extension to all important lines of travel marks a very definite advance in road administration.

I regret I was unable to reply more promptly to your message, which was received only as I was on the point of leaving the city. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

George R. Stewart on U.S. 40

In George R. Stewart's book on U.S. 40, he wrote about meeting with E. W. James to discuss the origin of the transcontinental highway:

On September 8, 1950, I sat in the Cosmos Club in Washington and talked with Mr. E. W. James. Still actively at work, he was just back from Central America, where as Chief of the Inter-American Regional Office of the Bureau of Public Roads, he had just been inspecting the latest extension of the Pan-American Highway:

“Just who,” I asked, “is actually responsible for the route that U.S. 40 follows?”

With a pleased twinkle in his eye, he gestured backward with his right hand,

pointing the thumb at his own sturdy chest

Stewart summarized the history of the named trail era, starting with the Lincoln Highway. The Lincoln Highway Association's activities "impressed the name Lincoln Highway so strongly on public consciousness that one still hears it in ordinary conversation, even though the Association itself has not functioned actively for over twenty years." (As will be discussed later, the Lincoln Highway Association ceased operation in 1928.) From there, Stewart discussed the value of the named trails, until they became "too numerous Particularly irked were the officials of the various state highway departments and those of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads."

The frustration of State and Federal highway officials had led to creation of the Joint Board on Interstate Highways, with James as secretary:

During its months of deliberation the Board had considered the question of the already marked "trails" and had decided to ignore them completely. This means, unfortunately perhaps, the end of even such a national institution as the Lincoln Highway. The Board recommended a new country-wide system to be set up on kind of a checkerboard-grid

The report of the Board was accepted, and in the next few years the system of numbered highways came to be universally accepted. A few of the old associations converted themselves, but their importance had vanished. They soon ceased to maintain road signs, and the bedizened telegraph-poles, in a few years, weathered back to gray.

Turning to U.S. 40, Stewart based his account on James's recollection of events:

At the time of the Board's deliberations the chief transcontinental route was, beyond all doubt, the Lincoln Highway. Since it lay toward the northern half of the country, it received the number 30, in the eastern part of the United States. Perhaps the Board felt, however, that the complete taking over of one of the older named highways in the new system would result in pressure that other highways also should be taken over as a whole. In any case U.S. 30 ceased to follow the line of the Lincoln Highway in northern Utah and veered northwestward, along the line of the old Oregon Trail.

A little to the south of the Lincoln Highway an important route of 1924 – also using the red-white-blue as its colors – led out of Washington, D.C., through Frederick, Maryland, and thus west to Columbus, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City and Los Angeles. It was known as the National Old Trails Association Highway, or merely, the National Old Trail. It served as the basis of U.S. 40 from Frederick to Kansas City. West of Kansas City, however, its swing-off toward the Southwest made it ineligible for inclusion as a unit in the new system of east-west highways. Directly westward, however, other routes continued, at least on paper. By means of these the new U.S. 40 passed through Denver. By the time Kremmling, Colorado, was reached, all these routes had turned off in one direction or another except the so-called Victory Highway with its yellow-blue marker. U.S. 40 followed this road on to the west, clear to San Francisco. Near Salt Lake City the route of the Victory Highway and of the new U.S. 40 coincided with that of the Lincoln

Highway for some hundred miles.

At its eastern end the new route departed from the line of the National Old Trail at Frederick, where that road swung south toward Washington. Continuing more directly eastward in accordance with the new east-west plan, U.S. 40 followed the Old Frederick Turnpike to Baltimore. As Mr. James recalls, the original plan was to end the new highway there, at tidewater on Chesapeake Bay. It was, however, apparently in later meetings, extended eastward, first to connect with U.S. 13 in Delaware, and then clear to the ocean at Atlantic City. At the first official publication of the new routes, in April 1927, U.S. 40 was a full-fledged transcontinental.

As thus established, it was essentially a combination of extensive parts of the National Old Trail and the Victory Highway, incorporating shorter sections of other roads.

Stewart noted that despite the “immediate and overwhelming” success of the U.S. numbering plan, communities resented being left off the route, “and state highway departments were subject to such pressures. U.S. 40, for instance, split between 40 North and 40 South over a long stretch in Kansas and Colorado, and only in 1935 did the northern branch become U.S. 24. [Stewart, pages 10-16]

A Standard Reply

Throughout this process, BPR received many letters from Members of Congress, named trail associations, chambers of commerce, and others objecting to replacing the names of the highways with numbers. For example, Senator Earle B. Mayfield of Texas, wrote to Chief MacDonald on April 10, 1926, to join with citizens of his State who objected to “the elimination of the names of national highways and the substitution of numbers therefor.” He admitted that standardization is often desirable, “but I submit that it is going rather far when in the interest of standardization it is proposed to eliminate the names of highways that are known almost as household words in every section of our great country”:

Sentiment is, and will always, play its part in every great undertaking. I submit that it would not have been as easy to construct the Lincoln Highway, the Jefferson Highway, the Dixie Highway, the Santa Fe Trail, and other highways if these great highways had simply been designated by cold figures.

The Senator was particularly partial to the Meridian Highway (Pembina, North Dakota, to Fort Worth, Texas), “not because it was named after the little town of Meridian, Bosque County, Texas, that is my home, but simply because the name of my home happens to be connected with the Meridian Highway.” Under the Joint Board’s recommendations, the highway “is not only destroyed, but it would be divided into three sections, each section being given a different number”:

Each of the national highways above referred to has a distinct personality that, in my opinion, should not be destroyed. Enthusiastic citizens of the nation believe in good roads, and in improved highways, and made unstinted sacrifices towards establishing the

Lincoln Highway, the Jefferson Highway, the Dixie Highway, and the Santa Fe Trail, and others, and I think it would be a serious mistake for the Government not only to allay and cool that enthusiasm, but in all probability to destroy it by eliminating the name of these highways and designating them by numerals. I do not suppose there would be any objection to adding a numeral to the highways above referred to, but most certainly the elimination of the names of our highways, in my humble opinion, should be not considered. May I not ask that you give this matter your most serious and thoughtful consideration before adopting the recommendations of the Joint Board of Interstate Highways.

Chief MacDonald replied on April 13, 1926, using language that he used in similar replies to many letters received during this period. He began by explaining that the Secretary of Agriculture had appointed the Joint Board at the request of AASHO to consider the uniform marking of important interstate highways:

It was the opinion of the Board at that time that the naming of highways was a matter entirely within the jurisdiction of the States, and if the individual States desired to perpetuate the names there would be no interference on the part of the Joint Board, nor would any action taken by the Joint Board prohibit the continuance of these names.

The same day your letter was written I received a letter from the secretary of one of the best known transcontinental trail associations in which he says:

“We are being bombarded from all directions with requests that we send letters and telegrams, etc., to Congressmen and Senators protesting against the removal of trail markers from U.S. highways.

“Our attitude has always been that the question of whether markers of highway and trail associations shall be allowed to stand rests with the individual States. Our impression has been that the Bureau of Public Roads would not attempt to take any definite stand and that the matter was one that could not properly come before the national law makers.”

This is an exact statement of the facts. Not only was the matter of perpetuation of the names of highways left to the individual States, but it was informally agreed by the members of the Board that should the States desire to carry the names of the highways on the same standards carrying the numbers adopted for the interstate highways as recommended by the Board, that the Board would make no objection. This in fact is the practice in some States now, i.e. to carry the State number and on the same standard a neat sign giving the name of the highway.

Whatever representations have been made to you are either by misinformed persons who honestly think that some injustice will be done to the old established named trails or through a wilful attempt for purely selfish purposes to misrepresent the situation to the Senators and Congressmen.

We found that there were in existence more than 250 so called trail organizations. Of these a very few had earned the right to a continuing existence. These few had kept faith with the public. They had succeeded in obtaining recognition for certain highways and worked with a definite purpose to put up markers, secure the interest of the people along the way in the improvement of their particular routes, and had built up pride in the communities in the improvement and care of the routes.

You have adequately described the situation in your reference to the Lincoln Highway, Jefferson Highway and others, and you also refer to the pride in the name which the towns along these routes have. The members of the Joint Board are all very familiar with these facts. There has been no act of the Board to interfere with the continuance of these names, and any representation to the contrary is false. On the other hand, the Association of State Highway Officials [sic] is determined if possible to wipe out the promoter of trails whose numbers and activities in collecting funds from the public have been increasing rapidly.

You know how urgent is the demand for improved roads, and how great the desire to hasten their actual accomplishment. It is this fact that has encouraged promoters to go into the field with the representation that by contributing to some new trail association Federal or State funds or both would become available and the improvements desired hastened. Needless to say, these promoters have not been in the position to control the application of one dollar of public funds. I do not criticize the civic organizations and individuals who have supported such individuals because they have been driven by the very laudable motive of doing anything possible to secure the improvement needed.

The plan to use numbers for uniform marking of important interstate roads is not an activity of the Federal Government, but a cooperative activity between the States, and all work is proceeding under the supervision of the Executive Committee of the American Association of State Highway Officials, an organization made up of the directing officials of the State highway department.

I have gone into the matter rather fully because there have been a number of letters received here from members of Congress and others who apparently have had representations made to them similar to those made to you. This statement should be helpful in doing away with such misinformation or misrepresentation. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Chief MacDonald did not say so, but the named trail era might linger on but its demise was in sight.

He would use similar, if not identical language in response to many letters from Members of Congress and others.

The Life of Judge Lowe

The Kansas City Star published a tribute to Judge Lowe on April 11, 1926:

In The Star recently appeared an account of continued progress in the building of the National Old Trails road. This transcontinental highway, considerable portions of which now are hard surfaced, has been for nearly fifteen years the chief object of care and the one ambition of a Kansas City man, Judge J. M. Lowe. It was Judge Lowe who organized the Old Trails Association, the first of its kind in the country. That organization Judge Lowe has fathered, working zealously, unselfishly and, most significant of all, without personal remuneration.

The history of American road building will record Judge Lowe as one of the outstanding pioneers in what now has become a leading development of the country. Years ago, when federal aid hardly was talked of, when the dirt roads were universal, and when state systems were unknown, Judge Lowe vigorously was maintaining up and down the land that a national highway system must come, that state systems must be laid out and that the motor vehicle must be looked to as the chief source of revenue for road construction. He protested against political interference and graft in road work; he denounced piecemeal road building, "measly little patches of road that lead nowhere," and demanded vision and business methods in construction.

Much of what the judge has worked for has been accomplished. Much yet remains to be done. But the lesson of honesty, broadmindedness and unselfishness which the man has taught has not been and will not be unavailing. In spite of his eighty years, the judge has continued to work and to hope. It has been his ambition some day to ride all the way across America on pavement. He will!

BPR Chief MacDonald saw the tribute and wrote to Judge Lowe on April 16:

I have received a copy of the Kansas City Star for April 11th, and have read with pleasure the tribute to you and your work in the editorial column. It is good to have one's efforts appreciated, and I congratulate you for having won such a splendid tribute.

With sincere good wishes, I am

Very truly yours,

/s/

Chief of Bureau

Judge Lowe did not receive Chief MacDonald's warm letter.

On April 16, 1926, Judge Lowe passed away in Kansas City. He was 82 years old. Nationally, his death was barely noted. For example, *The New York Times* mentioned his death in "Obituary Notes":

Judge J. M. LOWE, 82, President of the National Old Trails Road Association and a pioneer highway builder, died in Kansas City, Mo., yesterday. ["Obituary Notes," *The New York Times*, April 17, 1926, page 17]

Touring Topics, the magazine of the Automobile Club of Southern California, had documented the club's long association with Judge Lowe and the National Old Trails Road Association. Following his death, the magazine published a tribute to him and his work:

RENOWNED ROAD BUILDER PASSES

Judge J. M. Lowe, "father of the National Old Trails Road," passed to his reward on Friday, April 16, in Kansas City, Missouri, after an illness of many months.

Judge Lowe was a man of transcendent vision; of indomitable zeal and faith. His mind, decades ago, envisioned the flow and ebb of motor travel from coast to coast. His practical mind, grappling with the requirements of this flood of future travel, foresaw the need and the practicality of a surfaced highway connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific; and to Judge Lowe is due the credit for the creation and existence of the National Old Trails Road, that tremendous artery that unwinds its length for three thousand miles, traversing eleven States [sic] and with its terminals in Baltimore, Maryland, and Los Angeles, California.

Judge Lowe advocated the construction of motor roads with ardor and/or when the automobile was in its infancy. His shibboleth was "Good Roads." He neither wearied nor faltered in the fight when hailed as visionary or crank or worse. He was the first man to propound the theory of utilizing all automobile license fees and taxes for the construction and maintenance of motor highways.

April 17, 1912, the National Old Trails Road Association was formed to labor for the completion of a continuous improved highway from Baltimore to Los Angeles, utilizing the historic Santa Fe Trail as its principal Western link and with other links to be provided for at later dates. Judge Lowe was the first and only president of this association. For fourteen long years, to the very day of his death, Judge Lowe was its motivating, directing and executive head, divesting himself of all other business cares to give his whole time to this monumental undertaking and serving without monetary compensation of any kind. No greater example of whole-hearted devotion to a cause exists in the annals of the present generation of Americans and it is more than gratifying to know that this wonderful old fighter lived to see the fruition of his hopes and efforts.

Few men in all the world's history have left a more colossal life memorial than is this three thousand-mile road of teeming travel, the longest continuous mileage of improved road in all the world. Few men have left a greater heritage to their fellow men than has Judge Lowe. ["Renowned Road Builder Passes," *Touring Topics*, May 1926, page 27]

Local newspapers covered Judge Lowe's death more extensively. *The Kansas City Star* published an obituary on the day of his death:

Judge J. M. Lowe, president of the National Old Trails Road Association, died at his home at the St. Regis hotel early today. Judge Lowe, a pioneer in highway building known throughout the United States, had been a resident of Kansas City more than forty

years. He was 82 years old, and had been in ill health more than a year.

Judge Lowe was one of the first advocates in the country of connected highway systems, state and national. For more than seventeen years he had devoted his time, efforts and personal funds to highway promotion, chiefly to the building of the National Old Trails road across the continent.

For years the ambition of Judge Lowe was to ride all the way across the United States on pavement. Had he lived a few years longer, his hope would have been realized, for the Old Trails road now is paved all the way from its eastern terminus at Washington, D.C., to Kansas City, and a considerable part of the way from this point to its western terminus at Los Angeles.

The obituary discussed his long life before joining the highway crusade. Joseph Macauley Lowe had been born in Pendleton County, Kentucky, in 1844 and “was a typical gentleman of the old school of the South.” His grandfather had migrated from Virginia to Kentucky. Many members of his Anglo-German family had “been prominent in English and early American life”:

Leaving the Kentucky plantation at the age of 16, Judge Lowe enlisted in the Confederate army and served several months until the close of the Civil War. Following that he taught school at Greenfield, Ind., and shortly began the study of law. He served as clerk in the Indiana state senate and was admitted to the bar in that state. In 1868 Judge Lowe moved to Plattsburg, Mo., where he practiced law fifteen years. For four successive terms he served as prosecuting attorney of Clinton County. It was at Plattsburg that Judge Lowe married Mary Elizabeth McWilliams, daughter of a physician there. The McWilliams family also was of southern ancestry and originally had lived in Kentucky.

After moving to Kansas City more than 40 years earlier, he “devoted most of his time to personal affairs, although for several years he gave attention to the practice of law”:

A Democrat of the old persuasion, he also gave some attention to political affairs from time to time, although he did not become affiliated with factional or boss politics in the city. About fourteen years ago he was one of the leaders in an independent political movement in Kansas City. Judge Lowe occupied various appointive offices, and also served as judge of the county court of Jackson County.

Judge Lowe was a man of polished manners, he was widely read, an interesting conversationalist, and an orator of considerable force. For many years he was in demand as a speaker at political and business functions and, especially in later years, at highway conventions throughout the United States.

About seventeen years ago, when growth of the motor car industry made it evident that hard roads must be had, Judge Lowe turned his attention to highway promotion and building. From that day virtually until the hour of his death, the all-absorbing theme with him was highways, connected highways, “that lead somewhere, not measly patches of road.”

“I took up this work actively seventeen years ago,” Judge Lowe said recently. “And I have devoted every hour of my time since then to construction of the road (the National Old Trails). I have enjoyed to the limit every hour of that time. The pleasure has been full compensation for what I have done, and when the task is finished I shall feel amply rewarded for the dreary, heartbreaking periods through which we have passed.”

Judge Lowe always served the association without pay. “And, in addition, he contributed of his own means to support the road organization and its work. Judge Lowe declared he was not selfish in giving his all to one road, because he wanted that highway to serve as an example to road building throughout the country.”

The *Star* recalled his plan, 13 years earlier, for a highway system for Missouri that would cost 50 million dollars. “Mention of such a sum for state roads at that time was astounding. But Judge Lowe calmly asserted the expenditure was necessary, and showed how it could be made without burdening the taxpayer.” He proposed to finance the work by devoting revenue from motor vehicle licenses to the cause – “the first person in the United States” to do so.

Judge Lowe had proposed Federal legislation to create a national highway network before enactment of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. He considered the Federal-aid concept a compromise. “What he advocated was a national system of roads built entirely by the government; state systems built wholly by the states, and county systems, built by the counties alone”:

Pork barrel methods, political domination of road work and waste of funds on disconnected roads built largely as political favors, Judge Lowe denounced for years. He came to be feared by politicians both in the state and in congress, who had begun to see the big public demand for highways, the possibility of big sums being invested in the enterprise for selfish purposes. It was Judge Lowe’s influence, as much, perhaps, as that of any other man in the country, that helped to get road building out of politics and on a sound business basis.

The article concluded:

Judge Lowe, a member of the Baptist church, was an ardent believer in the fundamental, long accepted principles of orthodox religion. When the fundamentalist-modernist controversy broke in the country he took an active part in defending traditional religious belief and wrote fully in defense of his position. He wrote numerous articles and pamphlets on highway work, together with a volume giving an extensive history of the National Old Trails road, which originally had been laid out and in part built by the government more than one hundred years ago.

Judge Lowe a few years ago was a member of the board of management of the Missouri Confederate home at Higginsville, having been appointed by Governor Arthur M. Hyde. Recently he was made honorary vice-president of the National Optimist Club. He held membership in numerous organizations.

Judge Lowe was survived by his widow Mary; a daughter, Mrs. Hughes Bryant of Kansas City; and a son, J. Roger Lowe, of Lees Summit. Judge and Mrs. Lowe had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary about a month before his death.

On April 17, 1926, the *Star* contained an editorial recalling the life of Judge J. M. Lowe, "Citizen and Man":

A community finds its chief enrichment in the examples of its upstanding citizens. Such a citizen was Judge J. M. Lowe, who died yesterday. The example left by Judge Lowe is an example of courage, of militant honesty, unselfishness, vision, faith. Here was a man whose life is a lesson for those who waver and are uncertain, for those who fear to stand out against wrong, pettiness, fraud, narrowness. Judge Lowe was a man firm in his beliefs, religious and political; he was uncompromising for the right and confident that, ultimately, the right would prevail.

A loyal member of one party throughout his long life of more than four score years, Judge Lowe was never a slave to party or to party leaders. Time after time he denounced leaders whom he believed false to party principles, insincere, incompetent or dishonest. And he followed that course openly and unafraid at the risk of being termed disloyal and a deserter of party organization. Judge Lowe's service as election commissioner in Kansas City for six years was typical. In that office he fought dishonesty in politics and at elections, regardless of party. He was against political boss rule; he was a foe of inefficiency and lax methods of administration in public office. He contended for better election laws that would help to make honest voting easy and dishonest voting hard. In political life he made enemies, of course, as later he encountered foes in another form of public activity.

The contest that Judge Lowe waged for honest, businesslike methods in road building was but a continuation of previous public service. In this field he exercised rare vision, unselfishness and devotion. He was far ahead of most men in seeing the needs of the road building situation. He realized years ago that the motor vehicle would mean something of a revolution in methods of travel and communication; that state and county lines would mean little on the highway map of the future. Hence, his persistent, vigorous stand for connected highway systems, each system, national, state, and county, to be built through exercise of distinct and definite responsibility. He saw that the hundreds of millions of dollars the country would be investing in roads must be kept out of the hands of politicians if fraud, waste and incompetence were not to do their expensive work and the public end the loser. So, without pay and without hope of reward of any kind save that which comes through a consciousness of service honestly rendered, Judge Lowe gave the entire latter period of his life to the cause of good roads.

Optimistic, fearless, firm in faith, ever a fighter, this man has ended his work. The community, the country, is the gainer from his life.

Judge Lowe's widow, Mary McWilliams Lowe, died on May 2, 1939, at Menorah Hospital after

a brief illness. She was 83 years old. Between her daughter and son, she had six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren as discussed in an obituary published in *The Kansas City Times* on May 3, 1939:

Although Mrs. Lowe's chief interests centered about her home and family, she shared her husband's dream of a network of hard-surface highways linking the principal cities of the United States. Throughout Judge Lowe's long campaign that succeeded in securing the passage of the federal aid act during the first Wilson Administration, Mrs. Lowe devoted herself to the cause, too.

Although Mrs. Lowe's active work in the highway movement ended with her husband's death April 16, 1926, she continued her interest in motoring, making several trips across the continent Nothing gave Mrs. Lowe greater satisfaction, in her later years, than the knowledge that Judge Lowe's once criticized dream reached a brilliant fulfillment

Believing in the Victorian tradition that a woman's place was in the home, Mrs. Lowe belonged to no clubs and limited her activities to her family and her husband's highway interests.

Mrs. Lowe had been born on January 23, 1856, at Plattsburg. "Related to President Cleveland and the Revolutionary war hero, Col. Benjamin Cleveland of Virginia, Mrs. Lowe's ancestors included six officers in the Revolutionary arm and six officers in the Confederate army. Her parents were "members of old southern families that came to Missouri about the time of the Mexican war."

Her interest in politics and international affairs was maintained throughout her life. A southern Democrat, Mrs. Lowe voted for only two Presidents, Woodrow Wilson and President Roosevelt.

On August 4, 1926, Frank A. Davis, manager of the National Old Trails Road Association, wrote to Chief MacDonald in response to a telegram to the association's convention wishing the association continued progress.:

I thank you for your interest in the National Old Trails and your wish for our continued progress as indicated by your wire to our Convention. We expect to continue along the same lines as established by our late President Judge Lowe, and hope to cooperate very closely with your department.

By then, the association's letterhead had been revised. Davis was the Secretary-Manager. Julius W. Becker of Springerville was General Vice-President. The new President was a local official, temporarily out of office, named Harry S. Truman.

D.A.R. Meets in Washington - 1926

During D.A.R.'s continental congress from April 19 to 24, 1926, Mrs. Moss, national chairman

of the National Old Trails Road Committee, gave the committee's annual report. She summarized the committee's evolution from a plan to secure Federal legislation and post signs along the National Old Trails Road to placing a large monument in each of the 12 States it passed through "to mark some historical spot thereon or commemorate some historical act of the Revolutionary period":

To this end your National Chairman has been bending every effort the past two years, asking for a 10 cent per capita contribution from all the State societies and urging that we consummate a pledge made in the past intended as a memorial to the "mighty throng of our pioneer men and women who kept the faith and builded true," that we of today might journey through a land of plenty and of every convenience, never to know the hardships they endured, never to realize the sufferings they bore.

The National Old Trails Road, she said, "has been built, and, with the exception of a very few miles, it is a hard-surfaced road from ocean-to-ocean; and whereas the pioneer of the earlier day traveled months to reach the western coast, it is now a matter of a few days' pleasant travel." Every State had an "energetic program" of building good roads, and whether a motorist is going east, west, north, or south, "really remarkable systems of concrete highway give access to all parts of the United States." In securing a highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the committee's primary goal had been achieved, "but we as an organization have still to erect our memorial markers."

She experienced "a decided thrill of joy and pride" in the hard work of the D.A.R. that allowed her "to announce today that the fund of \$12,000 necessary to erect the twelve markers, at approximately \$1,000 each . . . has been contributed in full, and this fund is now available, and the work of erecting the markers may proceed as soon as a suitable design shall be chosen." After discussing State contributions to the fund, she concluded:

Many letters have been written by your National Chairman during the three years and copies of different bills and many maps distributed; the vice-chairmen in charge of the several sections have rendered loyal service, and it is through their untiring and persistent efforts that we have reached the goal, and the National Chairman wishes to close her last report with a word of grateful appreciation for their able assistance.

Mrs. Moss did not discuss the design of the proposed monument.

President General Mrs. Anthony Wayne Cook told the audience, "This is not only a gratifying report, but a very wonderful one." [*Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution*, April 1926, pages 255-259]

On April 24, the resolutions committee adopted a resolution:

RETAIN NAMES ON NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

Whereas, There has been inaugurated a movement to use numbers instead of names for the National Highways; and

Whereas, Such action would do away with the significance of the National Old Trails Road, the Lincoln Highway, Old Santa Fe Trail, Meridian Highway, Dixie Highway, King's Trail, Glacier to Gulf, and Old Spanish Trail, and would substitute for historic nomenclature cold numbers which have neither patriotic nor romantic appeal; and

Be It Resolved, That the Thirty-fifth Continental Congress Daughters of the American Revolution, go on record as favoring the retention of significant names for the National highways and proper marking of said names upon the designated roads; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be sent to the Board of Interstate Highways with the request that they take favorable action upon this question.

The resolution was signed by Mrs. Charles B. Jones, State Regent of Texas, and Mrs. Moss.

That same day, the Recording Secretary General of the D.A.R., Mrs. Alice Frye Briggs, transmitted a copy of the resolution to BPR Chief MacDonald.

MacDonald's May 19 reply was similar to the letters he sent to Senator Mayfield and many others in response to inquiries on the plan for numbering the country's main highways. He began, "it is apparent from the resolution that your society is not informed as to the facts," which he proceeded to provide. During the Joint Board's first meeting, the members decided "that the naming of highways was a matter entirely within the jurisdiction of the States, and if the individual States desired to perpetuate the names there would be no interference on the part of the Joint Board, nor would any action taken by the Joint Board prohibit the continuance of these names."

He referenced the letter he had received from "one of the best known transcontinental trail associations," stating that the decision on naming highways rested entirely with the States, and that BPR would not interfere. The was "an exact statement of the facts." He assured D.A.R. that neither the Joint Board, which was defunct, nor BPR would interfere if States decided to retain the names as well as displaying the numbers. "There has been no act of the Board to interfere with the continuance of these names, and any representation to the contrary is false." After discussing the promoters of the named trails, he clarified that the plan to use numbers was "not an activity of the Federal Government," but a cooperative State initiative. He concluded, as in other similar letters, that, "I have gone into this matter rather fully with the hope that this statement will be helpful in doing away with misinformation and misrepresentation." [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Harry S. Truman

When the National Old Trails Road Association assembled at the Hotel Muehlebach in Kansas City, Missouri, for its annual convention on July 24, 1926, the association faced its greatest crisis. The plan for the U.S. numbered highway system, though not yet approved, had fractured the road by splitting it among several numbers. Some parts of the route, particularly in Missouri, had been left off the main number. U.S. 40, as well as State Route 2. And the National Old Trails Road's greatest champion, Judge Lowe, had passed away.

The 150 delegates to the convention voted to maintain the organization even though the Federal-aid highway program, in cooperation with State highway departments, was accomplishing

highway improvements without the need for booster associations. To continue its work, the association would need a new leader for the next stage in the association's work.

For president, the association chose Judge Harry S. Truman of Independence in Jackson County, Missouri. In Truman, the association had chosen a man who had a lifelong love of motor vehicles and roads. As a young man, he longed for an automobile when he was courting his future wife, Bess, who lived in Independence. "Just imagine how often I'd burn the pike from here to Independence," he wrote to her from his family's farm on Blue Ridge Boulevard in Grandview (now part of Kansas City, just off U.S. 71 in the southern part of the urban area).

In 1914, his mother agreed to pay for an auto – but Truman didn't want a Model T that would brand him as a farmer. As biographer David McCullough observed, Truman wanted all the power his car could give:

Nothing could have pleased him more or made such an immediate difference in his life. He had never had anything of his own of such value or that drew such attention. He was to love automobiles all his life, but this was *the* automobile of his life.

It was a big, black, five passenger 1922-model Stafford, hand-built in Kansas City by a man named Terry Stafford On a good road, Harry soon demonstrated, it could do 60 miles an hour. It was a rich man's car. New, it sold for \$2,350. Harry paid \$650 From all practical viewpoints such an automobile was a huge extravagance – but to Harry \$650 for an automobile was a "bargain" With a little work on the engine, Harry found, he could go up Dodson Hill – considered the great test locally – so fast he had to shut off the power before reaching the crest.

Soon, he was visiting Bess regularly and taking her for a "spin" in his "machine." This love of driving never left him. [McCullough, David, *Truman*, Simon and Schuster, 1992, pages 92-93. For more on the life of Harry S. Truman, see "The Man Who Loved Roads" on this Website]

During the European War, he had served in France, where he discovered his ability to lead men and to earn not only their respect but their loyalty. But that wasn't all he learned. As he wrote to his future wife on May 19, 1918, from France:

The French know how to build roads and also how to keep them up. They are just like a billiard table and every twenty meters there are trees on each side. [Ferrell, Robert H., editor, *Dear Bess: The Letters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1910-1959*, W. W. Norton and Company, 1983, page 262]

Later that year, on November 10, he revealed his homesickness to Bess:

This has been a beautiful Sunday – the sun shining and as warm as summer. It sure made me wish for Lizzie and five gallons of gas with her nose pointed down Blue Ridge Boulevard and me stepping on the throttle to get there quickly. I wonder how long it will be before we do any riding down that road. [*Dear Bess*, page 280]

After the war, Truman and a friend, Eddie Jacobson, opened a clothing store in 1919. Truman

and Jacobson Haberdashery was at 12th and Baltimore (104 West 12th) in Kansas City on the ground floor of the Baltimore Hotel and across the street from the Hotel Muehlebach. The store was an initial success, but the recession of the early 1920s resulted in its closure in 1921 and debt for both men.

In 1922, Truman ran for election as a Jackson County Judge, an administrative post. The “court” included two judges (eastern and western) and a presiding judge; Truman ran for the eastern judge covering the outlying part of the county. As McCullough explained:

The judges had control of the county purse strings. They hired and controlled the road overseers, as well as road gangs, county clerks, and other employees numbering in the hundreds. They could also determine who was awarded county contracts, and for the county road system, such as it was, there seemed a never-ending need for maintenance and repairs. [McCullough, page 159]

He campaigned for better roads and sound management. His campaign came after enactment of Missouri’s Centennial Road Act on August 4, 1921. At one campaign stop, he told the crowd:

The time has arrived for some definite policy to be pursued in regard to our highways and our finances. They are so closely connected with our tax problem that if they are properly cared for, the tax problem will care for itself. [McCullough, page 163]

He won the election and took office as Judge Truman. McCullough summarized how:

Harry Truman, as he later boasted, made himself "completely familiar with every road and bridge" Years of mismanagement and crooked contracts had produced roads so poorly constructed that they caved in like pie crusts. Bridges were inadequate or in sad repair" The improvements made now were impossible to ignore. Even the Kansas City *Star* had praise for what was happening under the crisp, efficient new county administration. “When a road project or a bridge application is brought before the county court, here is what happens,” wrote one Republican. "Judge McElroy turns to Judge Truman and asks him what about it. Nine times out of ten Judge Truman already has been on the ground and knows all about the proposition. He explains it to the court. Judge McElroy then says, ‘All right, if you say so I move the work be done,’ and it is ordered." [McCullough, page 167]

Judge Lowe’s frequent reference to mismanagement of road management stemmed at least in part from his observation of roads close to home.

The job paid \$3,465 a year, much needed funds for the failed businessman trying to support a family while paying off his debts.

Despite an excellent record, Truman lost his reelection bid in 1924 – by 877 votes, the only election he ever lost – against Republican candidates aligned with the Ku Klux Klan, which was in the ascendancy at the time and having an impact on races in several States. Another factor in the loss was the success of President Coolidge, who secured nearly half the votes in Missouri.

Aged 40, out of work, broke, and in debt, he planned to run again in 2 years, but in the meantime, he needed to make a living to support his family:

From an office in the Board of Trade Building, he began selling memberships in the Kansas City Automobile Club, working on commission, which, after expenses, came to approximately five dollars for every new member he recruited. In a year he had sold more than a thousand memberships and cleared \$5,000, which, with a family to support and debts to pay, he greatly needed. Roads, highways, the new age of the automobile had become his specialty. [McCullough, page 171]

The National Old Trails Road Association elected Judge Harry S. Truman on July 23, 1926, as its second president. In addition, the association voted to take steps to encourage officials of the States west of Kansas City to provide a hard surface to their portions of the National Old Trails Road. According to a local news account, “Virtually all of the trail east of Kansas City is hard surfaced, it was said.”

Like Judge Lowe, Truman would lead the association without a salary. According to the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum:

The earliest tax form I found was for 1927. In all of the forms that I checked from 1927 through 1933 (the year before Truman was elected to the U.S. Senate, which substantially increased his income), the only income that is reported is his salary as a Judge of the Jackson County Court, which ranged from about \$5,000 to \$6,500 annually. [Sowell, Randy, Truman Library, email, November 30, 2022]

In addition to electing a new president, the convention elected Frank A. Davis secretary-treasurer. Davis, long involved with the association, also was involved with the King of Trails Association (see part 3), served as manager of the Kansas City Automobile Club, and was a friend of Truman's. Other elected officials included Julius W. Becker of Springerville as general vice-president, and E. R. Moses of Great Bend, Kansas. [“Judge Truman Honored,” *Independence Examiner*, July 24, 1926. Provided by Randy Sowell, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum; “Old Trails Association to Continue Work,” *Douglas [AZ] Daily Dispatch*, July 24, 1926]

Having served as one of the district judges in Jackson County, Truman sought election as the presiding judge in November 1926 and won a 4-year term by 16,000 votes. His salary increased to \$6,000. According to Margaret Truman's biography of her father, Truman's predecessor as presiding judge, Miles Bulger, “had made a policy of boondoggling away millions and running the country into murderous debt. In 1921 the Bulger court had spent \$1,070,000 on roads that were already disintegrating because they had been built by crooked contractors using shoddy, low-grade materials.”

She wrote of her father:

He dates the real beginning of his political career from this 1926 election. For the first time he had the kind of authority he needed to build a record that voters could see and

admire. He poured all his energy into the job, and he needed every bit of it. The county government was in disastrous shape. The roads, most of them built by Bulger, were called “piecrusts” by two local engineers whom my father hired to survey them. “These men, with my assistance planned a system of roads estimated to cost \$6,500,000,” Dad says. [Truman, Margaret, *Harry S. Truman*, William Morrow and Company, 1972, pages 67, 70]

The Business Plan

Now that Judge Lowe was no longer available to use his resources to supplement the finances of the National Old Trails Road Association, its future depended on dues paid by members, businesses, and other supporters.

His successor, who was still paying debts incurred from his failed haberdashery store, understood the importance of assuring income for the association. The members had decided to continue the association’s operations, but Truman would have to put it on a solid financial footing.

In November 1926, he was still working on the plan, as reported in *The Republican* of Oakland, Maryland. One issue was to work out a coordinating agreement with the newly formed National Highway Booster Association of Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio. The booster group held a preliminary meeting during August 1926 in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. When the group met again a month later on September 23 in Zanesville, Ohio, representatives from seven States were in for a surprise:

It was disclosed that there already was a similar organization, known as the National Old Trails Association [sic] in existence, a fact which few of those in attendance knew about.

J. P. Eagleson, of Washington [Pa.], who is vice-president of the National Old Trails Association, told the gathering at Zanesville that the association had been formed in 1912, covering the highway from Maryland to the Pacific Coast.

The purpose of the meeting at Zanesville was to form a permanent organization known as the National Highway Booster Association, and to discuss ways and means of perpetuating the traditions and history of the Old Trails, advertising its scenic beauty and many points of historical interest, and to promote additional tourist travel on the highway.

When Mr. Eagleson explained that a similar organization already was in existence, but had been inactive of late years because of lack of funds, George E. Lutz, temporary president of the National Highway Booster Association, urged that a committee be appointed with the view of consolidating the two bodies, the suggestion being favorably acted upon. [“Seven States Join to Boost National Highway,” *The Republican*, September 30, 1926]

(On February 27, 1927, when the National Highway Booster Association met in Wheeling, it considered recommendations “that the highway be used to erect beacon lights for the proposed

model airway across the country. A large number of planes follow the course of the pike every month, and it would seem logical that this route would be quite advantageous for the erection of beacons. Should this be done, it would be a simple matter to light the roadbed as well and thereby make a most excellent highway for both day and night, driving.” [“Highway Booster Association,” *The Republic*, February 24, 1917])

By November, Truman had not finalized a business plan for the National Old Trails Road Association:

The plan of financing the national organization has not yet been completed and Judge Harry S. Truman, president of the older organization, was authorized to work out a plan and submit it for approval to both groups at their meetings later. It is figured, however, that on the basis of \$5 a year for national membership, reliable hotels, restaurants, garages and other business places along the highway will become members and thus entitled to display the highway association insignia. These places will be thoroughly examined before being permitted to become members in order that all firms may have reliable backing in the association.

Among the activities of the association will be to issue courtesy cards to all tourists using the highway, to put up direction signs in all towns through which it passes and the many other necessities which may be required to make the National Highway the most popular road by which tourists may travel during the touring season.

During a recent meeting of the two groups in Dayton, Ohio, a plan was tentatively adopted, pending approval in coming months:

The plan as set forth in Dayton calls for the division of the highway system into four divisions extending from the Eastern seaboard to the Pacific coast, with terminals at Baltimore and Los Angeles. The National Old Trails road is perhaps the most famous in the United States and from the Eastern seaboard to St. Louis consists of the old Cumberland Trail and the National Pike, while from St. Louis westward it consists of the Boon’s Lick Trail, the old Santa Fe trail and old Spanish trails extending to Los Angeles. Passing through 12 states, the highway presents a vast opportunity to an organization for the bringing of tourists into those states which it traverses and by means of a consolidated organization, national in scope, those interested in boosting the highway feel that better results can be obtained.

The local division of the highway will consist of Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland with a headquarters at a suitable point in either of the four states. In controlling the work of the association it is planned to have the president and secretary of the national organization and two vice-presidents from each state form a board of directors, while the president and representatives from each state of the four divisions will form an executive committee. It is planned to have national headquarters located in Kansas City, where the National Old Trails Association [sic], which was formed in 1912, and is the older of the two organizations, now has its headquarters. [“Consolidation of Old Trails Roads Boosted,” *The Republic*, November 25, 1926, page 1]

While trying to put the association on a solid foundation, Truman was running for election as presiding judge of Jackson County. After his victory, Truman received dozens of congratulatory calls, but he was not home to receive them. He was on the road for the National Old Trails Association. [Truman, Margaret, *Bess W. Truman*, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986, page 102]

The trip appears to have been an opportunity for the new president to meet leading members of the association, familiarize himself with the road, and build relationships that would benefit the organization. Frank Davis accompanied Truman on the trip. Truman had wanted Bess to travel with him, but she stayed home with their little girl Margaret. Although Bess accommodated her husband's annual 2-week summer army reserve duty, Bess "pursued him with complaints" during his trips for the National Old Trails Road. [Bess, page 102]

The collection of letters in *Dear Bess* from Truman to his wife provide a partial picture of his activities as president of the National Old Trails Road Association. The Truman Library and Museum has some additional letters, beginning with November 7, 1926, in Herington, Kansas:

Dear Bess:

We have kept our schedule to the dot. Got to Council Grove at 2:30 P.M. and met all the prominent citizens in town, at "the" Building and Loan Association office. You'd think I was the President of the U.S. We discussed the National Old Trails, cussed Osage City, the next larger town to the east (we'll do the same for them when we go to Osage), and came over here to Herington. Arrived at 5:45, left Council Grove at 5:45. [This anomaly was possible because of the time zone variables in Kansas.] It is twenty-six miles, so we lost no time on the finest dirt road you ever saw. Had a flat tire at Burlingame. The hotel man called a garage and had it fixed while we ate the finest chicken dinner you ever saw with the leading lawyer, the county judge (commissioner they call him out here), and a couple of other prominent citizens. Tonight we'll do the same here. It has been misting since 3:00 P.M. I don't know if it is going to rain but I hope not. I am feeling fine and dandy. My voice is improved. I've eaten a box of the whiskered bro's. cough drops. Be sure and kiss my baby and look in the mirror for one for yourself. Will write you tomorrow. I wish you and the young lady were here. Love to you both by the bushel.

Yours, Harry

November 08, 1926

The Palace Hotel, Lyons, Kans. Nov, 8, 8:30 P.M.

Dear Bess:

We got on a train at Herington at 1:20 after Davis & I had made speeches to the Rotary Club and went to McPherson, a beautiful little town right in the center of a county of the

same name. We had an hour there between trains and a number of the prominent citizens including the Mayor what would be the Presiding Judge of the County Court in Mo (they call him Commissioner out here) and the Chamber of Commerce head met us at the Chamber of Commerce and we had a very good meeting. At 5 o'clock we caught a Santa Fe train for this place and got here for the regular meeting of the Chamber of Commerce which they turned into a good roads boosters meeting and Harry had to make a real speech or try to. They've put us up at a good hotel and we can't pay for anything. We are leaving by bus in the morning for Sterling, south of here where we'll catch a main line Santa Fe for Great Bend where we'll have another booster's meet.

It has cleared off as nice as can be and by the time we get back the roads will be as good as when we came down. I'm feeling fine and I hope you are. How many phone calls from the Saviors of Democracy have you had? I hope Miss Marger is behaving herself. I wish I could see her.

Be sure and kiss her for her daddy. Lots of love to her mamma from

Your Harry.

November 09, 1926

Hotel Zarah, Great Bend, Kans. Tuesday 10:30, November 9, 1926

Dear Bess:

Got up at six-thirty, had grapefruit, bacon and eggs, oatmeal, toast, and hot tea for breakfast. Took a bus for Sterling and got a Santa Fe train for this place. Mr. Moses, of the Moses Milling Co., met us in a big Hudson sedan and the president of the Chamber of Commerce was there in his Buick sedan. We are billed to speak to the Lions Club at noon, after which these gentlemen are going to drive us over to Larned for a 3:00 P.M. meeting and a Chamber of Commerce meeting at six-thirty at Kinsley, after which they will drive us to Dodge. This is almost like campaigning for President except that the people are making promises to me instead of the other way around. They sure do treat us royally. The Rumanian Queen had nothing on us.

The weather is ideal, as pretty a day as you can wish for. This a beautiful town [sic] and seems to be plumb full of live wires. I do hope I get a letter in Dodge. Bill Francisco was at Lyons. He's straightened up and is making good as a salesman for the Rock Island Imp. Co.

You sure ought to be along. We'd have the time of our lives. I've got a trip all arranged to California for next fall if you want to take it. Kiss my baby and take a carload for yourself. I've got to run.

Love from Your Harry

The comment about Queen Marie of Rumania referred to a sore point with Bess. According to Margaret Truman:

Bess reported that Sunday was “poky” without her husband. She had wanted to go to a reception for Queen Marie of Rumania, who visited Kansas City during a world tour. Her majesty was the guest of honor at a musical extravaganza staged on November 5, to raise money to pay for the city’s memorial to the dead of World War I. Bess and Harry had been invited. She declared herself unable to go without him.

Bess allowed the comment to pass, as Margaret explained:

Instead, there were more complaints about missing the Queen and about the deluge of telephone calls from jobseekers

She had succeeded in making him feel guilty. Although I think I have made it clear that I love both my parents, I must confess to a certain prejudice in favor of my father as I read these letters. The man was only trying to make a living for himself and his family! I suspect it was his honesty that got him into trouble. Much as he loved his wife and daughter, Harry Truman also liked to get out and see the rest of the country. He poured out his fascination for places such as Dodge City and the characters he met there and elsewhere Bess did not find such pieces of living history as interesting as her husband did. More to the point, he was enjoying himself too much – while he was several hundred miles away from her.

It did not seem to matter that he had urged her to come with him. “The child” was her excuse to stay home now, although her two sisters-in-law were ready and willing to substitute for her [Bess, pages 102-103]

Margaret cited the next letter as an example of activities and people that Harry found fascinating, such as the details about Ham Bell, while Bess did not.

Dodge City, Kans

November 10, 1926, 5:30 P.M. (or 4:30?)

Dear Bess:

We had a fine meeting at 10 A.M. It lasted until 3 o'clock this afternoon with time out for lunch. We succeeded in getting Larned and Kinsley to let the wind dispose of their signboards tonight and all the towns from Garden City to Herington have buried the hatchet and are now pulling hammer and tongs for the National Old Trails Road. I also got them to pass a resolution favoring a State Highway Commission for Kansas, similar to ours in Missouri. That was a real accomplishment because the Kansans are 'agin" it on general principles. The president and sec. of the Chamber of Commerce wanted us to stay two days more and do some more fixing, but I told them we had some [fixing] to do at Marshall Missouri and Dayton, Ohio.

I met Ham Bell, who was mayor of South Dodge at the same time Bat Masterson was mayor of North Dodge. One lies south of the R.R. and the other north of it. They tell me that the Hon. Ham was not so pious in those days as he is now. He's a pillar of the Methodist Church and places a bouquet on the altar every Sunday now, but they tell it on him that in days gone by, when he ran a dance hall in the part of the city of which he was the presiding officer, he was pitched bodily over into his part of town by the invincible Mr. Masterson when he came across the track to meet some ladies from Wichita who were going to work for him. It seems that inhabitants of the two sections were supposed to stay in their own bailiwicks and if they ventured into strange territory, they did so at their own bodily risk. It seems that Mr. Bell thought he could get over to the train and back without attracting attention, but a long scar on his face shows that he failed. He's forgotten it and no one can persuade him to mention it, but gossipy neighbors spilled the beans.

We went out to old Ft. Dodge, southeast of here on the Arkansas River, just to say we were there. It is now a soldier's home and not interesting to look at except that it was an Indian frontier about sixty years ago. The fort is four miles from town because it was against the law to sell booze within that distance of a government post in those days and when the R.R. came they had to start the town four miles away. They showed us "Boot Hill," where they buried the gentlemen who were slow on the draw in an argument. It has a schoolhouse on it, a large brick structure which the city has outgrown. It has been abandoned as a school for a better one and is now vacant. The Catholics built a fine hospital here and some of the "Sheet Bros." bought "Boot Hill" to build a finer one but fell out among themselves, as usual, and it's still Boot Hill with an old schoolhouse on it. I am enclosing you a picture of it.

We're leaving at 7:00 P.M. and will be home Friday. You really don't know how awful glad I was to hear from you. I'm sorry you were so uneasy about me but I was never better in my life. I hate it because you had a poky Sunday. I hope the time will soon come when you never have one. Be sure and kiss my baby and take a carload of love for yourself.

Your Harry

Dodge City, Kans., Nov. 10, 1926 Tuesday, 10:15, maybe 9:15

Dear Bess:

We had a grand meeting in Great Bend and Mr. Moses and the president of the Chamber of Commerce hooked up a fine 1927 Buick sedan and hauled us to Larned where we had a meeting at the Cafe Bon-bon with the town's leading citizens, after which we drove out to Pawnee Rock, which is a rock hill about one hundred feet above the surrounding plain at a little place about twenty miles southwest of Great Bend called Pawnee Rock and from the top of which you can see for miles. It is the only rock in forty miles and was formerly used by Indians as a place from which to jump out and slaughter unsuspecting

travelers who were going down the Santa Fe Trail. The D.A.R. have put a fence around it and erected a fine monument on top of it to the early pioneers.

We drove on to Kinsley, where we had another meeting at 8:00 P.M. At Kinsley the road forks going east and the new Santa Fe Trail goes by way of St. John and Syracuse to Hutchinson and Emporia. At Larned the road splits and goes west to Garden City by way of Jetmore and is called North 50. If Larned directs traffic straight west by North 50, it misses Kinsley and Dodge City. If Kinsley directs traffic east over the new Santa Fe Trail, it misses Larned and Great Bend. Larned and Kinsley each have had signs up directing traffic away from the other but they each claimed that some outside town on the other road had put up the sign. The inhabitants of each town are almost afraid to be caught in the other town because of the situation. We have delegates from each place due at our meeting here tomorrow and from the look of things we have reestablished good relations and will have all the cities in this neighborhood pulling for our National Old Trails, which is what we came for.

I have met some real characters on this trip. This Old Man Moses I rode down with on the train from Kinsley and in the auto to that place is not the Kansas Milling Co. Moses but is a financier of these parts. He owns (or did until he gave them away) four department stores and three banks besides generous portions of the business sections of Great Bend, Larned, Pawnee Rock, and various and sundry other towns. Davis tells me he's worth a million or two. He has two sons and some granddaughters in whom he seems to be very much interested. He gave his department stores to the managers who had been with him longest and organized a finance company to run his banks and gave them to his sons. He is still burdened with his real estate. His wife died in June, but he told me that they had seen everything on the American continent and most of Europe before she died and that he intended to keep their big house in Great Bend running just as if she were alive for they both believed in getting everything out of life there is in it. He came here from Sedalia, Missouri, in 1874 after taking a much shot-up trip across Colorado to San Francisco and Portland. He said his brother was sheriff of Great Bend when he arrived and that the chief deputy killed a man that night and his brother had to kill one the next day. I'm meeting some fine old Kansas Red Legs, as my mother would call them, and they're not half bad.

We came down from Kinsley on Santa Fe No. 5, which arrived here at 10:05, stayed fifteen minutes and left at 9:20. You can't beat that and I'm sober too.

I'm hoping I get a letter from you tomorrow. I'll sure be disappointed if I don't. Be sure and kiss my baby. I'll be home Friday evening and gone again Saturday at 10:00 A.M.

Loads of love from Your Harry

Hotel Stamey, Hutchinson, Kans., November 11, 1926

Dear Bess:

. . . This is Armistice Day

Truman recalled what he was doing 8 years earlier on Armistice Day, and the fright he had when he received a letter from Bess indicating she had nearly died with the flu:

I hadn't suffered much except loss of sleep and worry for my outfit and here nearly all I had in the world was nearer the great divide than I'd ever been because I believed my name was on a bullet

I am ashamed now that I didn't stay at home and fight the job hunters and take you to see the Queen. I'm afraid I'm not as thoughtful of your pleasure as I ought to be. If ever I can connect, you'll never want to do anything you can't. Kiss the baby. I wish I could her [sic] say "Lo Dad"

All the love to you, Your Harry.

Daniel Boone Tavern, Columbia, Mo. November 13, 1926 8 P.M.

Dear Bess:

We had a very good trip to Marshall. Stopped at Higginsville by making a 5 1/2 mile detour and picked up Mr. Hopkins, president of the Traders Bank of Lexington and V.P. Natl Old Trails Road Assn. Had a fine meeting at Marshall. Independence, Lexington, Dover, Arrowrock, & Columbia were represented. We left there after the meeting at about 3:30 and arrived in Boonville at 5 P.M. Called on the newspaper man who, it developed, is a cousin of Dr. Nelson's and is called Edgar Nelson. I gave him my Kansas speil [sic] and he immediately agreed to called [sic] a special meeting of the Chamber of Commerce on our way back. He sent for Dr. Nelson to come over and call on us but the Dr. was not available. We had dinner at the same place you & I ate and came on over here. It sure poured down rain, but has quit now. We ran into a football game and (my pen ran dry at that point) came very nearly having to sleep in the street. The clerk told us he had only rooms with cots and sent us up to look at them. He made a mistake and sent us to one of his real rooms, which we immediately signed up for. We'll leave here about 8 AM, stop in Fulton about 10 and aim to get to Greenville, Ill at stopping time tomorrow.

I had such a terrible time getting out of Independence. I never did call you because I couldn't. It was 10:30 before I shook off all the leeches and on account of the detour to Higginsville I couldn't get to Marshall on time if I stopped. I'm calling you tonight to make up for it. Write me care of the Dayton Automobile Club, Dayton, Ohio. I hope you and the young lady are all O.K. Kiss her for me.

Love to you from,

Your Harry.

Thomas Hotel, Greenville, Ill. November 14, 1926

Dear Bess:

Still it rains. We left Columbia about eight-thirty this morning and stopped in Fulton to see Nick Case, the senator from that town in the state legislature. He invited us out to his house and was very cordial to us. We arrived in St. Louis about one-thirty and came on out here. Found George's Hotel, and just now phoned the president of the Chamber of Commerce. He's coming down to see us after a while. We've seen the local newspaperman, who said our names and business would be in the paper tomorrow.

This hotel is run by an old fat codger who is very good humored but he has a tough egg for a wife. She made a couple of kids take their pup out of her hotel lickety-split just now. They were tourists same as we are, but my sympathies are always with the kids. The old lady told them they could take their dog up to the garage and let him stay in the car, which they did.

We are now traveling on the National Pike, which was surveyed and laid out in Thomas Jefferson's administration to get communication with Louisiana Territory. That was done along about 1806. Last year or the year before the road was finally paved into St. Louis. Quick action what? We've gone from wheels on the ground to wheels on steel and now we are back on the ground. What, I wonder will be the next step?

The National Old Trail is really on the map here. They have hotels, eating houses, garages, and drugstores all named for it. So you see we won't have a very hard time getting things rolling over here. I hope you and the young lady are in fine health and spirits. I'd like very much to see you both tonight. Be sure and kiss my "good girl" and make believe for yourself.

Love by the bushel from Your Harry

Hotel Gibbons, Dayton, Ohio November 15, 1926

Dear Bess:

We arrived here at 8:10 P.M. after an all day's drive, and I find it a rotten town. I thought I'd get a letter as soon as I arrived and I found none. I was so disappointed that I went off to a show before I wrote this. Then I got to thinking that maybe you had so much to do Saturday that you couldn't write and maybe after you wrote Sunday it didn't get off until Monday, in which case that's today and I won't get it until morning. But I sure did want it.

We left Greenville, Illinois, this morning at 7:00 A.M. Old man Thomas, who is the proprietor of the Thomas Hotel, proved to be a right interesting old man. He told me about a former saloonkeeper of his town who was such a good citizen and ran such a clean place that all the high collars and "the ribbon ladies" (Thomas called them that) looked on him with favor. He told me all that to impress upon me how nice it is to leave your widow money, no matter how you get it. The good saloonkeeper died and left his wife rich. In due course of events she married a Baptist preacher and the money personally went to a good purpose.

Davis has just read in a Terre Haute paper that President Coolidge dedicated a \$2 million memorial for K.C. and that Will Rogers says it looks like a silo. Other people have the right slant on R.A. Long's monument to himself as well as us perverted people who only fought the war behind a gun.

(On November 11, 1926, President Coolidge was in Kansas City to dedicate the \$2.7 million Liberty Memorial, erected "in honor of those who served in World War One in defense of liberty and our country." Humorist Will Rogers asked, "What is it? A silo?" The reference to the "R.A. Long memorial to himself, may refer to the R. A. Long Building at 928 Grand Avenue, a 16-story skyscraper in Kansas City built by lumberman and philanthropist Robert A. Long in 1907.)

We passed through a whole string of Illinois towns. Evidently they were all good ones too. We stopped awhile in Greenup to see a former supporter of the Old Trails and also stopped in Casey, another nice little town, to see quite a number of former supporters of the movement. They all seemed to be still enthusiastic.

We ate our noon meal at Brazil, Indiana, at the Hotel Davis. Had a grand lunch for fifty cents. Then we headed for the Hoosier State capitol. Got there about two-thirty and drove around and round the town for thirty minutes trying to find a place to park. They have a fine town, a good-looking state capitol, a federal building, and a courthouse equal to any. The Old Trail runs straight through the town from one side to the other on a big, wide street called Washington. Down in the center of town and a block north of this street is the Soldiers and Sailors Monument erected to the men who fought in the Civil War. It is a beautiful thing and is in the center of a large circle into which run four streets, one from each cardinal point. Around the circle are fine hotels, theaters, and clubs. We wanted to see the secretary of the Hoosier Auto Club, whose office is in the English Hotel. It is on this circle. After driving around about a dozen times and out each cross street and around the block trying to find a place to park, Davis finally got out and I kept going around the circle. Finally I stopped in front of the hotel and the secretary came out to see me. I told him I'd been around that circle so often I didn't know south from straight up. He set me right and we headed for here. Stopped in Richmond, Indiana, at 6:00 P.M. and had as fine a meal as I ever ate and safely arrived here for a woeful disappointment. No letter. This is a fine town, however, from a civic standpoint – good hotels, fine buildings, and apparently lots of business. I hope we have good luck tomorrow, and I hope that letter comes. Kiss my baby and lots of love to you from

Your Harry

Hotel Lincoln, Indianapolis, Indiana 10:30 P.M., November 16, 1926

Dear Bess:

This day turned out to be fine in every way except the weather. Your letter came, we had a fine and successful meeting, got our pictures in both evening Dayton paper [sic] and got back as far as Indianapolis on the return trip. It was a grand and glorious feeling when your letter came this morning, appreciated the clipping, digested what you said of my friend Mr. Hall and am filing it away for future reference. I'd like to see both you and the young lady.

There was some very fine and intelligent men here to talk over the situation with us. Mr. Corcoran, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of Wheeling, W. Va., Mr. Schenk Sec Chamber of Com of Uniontown, Pa., Mr. Elkins, proprietor of the Elkins Hotel at Wheeling and the Cumberland Hotel at Cumberland, Md. as well as the Sec. & Gen. Mgr. of the Dayton Chamber of Com. Mr. Wayne Lee, and Mr. Ackerman of the Dayton Auto Club. I dictated a plan of action to the Auto Club Steno and it was adopted verbatim. All that had to be done now is work out a financial plan and that is tentatively agreed on. The National Old Trails is back on the map east of Indiana and is there to stay.

This is some city. We left Dayton in a snow storm but ran out of it about 40 miles this side and it is now clear with the moon shining. We ate supper in Jas. Whitcomb Riley's town of Greenfield. The "old swimming' hole" is just outside of town but it was a little chilly to go try it.

We arrived here at eight and got settled, then went out and walked over the downtown section. It's a lot easier to walk over it than to find a place to park. We'd expected to stay at the Washington Hotel, a copiously road advertised house, but we couldn't find it anywhere so we stopped here. This is a bigger and finer place we discovered after stumbling onto the Washington while walking around. We came across it right on the street we came in on but after placarding [sic] the roads for a hundred miles in each direction, the sign wasn't big enough to see on the Hotel itself. The Claypool is right across the street from here. That is where all the Indiana politics is brewed. It covers a whole block and has been here for a long time. We hope to see some of the Indianapolis politicians tomorrow.

We have to see the Pres of the Chamber of Com., the Auto Club and the Mayor or Manager if they have one. Probably got our pictures in the Indianapolis papers too.

We'll go to St. Louis tomorrow night and be home Thursday night. I'm going to call you on the phone. Kiss the baby and love to you.

From your Harry.

en Route aboard The National Limited February 11, 1927

Dear Bess:

Davis suggests that I inform you of all the tricks we are entitled to on this Limited whether we use them or not; such as maid, hairdresser, barber shop & bath, secretary, valet, tailor etc. ad infinitum.

We left St. Louis after I called exactly at 12 noon and have been moving along about sixty to the hour ever since. I could dictate this letter but I don't like to dictate letters to my honey, even at the risk of being accused of inebriety. This train does not slow up for curves, towns or crossings, hence the wobbly writing.

We are evidently in for a fine meeting at Wheeling. Davis had two telegrams and three letters from the interested parties. The N.O.T. is getting bigger every minute even if we did pull a bloomer at Topeka. There's no alibi for that, we were simply licked.

I hope the baby is all right and you too. It would surprise you how well my brain pan is feeling and apparently working.

Much love and a kiss for my girl and you,

Your Harry.

Hotel Windsor, Wheeling, W. Va. February 12, 1927

Dear Bess & Margie:

We arrived some time during the night. The porter woke me up and said it was after seven. I got up very hurriedly shaved and dressed and then found my watch said it was still five minutes until seven. However when we got out on the street all the clocks said eight o'clock, so we were cheated out of an hour's sleep by a chance in time.

The town is right on the edge of the Ohio River and looks as if it might fall in any minute. There are high bluffs on the east side, which gives you that impression. We were expected and assigned a room and are to be entertained at lunch at dinner, so you see we are the distinguished citizens again.

I am enclosing you a horoscope which Davis wanted me to send you. He said you were undoubtedly due for a splendid outlook unless all signs fail. He honestly believes it and so do I.

We expect to start home tonight and ought to arrive there Monday for breakfast. Kiss the baby. Love to you.

Sincerely Harry.

Hotel Windsor, Wheeling, W. Va., February 12, 1927

Dear Bess:

The meeting is over and was one howling success. The National Highway Boosters Association is no more, and the National Old Trails Highway Association is a national organization indeed [sic] and in fact. We are completely organized back here and have had our financial situation practically guaranteed. George Washington Lutz, who was the president of the Boosters Association, is our executive vice president back here and Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio are completely organized with two vice presidents each and a bunch of enthusiastic boosters behind them.

George Washington Lutz is seventy-one years old and is *the* leading citizen of Wheeling. He looks like George F. Baker, the president of the First National Bank of New York, his mutton-chop whiskers and everything. He's been president of the Board of Trade, the Fair Association, Chamber of Commerce, mayor of Wheeling, and most everything else. He is a widower with no children and has only one nephew, of whom he is very fond. He told me if his nephew had been a girl, he'd have married him long ago, which was his way of saying that he is very fond of him. He took us to his house just outside the city and gave us of his liquid hospitality and showed us the most complete house I've seen under one roof.

Our trip is a success. I've got to go to the train. Kiss my baby.

Your Harry

End of the Trails

While Truman was away from home building support for the National Old Trails Road, AASHO was finalizing plans for the U.S. numbered highway system.

In general, the major named trail associations accepted the need for an orderly, uniform system of marking, while wanting to preserve their own connected routing. Some of that interest in preservation was reflected in the numerous inquiries BPR received from Congress about specific named trails. In one case, congressional interest went beyond letters.

On March 15, 1926, Senator Park Trammell of Florida introduced S. Res. 169 asking BPR to "make no change in the marking and designating of interstate public highways which would bring about a discontinuance of the designation and marking of said highways by names as heretofore adopted." Chief MacDonald advised Cyrus Avery that the resolution had been made as a result of a "determined effort" by trails people to defeat the U.S. numbering plan. MacDonald said he had spoken with Senator Trammell to explain that nothing would prevent the States from allowing trail markings. As a result, Senator Trammell had withheld the resolution, but MacDonald was still concerned that the numbering plan might be defeated by what he described as "a great deal of false and mischievous propaganda." [Kelly, page 168; S. Res. 169, 67th Congress, 1st Session, "Designation of State Highways," *Congressional Record-Senate*,

March 15, 1926, page 5593; “Designation of State Highways,” *Congressional Record-Senate*, March 25, 1926, page 6217]

The most contentious issue – placement of U.S. 60 – remained to be settled after several options had been rejected by Governor Fields or by Avery, Page, and Piepmeier. On April 30, 1926, with MacDonald acknowledging the merit in Governor Fields’s argument, the three State highway officials met in Springfield, Missouri, as Kelly described:

The three men got together in Springfield at the hometown of Avery’s friend and fellow highway supporter John T. Woodruff. Most likely, the men met in Woodruff’s Colonial Hotel.

By this time, Cy was critically aware that the whole highway numbering system was in peril. It had always been far more important to him to have his highway through Tulsa than the number it carried. He had been upset by the high-handed manner in which the number had been changed and distraught over money expended for now-useless signage and maps, but it was Piepmeier more than Cy who was truly wrought up over the situation.

After quite some discussion, Cy led the conversation around to the possibility of adopting one of the alternative numbers that had not yet been considered. He asked Page to look into the numbers that were left over. There were not many; with the way the numbering system had come down, after the major east-west highways ending with zero and the major north-south highways ending with one or five, the joint board had quickly given other numbers to bypasses, alternative routes, and the rest of the selected primary roads: odd numbers for north/south roads and even numbers for east/west roads.

Page went back through his records to a report by Markham that listed unused numbers. Out of the twenty-four unused single- and double-digit numbers, Page suggested that sixty-six might work.

Sixty-six.

To Avery that sounded like it might be a good choice. It may have been that he realized how easily the number sixty-six rolls off the tongue. With his promotional bent, he may have seen design possibilities in the rounded back of the double sixes. And it is not unlikely, given the era’s interest in the occult and spiritual, that at least one of the three men recognized the double sixes as a master number. In numerology, this particular master number was known to bring material pleasures and success. By mid-afternoon Piepmeier was on board and the decision was made.

At four o’clock in the afternoon of April 30, 1926, Avery sent a brief telegram to MacDonald: “Regarding Chicago to Los Angeles Road, if California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Illinois will accept Sixty-Six instead of Sixty we are willing to agree

to this change. We prefer Sixty Six to Sixty Two.” The telegram was signed Avery and Piepmeier.

Some negotiations were needed to complete the decision. As BPR’s chief engineer, P. St. John Wilson, observed, the agreement meant that U.S. 60 would begin in Virginia, but end in Springfield, Missouri, not the West Coast, while U.S. 70 would begin in North Carolina, but end in Arizona, closer, but still not on the West Coast – both with termini on the new U.S. 66. This would, he said, “upset the general theory of numbering.” As Kelly pointed out, however, “Not surprisingly, no one else cared about the niceties of the theory, at least not enough to stop the highway system’s newfound momentum.” [For a detailed account of these events, see Kelly, pages 155-175]

In July, Kentucky agreed to this arrangement – U.S. 60 from Newport News to Springfield, and U.S. 66 from Chicago to Los Angeles. When James informed Avery of this news, Avery wrote to thank James for his interest in finding a solution. As for the Chicago to Los Angeles highway, "We assure you that it will be a road through Oklahoma that the U.S. Government will be proud of." As for the U.S. 60 shields that the States had placed on the road, we "will have to junk them."

(Although Route 66 would, indeed, become a road America could be proud of, neither Avery nor Piepmeier would be around to make it happen. Piepmeier submitted his resignation in December 1926 to accept a private business opportunity. In Oklahoma, Governor Martin E. Trapp was succeeded by Governor Henry S. Johnston, who dismissed Avery and Page. As for Fields, his term as Governor of Kentucky ended on December 13, 1927.)

In the first week of August, AASHO’s executive committee approved the complicated deal. They also wrangled with a few other lingering debates over numbers.

By November, when AASHO was in Pinehurst, North Carolina, for its annual meeting, only a few cases remained to be settled by the executive committee on November 8. In all, the executive committee had acted on requests from the State highway agencies seeking 132 changes in routing or numbering. The network of U.S. numbered highways had expanded to 96,626 miles. The time had come for AASHO to adopt the Joint Board's proposal, as modified during the past year.

Perhaps approval was inevitable, but as E. W. James reported to AASHO on the work of the executive committee, he brought the subject up. He could not speak for the executive committee, he said, but he would express his personal view. His words reflected the tension and frustration he had experienced over the past year and a half in mediating disputes about the numbered highway network that had nearly doubled in length during that time – while fending off entreaties by and on behalf of the named trail associations:

I urge the immediate adoption of the system as now laid out. It is not perfect. After 18 months almost continuous experience with the work I am convinced that to leave the case for further consideration will not improve it. So far as it contains errors of

arrangement or selection, the worst ones are due to efforts to meet narrow local viewpoints, and this condition has become more and more pronounced as the requests for changes have come from the States. The Joint Board started out with a broad general conception of the country as a whole and the nationwide significance of a great system of routes. We should not announce an opportunity for further revision but adopt the system as nearly as possible as it now comes from the Executive Committee.

It was, moreover, too difficult to continue making changes. James had canvassed the States and found that 22 States had nearly completed marking their U.S. highways. Signing was underway in 10 States while another 14 had ordered the signs to be manufactured. Only two States had not responded:

This means that the system is rapidly being crystallized. Changes can not be made satisfactorily without altering signs now in place, and in fairness to the States such changes should not be asked.

The fact that 32 States have the work far advanced indicates the reception which the plan has had and argues well for its ultimate complete success. [James, E. W., "Executive Committee Report on Numbering of United States Highways," *American Highways*, January 1927, page 41]

On November 11, AASHO adopted the U.S. numbered highway system.

Not everyone was happy about the new numbering plan. Henry Bourne Joy, president of the Packard Motor Car Company and president of the Lincoln Highway Association, was so bitter that he wanted to send, but did not, a note to President Coolidge, his Cabinet, and all Members of Congress:

The Lincoln Highway, a memorial to the martyred Lincoln, now known by the grace of God and the authority of the Government of the United States as Federal Route 1, Federal Route 30, Federal Route 30N, Federal Route 30S, Federal Route 530, Federal Route 40 and Federal Route 50.

Ernest McGaffey expressed his concerns in humorous fashion by suggesting that "substituting arithmetic for history, mathematics for romance" opened illimitable prospects for innovation. Why, he asked, burden the minds of school children with the events of yesteryear? "Perish the thought." Why not number our Presidents ("let George Washington hereafter be known as No. 1"), our Senators ("numbered according to seniority, with a judicious sprinkling in of ciphers where necessary"), our Supreme Court justices, our rivers, our mountains, our States, our Governors, our Mayors, and certainly our oceans (No. 1 and No. 2)?" He noted:

They were all very well in their day, but they have no claim on the "American" Association of State Highway Officials and the Federal Bureau of Public Roads.

In short, McGaffey wrote, the trail signs would come down, tossed aside as so much useless junk. "Logarithms will take the place of legends, and 'hokum' for history." [McGaffey, Ernest, "Numbering Highways of the United States," *Highway Engineer and Contractor*, February 1928, pages 31-33]

Even after AASHO adopted the U.S. Numbered Highway System in November 1926, Pennsylvania's Connell would raise concerns, not with the overall plan, but about the numbering of Pennsylvania highways, particularly the splitting of named trails among several numbers. (For information on the dispute, see "U.S. 22 – The William Penn Highway" on this Website.)

The New York Times quoted the *Lexington Herald* of Kentucky:

The traveler may shed tears as he drives down the shady vista of the Lincoln Highway, or dream dreams as he speeds over a sunlit path on the Jefferson Highway, or see noble visions as he speeds across an unfolding ribbon that bears the name of Woodrow Wilson. But how in the world can a man get a kick out of 46 or 55 or 33 or 21?

The Times added:

This is part of the effort to "save the souls of the national highways." For it seems the United States Bureau of Roads has officially changed their names to numbers and has sprinkled the highways with signs that bear cold numerals instead of names that glow in American history. ["Numbers for Names," *The New York Times*, June 18, 1927, page 16]

Despite such sentiments, the U.S. numbered highway system proved its worth, almost immediately rendering the named trails and their booster associations obsolete.

As for the National Old Trails Road, the new numbering system broke up the route, with the longest segments split among U.S. 40 and U.S. 66. According to AASHO's first log of the United States Numbered Highways, published in 1927, U.S. 40 was a 3,205-mile highway from Atlantic City, New Jersey, to San Francisco. The route went through Baltimore and connected with the National Old Trails Road at Frederick, Maryland, then generally followed the older National Road to Missouri.

In Missouri, U.S. 40 followed State Route 2, partly on the old named trail but following the Victory Highway on other parts. From Marshall to Waverly the National Old Trails Road was part of U.S. 65 (St. Paul, Minnesota, to Ferriday, Louisiana). From Waverly to Kansas City, the old trail was part of U.S. 24 (Pontiac, Michigan, to Kansas City).

In Kansas, the new numbering stirred up the rivalry between the Old and New Santa Fe Trails. As discussed earlier, both wanted to be on a two-digit, zero-based number, not a three-digit number. AASHO's executive committee approved a split. The Old Santa Fe Trail became U.S. 50 North from Baldwin City to Larned. At Larned, U.S. 50 North left the National Old Trails Road for a detour through Jetmore before meeting the main line again at Garden City. The

New Santa Fe Trail, and the segment of the National Old Trails Road between Larned and Garden City, became U.S. 50 South.

In the Southwest, AASHO modified the numbers assigned to the National Old Trails Road in Colorado and New Mexico. The National Old Trails Road between La Junta and Trinidad was U.S. 350. South of Trinidad, the road became U.S. 85 (from the international boundary north of Ambrose, North Dakota, to Las Cruces, New Mexico) through Las Vegas, Santa Fe and Albuquerque. The number was continued along the National Old Trails Road branch to Socorro, then continued south to a terminus at Las Cruces.

U.S. 66, the Chicago-to-Los Angeles highway crossed Oklahoma and Texas before joining the National Old Trails Road in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The AASHO log listed the main contact points:

New Mexico Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Los Lunas, Grants, Gallup to the New Mexico-Arizona line west of Lupton.

Arizona Beginning at the New Mexico-Arizona State line west of Lupton via Navajo, Adamana, Holbrook, Winslow, Flagstaff, Williams, Ashfork, Seligman, Peach Springs, Kingman to the Arizona-California line west of Topock.

California Beginning at the Arizona-California State line west of Topock via Needles, Ludlow, Daggett, Barstow, Victorville, Pasadena, San Bernardino, Los Angeles to San Fernando.

By July 1926, with the battle over “60” resolved, Cyrus Avery was determined to promote the new highway in the manner of the named trail associations. “We designed Route 66 as the most important highway in the U.S. and it will carry more traffic than any other road in America.” On April 2, 1927, he took the lead in forming a Missouri corporation called the U.S. 66 Highway Association, with his friend and associate, John Woodruff, as president. Avery was State vice-present for Oklahoma. The route was, the association stated on all its literature, “The Main Street of America,” a slogan once applied to several named trails, including the National Old Trails Road, the Lincoln Highway, and the Roosevelt Midland Trail. The phrase also was appropriated by the U.S. Highway 40 Association. [Kelly, pages 190-193]

If E. W. James's words to AASHO at Pinehurst in 1926 contained a hint of desperation about approval of the uniform plan, a relieved James could assure AASHO members in 1933:

After nine years the wisdom of the course pursued can no longer be questioned. The Joint Board designated a total of 75,000 miles of routes to be marked and provided a method for increasing this number as additions became desirable. At the present time the system comprises 124,758 miles. The trail associations so far as they cause embarrassment or annoyance have almost entirely disappeared. Several at once converted themselves into proponents of one or the other of the principal numbered U.S. highways. For several years, the “U.S. 40 Association” was active but it was soon seen

that the plans of the several States for systematic construction were actually producing the very results for which the earlier associations stood, and it became evident that their continued existence was no longer necessary

The present scheme needs no defense, because it has the merits of being easily extensible to include any reasonable additions, has that impersonal aspect which resists all local favoritism, and has actually accomplished the purpose for which it was created.

[“Making and Unmaking a National System of Marked Routes,” *American Highways*, October 1933, pages 16-18, 27]

But perhaps AASHO expressed it best in a statement issued in 1927:

Probably there is no single item which shows the value of federal and state co-operation more than the work of the officials of the state highway departments and the Bureau of Public Roads in the selection of a limited system of roads to receive national numbers, so that people may travel across the continent following the same number.

The named trails served a valuable purpose in their day, but they began to pass into history when AASHO adopted the U.S. numbered highway system on November 11, 1926. Today, their remnants are scattered across the map. A motorist can still travel bits of roads carrying the old names – the Bankhead, the Dixie, the Jefferson, the Lee, the Lincoln and many others – although for residents of the towns they pass through, the origins of the names often have been lost in time, part of the unknown history of America.

Madonna of the Trail – D.A.R. 1927

On April 22, 1927, during the thirty-sixth Continental Congress of D.A.R. in April 1927, Mrs. Moss reported on the activities of the National Old Trails Road Committee.

She began:

Daughters, it is a great privilege and honor to introduce to you the grand old patriot of the Old Trails Road, the Honorable Ezra Meeker. He wishes to say a word to you.

Honorable Ezra Meeker: History is recorded and the history of this nation is written by the battles over the Old Trail and by the movement of the pioneers who by their actions extended the boundaries of this nation to the Pacific.

I want to invite your cooperation in recording permanently that great action, not only by the men but of the courageous women. Seventy-five years ago I crossed over this Oregon trail with a little courageous wife. I am here the only survivor in this generation.
(Applause.)

Meeker and his wife had crossed from Iowa to Oregon Territory in 1852. In his 70s, Meeker began seeking support for placing monuments along the old trail, including by retracing the trail in 1906-1907 in an ox-drawn covered wagon. At 97 years of age, he was still promoting his cause. He was in Washington for a speech at 2 p.m. that same day at Memorial Continental Hall to tell D.A.R. about plans to use the revenue from the sale of Oregon Trail memorial half dollars to build a million-dollar pioneer memorial in Washington. According to the April 21 edition of *The Washington Post*:

He spoke last night at the Waugh Methodist church, Third and A Streets northeast. Recently he placed on sale at the Riggs National Bank, the memorial coins authorized by Congress. He plans to set aside one-third of the amount realized for the pioneer memorial. To this end steps already have been taken to incorporate a branch of the [Oregon Trail Memorial] association in Washington. ["D.A.R. Convention Notes," *The Washington Post*, April 21, 1927, page 5]

Mrs. Moss began her presentation by reciting a poem that President Harding had spoken during his Voyage of Understanding in Meacham, Oregon, before 30,000 people on July 3, 1923. The occasion was the dedication of a monument to the Old Oregon Trail and of a named trail called the Old Oregon Trail Highway, with Meeker in attendance:

There are no new worlds to conquer,
Gone is the last Frontier
And the steady grind of the wagon train
Of the sturdy pioneer;
But their memories live like a thing divine,
Treasured in heaven above,
For the trail that led to the glorious West
Was the wonderful trail of love.

The D.A.R., Mrs. Moss said, "caught the vision of this 'Thing Divine' – this great spirit of the pathfinder, the trail blazer – and we have loved it and cherished it for many years, and we have sworn our allegiance to the upbuilding, preservation and marking of this great transcontinental Old Trails Road, the longest continuous track in the world and probably the trail of the greatest tragedies – as the greatest memorial that can be or will ever be preserved to honor American pioneers."

She talked about the origins of the Old Trails movement. She referred to the Cumberland Pike, the Pony Express, the Santa Fe Trail, and of course, the Oregon Trail:

Here may I stop long enough to say that these time-worn, time-honored names ring in our ears like sweet old refrains. They spell hardships you and I will never know. They interpret the fortitude and ever-abiding hope of the women. They speak to us of the old prairie schooner slowly wending its way, and when we read the fascinating history and romances told of the Oregon Trail alone, and picture that covered wagon moving, dust begrimed, across river and plain, with the sacred burden of the dead mother and the little

children unattended, we know that the names of these old trails are written in blood and spelled out in countless graves along the way, and can never be supplanted by numbers cold and meaningless; but, if the “Powers that Be” insist on such a desecration, then at least dignify the name and character of The National Old Trails Road by giving it one number across the continent, and let it be known as “Number One.”

AASHO had just published the first official log of the U.S. Numbered Highway System, so that change was unlikely to happen. Within this grid of numbers, north-south U.S. 1 was the main East Coast road.

Despite the many old trails her committee had called attention to, “the D.A.R. also had the vision of a national highway, an ocean-to-ocean highway, built on the sacred ground of these famous old trails as a memorial to our pioneer patriots, claiming such a highway had for the present day social, economic, and commercial value.” As mapped by a former chairman, Mrs. Van Brunt, it was “the most practical, the most historic, and the most scenic of any suggested as a transcontinental highway:

And the D.A.R. were convinced that such a monument would not only honor the dead, but would serve the living. The D.A.R. entered into the movement with heart and soul and all the energy they possess. The chairman at that time suggested that red, white, and blue bands be painted on telephone poles to mark the National Highway with the national colors, and Daughters far and wide took the paint pot and brush in hand and, with little or no assistance, painted the red, white, and blue strips around the telegraph posts in front of the farms and home, and the slogan for that day’s traveler was “Follow the flag of the D.A.R.”

Now, while our D.A.R. committee gave the first organized impetus to this plan of a pioneer highway across the continent, and issued the first map, named the road, originated the original road sign and painted it on the poles, and introduced a bill in Congress calling upon the Government to build the road, we gratefully acknowledge the impetus and far-reaching power to this movement by the National Old Trails Road Association, which states in its by-laws that it organized to “assist the D.A.R. in carrying forward their plan.” Like the wise men of old, we have followed the same bright star all these years together, and with the exception of a very few miles, the National Old Trails Road has been built and is a hard-surfaced road from ocean to ocean, and whereas the pioneer of the earlier day traveled months to reach the Western Coast, it is now a matter of a few days’ pleasant travel

And to remember that at the present time the National Old Trails Road is the most popular transcontinental highway, as statistics of national park associations and automobile clubs show that more cars traverse the National Old Trails Road than any other highway. This part of the committee’s intent and purpose has been carried out in full, but the D.A.R. organization has still to erect their memorial monuments on this great memorial highway

It is with this thought in mind that the D.A.R. will fulfill their pledge, to wit: To erect in each of the twelve States through which the National Old Trails Road passes . . . one marker or monument of dignified and pretentious proportions to cost approximately one thousand dollars each – these markers to be as near alike in size and design as will be consistent with the location and surroundings, and each marker to definitely mark an historical spot or commemorate some great act of historical interest of the Revolutionary period; these markers to bear, with other inscriptions, the insignia of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, and to be known as the National Old Trail Road Memorial Markers.

She discussed the chosen design:

Numbers of letters and suggestions for the “Memorial Markers” were received by the National Chairman from all sections, and every one expressed the hope that we would not erect the old-style “tombstone” marker, or “gravestone” style, or the regulation boulder type, but that we would erect some sort of a monument that would be truly representative and distinctively a memorial monument, worthy of our National Society, the Daughters of the American Revolution. The vision that your National Chairman has long had fitted right into such a description – a *monument*, not a *marker* – to be the figure of a pioneer mother, to be known as “The Madonna of the Trail.”

After quite extensive investigations, it was found that the cost of same, carved in stone or granite, was prohibitive and could not be considered. Finally, the attention of the National Chairman was drawn to the composite stone known as “*algonite stone*.” It is a composite, poured mass, more dense, even more solid, than many kinds of stone; made of many of the everlasting materials, crushed granite, crushed marble, crushed gravel and stone and cement, and a “chat” that is the screening from lead ore, used as a backing. It is very hard when finished, requires the services of a sculptor, and is termed *everlasting*. It was found upon investigation that many very beautiful monuments had been erected, and that such sculptors as Lorado Taft considered this composite stone worthy of their consideration. Mr. Taft speaks of it as “a medium for sculpture which is as flexible as plaster and ultimately as hard as rock, that might in time not only give a new character to our building arts, but very greatly assist in crystallizing American ideals.” The beautiful monument in Washington Park, Chicago, called “March of Time,” was expressed in sculpture by Mr. Taft, and is cast in this composite stone.

The Black Hawk Indian Statue in Illinois is another work of art in composite stone, as also are the four figures on the High School in Little Rock: Ambition, Preparation, Personality, and Opportunity . . .

When the National Chairman submitted a tentative design and suggestion to the Algonite Company for the figure of a Madonna of the Trail, to see if such a monument would be within our reach financially, it was estimated that the amount of our fund would cover the cost of the twelve monuments, but would not pay the cost of freight or the erection, which meant, of course, that we had to have more money; and to face such a situation

was more than impossible to the National Chairman after she had definitely stated to chapters that no more funds would be solicited for the National Old Trails Road Marker Fund.

In the meantime, the National Old Trails Road Association, with headquarters in Kansas City (Judge H. S. Truman, President), was seeking the assistance and cooperation of the Daughters of the American Revolution National Old Trails Road Committee, and at the request of your National Chairman they sent valuable information in the form of books, pamphlets, etc., about the Old Trails Road to each Vice-Chairman and each State Chairman. They also intimated that they would lend us very material aid and cooperate with our committee in the program we had for marking the National Road, providing we would not erect any more "grave stone" markers. Upon this advice, your National Chairman went to Kansas City and held conference with Judge Truman and Mr. Frank Davis, the Secretary, and, to state facts concisely, came home with this written statement signed by them both:

National Old Trails Road Association
Headquarters and Offices of Manager
1018 Central St., Kansas City, MO.

THE GRAND CANYON ROUTE

To the National Old Trails Committee of the
Daughters of the American Revolution:

The National Old Trails Road Association will assist your committee in the erection of memorial monuments on the National Old Trails Road by guaranteeing the expense of erection of same; and we will assist the committee in the location of the sites for these monuments.

National Old Trails Road Assn.

(Signed) "Harry S. Truman"

(Signed) "Frank A. Davis."

"The above is with the proviso that the monuments be in form and class entirely different from the boulder or tombstone variety.

(Signed) "Harry S. Truman"

(Signed) "Frank A. Davis."

And I trust that this offer will be acceptable to the Thirty-sixth Congress.

That much settled for the time being, your National Chairman returned home and proceeded to have designs drawn, none of which was entirely satisfactory. Finally, a well-known sculptor in St. Louis produced in wax a composite design of the ideas expressed in the designs submitted and by the National Chairman – a miniature statue of the Madonna of the Trail as your National Chairman has visioned it.

The figure before you was accepted by the National Board last Saturday, April 16th, as the Memorial Monument to mark the Memorial Highway, as stipulated in resolution accepted at Congress April, 1924.

You will note the figure is that of the typical “Mother of the Covered Wagon Days,” strong and determined, faithful and true. This model in wax is one foot in height, and in the scale of measurements is on a base of four feet. The monument to be erected will be approximately eight times as high and in proportion, making it between eight and nine feet high, to be on a base six feet in height.

The paramount idea was not to have a figure of too many angles and too many outstanding, jutting features that would project and be broken easily, but that it should be a well-rounded figure that would look better from a distance than close up. Any change can be stipulated. Any color can be named, but a real warm granite color would be more suitable than a dead white; in other words, more granite used in the composite stone than marble. This figure in miniature simply indicates the idea of “The Madonna of the Trail,” and the National Committee hopes it will meet with the approval of every Daughter in the Society; and we hope every State in the Union will point to these monuments with pride as they pass along this great highway as a great national and universal tribute of a greater love, as a nation, to our mothers – and our fathers – of the Covered Wagon Days.

In accepting the cooperation of the National Old Trails Road Association, it would be a courtesy and a great help, of course, to accept their assistance on the committee also, to help determine the location of the site of each of the monuments in the twelve states in which they will be erected.

A date will be set, fixing a time limit before the expiration of which all requests for monuments must be formally submitted. Each request must be accompanied by the reasons upon which the request is based.

The National Old Trails Road Association have offered to use their Publicity Department and give each one of the twelve ceremonies on these twelve occasions, not only State-wide publicity, but nation-wide; and your chairman feels that with their interested cooperation, we shall be able to put over this marking program in a very big way!

She concluded her report with another poem:

Down the old trails, unscathed by worldly schemes,

The men seeing visions; the women dreaming dreams;
For these pioneer women who knew not the word fail,
What could be more fitting than “The Madonna of the Trail?”

[*Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution*, April 1927, pages 533-539]

According to Fern Ioula Bauer, “All records indicate that it was a picture of Sacajawea’s statue in Portland, Oregon, that inspired Mrs. Moss to create our Monuments.” It had been dedicated on July 6, 1905, during the Lewis and Clark Exposition. In fact, “the Statue of Sacajawea was much more than an inspiration – it had a big impact on Mrs. Moss” because the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery had begun its western expedition in St. Louis. “There can be no doubt that St. Louis paid close attention to the celebration held in Portland, and Mrs. Moss was one of the chief observers.”

Sacajawea’s story was little known until 1900 when Mrs. Emery Dye wrote a bestselling book, *Conquest*, that told the dramatic story. “Overnight, Sacajawea became a household word. Without a doubt, Mrs. Moss read *Conquest*, watched with interest as Sacajawea’s statue became a reality, and fully understood its significance.”

The thought of this woman, Bauer wrote, who had done so much to make the explorers’ mission

a success “must have laid dormant for many years in the fertile mind of Mrs. Moss”:

“Just as Sacajawea was rightfully honored for her valuable contribution to America so should the women who endured so much in settling this land be honored and immortalized.” When the opportunity presented itself, this idea surfaced. She caught a vision of “A thing divine” and conceived the idea of our “Madonna of the Trail” Monuments.

Mrs. Moss and her son John developed the design over 5 months before they were ready to proceed in 1927. First, they needed an architect, and found one in St. Louis:

August Leimbach was an architectural sculptor whose line of work was in the design and execution of the decorative scheme of public buildings. He had worked on buildings at the 1915 San Francisco World’s Fair and on buildings in Salt Lake City, Illinois, Missouri and Texas. He had not entered the competition to design and model the Madonna of the Trail Monuments.

Three days before Mrs. Moss was to leave for a DAR meeting in Washington, D.C., the head of a stone manufacturing company who was to make up the statues suggested to Mr. Leimbach that he create and submit a design. In just three days he had a model to show Mrs. Moss, who was most pleased. A few days later she sent him a telegram asking

him to send the model to her, which he did. A few days later she sent him another telegram awarding him the contract. He commented, “I doubt if any other sculptor ever created a design and had it accepted in such a short time.”

In an article in *Federal Illustrator*, quoted by Bauer, Leimbach explained:

The monument “The Madonna of the Trail” was modeled for art-stone (granite) and done in a time less than a month to be placed in twelve states from Maryland to California as a trail marker on the Old National Trails. The idea I had, when I modeled the design was this: The pioneer mother with her two children was waiting for the father at her block-house in the wild West, for the father did not come home as he had promised. She, believing him to be in danger, put her little child in a blanket, grasped the gun and with the boy ran out in the field to look for the father. [Bauer, pages 6-18]

Two-Way Trip Across Country

With the country still in the “Roaring 20s,” stunt driving could catch the public interest as in years past.

In June 1927, L. B. Miller set a record for a round-trip transcontinental trip on two of the country’s most famous named trails. Unlike Cannonball Baker and other long-distance record setters, Louis Miller, in his 50s, did not do stunts for a living. He was the manager for West Coast Operations of the Victor X-Ray Corporation. He sought long-distance records as a hobby. After pursuing city-to-city records, he sought his first transcontinental record in 1925, driving his Wille Sainte Clair Roadster on the Lincoln Highway. [Hokanson, page 103]

At 10 a.m. on May 31, 1927, Miller drove his Chrysler Imperial “80” Phaeton out of San Francisco bound for New York City on the Lincoln Highway. His goal was to break the transcontinental driving record he had set in August 1926. He reached New York City on June 3 – his 3,385-mile trip had taken 79 hours and 55 minutes. He had beaten his own record by 3 hours and 17 minutes.

He did not linger to celebrate his success. He stayed in New York City only long enough to get his time stamped at 8:55 p.m. At 8:56 p.m., he began the drive to Los Angeles via the National Old Trails Road. From a map of the trip, he appears to have driven across New Jersey and intersected the National Old Trails Road in southwestern Pennsylvania. After driving 3,336 miles, he reached Los Angeles in 86 hours and 20 minutes later.

Overall, he had driven 6,721 miles in one minute less than 7 days. The time was clocked officially by the Western Union Telegraph Company and verified by the Lincoln Highway Association and the National Old Trails Road Association. The two-way record was official.

On arriving in Los Angeles, Miller told reporters:

I made a one-way transcontinental record two years ago by driving from New York to San Francisco in 110 hours. This record was broken, but last August I got it back again. Now I've broken my own record, and the other fellows have something to shoot at. The new mark we made going East this time will stay put for the one-way trip, I guess, and this round-trip record is going to tax the abilities of any one to better.

The Washington Post reported:

Miller was accompanied in his grueling ordeal by J. E. Wieber, of Portland, Oreg., who was his companion on the one-way record trip last August.

Neither man was able to sleep more than a few minutes at a time during the week, and their only nourishment was black coffee and orange juice carried in thermos bottles, supplemented by an occasional brick of ice cream picked up at filling stations under orders wired ahead. In spite of lack of sleep and inadequate food, both Miller and Wieber were in excellent physical condition on their arrival in Los Angeles, apart from the loss of a few pounds of weight, a fact all the more remarkable in Miller's case, as he is in his fifty-fourth year. This absence of exhaustion, in his opinion, is striking proof of the unusual riding ease of the Chrysler car.

The Stover Signal Engineering Company of Racine, Wisconsin, sponsored the two-way run by Miller and Wieber. The company's sponsorship was intended to demonstrate the value of the newly perfected Neo-Ryan non-glare headlight for night driving. Chrysler also used the record-setting drive in its advertising. An ad in *The New York Times* on June 19, 1927, was headed:

**All America Applauds
the
Triumphs of Chrysler
In Speed in Stamina**

Setting new world's records for speed and stamina among stock cars throughout the world, Chrysler in the last four weeks has thrilled all America with further new proofs of performance leadership.

The ad highlighted two events:

89.091 Miles in One Hour

Driving a stock Chrysler Imperial "80" Sport Roadster of 288.6 cu. in. piston displacement, at the Atlantic City track on May 14th, Ralph DePalma (under A.A.A. supervision) covered 89.091 miles in one hour – the American record for cars of less than 300 cu. in. piston displacement and within seven-tenths of a mile of the free-for-all stock car record, established by a car in the 450 cu. in. class.

Miller's cross-country drive was the other event:

6720 Miles In 167 Hours

Starting from San Francisco on May 31st, in his personally-owned Chrysler Imperial "80" Phaeton, Mr. L. B. Miller, of Racine, Wis., accompanied by Mr. John Wieber, of Portland, Ore., drove 3,385 miles to New York in 79 hours, 55 minutes, breaking the former transcontinental mark by 3 hours and 17 minutes. Turning around without losing a minute in New York, Mr. Miller and his aide sped back to the Coast, reaching Los Angeles on June 7th, covering the 6720 miles of the round trip in 167 hours, 59 minutes – a whole season's driving in a week's time – an average of 40 miles an hour for the entire distance – an achievement without precedent.

Not everyone was impressed by the trip. *Michigan Roads and Pavements* wrote that such records "are merely relative and informative." For the ordinary motorist, "it only tells him that one can travel across the continent in a motor car in several hours less time than he can in a railroad train." The magazine explained that Miller took the Lincoln Highway east and "another route" west:

Mr. Average Motorist, reading an account of Miller's performance, will not be prompted by any desire to cross the continent with similar speed; but he will receive the impression that it is now possible to drive a motor car from coast to coast at reasonable speed and in reasonable comfort. He will believe that America has highways that the day of motor driving has arrived. [sic] And he will be right.

[“Breaks Record Crossing U.S.,” *The Baltimore Sun*, June 19, 1927, page TA12; “Chrysler Hangs Up New Cross-Country Round-Trip Record,” *The Washington Post*, June 19, 1927, page A2; “Pacific to Atlantic and Back in a Week,” *Michigan Roads and Pavements*, June 30, 1927, page 8]

Locations for the Monuments

In April 1928, when the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution assembled in Washington for their Thirty-Seventh Continental Congress, Mrs. Moss had much to report.

She did not repeat the history of the National Old Trails Road Committee, as she had in 1926 and 1927. Instead, she began with the resolution adopted for installing monuments in each of the States along the National Old Trails Road:

To this end your Committee has been diligently working, never ceasing their labors during the entire past year; and, with the assistance of the National Old Trails Road Association, very splendid progress has been made toward the erection of a great National shrine reaching across our broad land, from ocean to ocean, to be our tribute of love and affection to the memory of the great host of Pioneer Mothers – the thousands of

“Known” and “Unknown” Mothers – whose great courage, faith, and hope are recorded in countless pages of the histories of our early America.

Your National Chairman has traveled back and forth over the National Old Trails Road 1,200 miles by auto and 2,916 by train – as far west as Albuquerque, New Mexico, and as far east as Washington, D.C. She has mailed close to 4,000 pieces of mail – books on the National Old Trails Road, maps, booklets of information on good roads in general, and circulars, all of which were supplied by the National Old Trails Road Association. Twenty-four dozen large photographs of the Monument, taken when the full-sized model was finished, were sent everywhere upon request, as well as 500 large cuts and 1,000 small cuts of the Monument. Mail all during the year has been constant and demanding, and your National Chairman has literally lived with her pen in her hand during the past year, writing hundreds of letters to interested members and to people outside of the ranks of the D.A.R. who were interested and enthusiastic about the project. Publicity Bureaus, the Extension Divisions of Universities, Editors of magazines and newspapers, have requested information, and splendid publicity has been the result; and the photograph taken the day the sculptor finished the full-sized model has been printed in papers and magazines from one end of the country to the other, bringing very favorable comment from all sections.

She had watched development of the Madonna of the Trail statues:

As you no doubt know, the small model was presented last April to the National Board and to Congress and accepted without a dissenting vote. One change was made after consideration: the shawl that was over the head of the *Mother* was replaced by a bonnet of old-fashioned type.

During the hot summer days, your National Chairman watched the figure of the Mother and her children grow under the skilled hands of the sculptor, Mr. A. Leimbach of St. Louis, who willingly took the ideas given him and fashioned them into a very beautiful, and certainly a very representative and distinctive memorial to those Pioneer Mothers of ours whose granite virtues were outstandingly great.

The figure of the Mother is a strong one, showing fortitude, perseverance, and energy in her bearing; and the foot pressed forward, as well as the grasp of the gun, expresses firm determination. Her face is one of beauty and of strong character – the face of a Mother who realizes her responsibilities, and trusts in God.

The one great outstanding feature of our statue of the Pioneer Mother and children that has been commented upon so favorably is the compactness of the group. The children are clasped to the figure of the woman, giving at once the idea of solid, substantial, heroic proportions, and not easily to be marred.

For your information, the figure is 10 feet high and weighs 5 tons. The base upon which the monument will stand is 6 feet high and weighs 12 tons. The foundation upon which

the monument stands is 2 feet above ground, which will make the monument 18 feet above ground. In color, the finished monuments are of a warm pink granite shade, the color of the Missouri native granite. The Missouri granite is used as the main aggregate in the “poured mass” of algonite stone, of which the monuments are made.

The foundation is 9 feet square, which made it necessary to secure ample-sized plots of ground for “sites” upon which to erect these monuments. On the front of the base will be the following inscription; in small letters directly under the monument will be the words:

“THE MADONNA OF THE TRAIL”

Then will come the N. S. D. A. R. Insignia, under which will come –

“N. S. D. A.R. Memorial
To The
PIONEER MOTHERS
Of the
COVERED WAGON DAYS

On the back of the base will be the words:

“THE NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD”

On the two sides will be 25 words each of historical data or local commemoration. These inscriptions must be of Revolutionary Period or as early history as may be recorded for the respective localities.

She explained the process employed to decide where to install the monuments in each of the States of the National Old Trails Road:

Last year we accepted the generous offer of the National Old Trails Road Association to assist in the erection of the monuments, helping to secure the funds to defray the expenses of the National program, as well as to assist in the selection of the site upon which to erect the monument in each one of the 12 States on the National Old Trails Road. Through the office of the National Old Trails Road Association, a bulletin was sent out last spring to every town on the National Old Trails Road announcing the fact that the Daughters of the American Revolution were about ready to erect their memorial monuments on the main Ocean to Ocean Highway, the *National Old Trails Road*, requesting each community that felt it had a claim as a point of historical interest to send in their data. Your National Chairman followed these bulletins with her letter giving the plans for the campaign for sites. The “time limit” for applications to be sent in was set for August 20, 1927. Many points of interest were heard from, and a number of competitors forwarded beautifully designed brochures. These little works of art are themselves worthy of special attention.

Several States had 5 or 6 places bidding for the honor of securing the monument, but to Kansas went the distinction of being the most enthusiastic, for 10 towns entered into the contest. Each one of these 10 towns had history that no other town could boast of, and each one practically claimed to be the center of Kansas – and each, with great pride, pointed out the first school house in Kansas.

The personnel of the Committee to decide on the location or “site” for the Pioneer Mother monument in each State was as follows: The State Regent of each State, respectively; the Vice Chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee in charge of each State; the National Chairman, National Old Trails Road Committee, D.A.R.; the President and Secretary of the National Old Trails Road Association; and one business man from each of the two first places submitting data in the State; these men to be appointed by the Chamber of Commerce in each town. This made a committee of seven.

All arrangements for the trip west to select sites were made by the gentlemen of the National Old Trails Road Association, and your Chairman finds it difficult, indeed, to adequately express her appreciation of the very business-like and thorough manner in which this entire matter was handled by these gentlemen. Judge Harry S. Truman, President, and Mr. Frank A. Davis, Secretary, of the National Old Trails Road Association, accompanied your National Chairman and the committees for each State, respectively, all the way west to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and east as far as Bethesda, Maryland, and their untiring efforts and never-ceasing courtesy and thoughtfulness made what might have been a very hard, tiresome trip one of great pleasure.

Mrs. Moss went through the State selections:

Missouri: September 28, 1927, the Missouri Committee inspected sites at Lexington and Independence, the two Missouri towns to qualify, and the Committee chose Lexington. The inspection through Missouri and as far west as Dodge City, Kansas, was made by auto, and accompanied in each State by the State Regent and the National Vice-Chairman.

Kansas: Kansas rain and Kansas mud was overshadowed by Kansas hospitality, and it took the Committee 3 days to view the sites, and, after long and serious deliberation, give the Kansas monument to Council Grove.

Arizona: Judge Truman, with Mr. Davis, his Secretary, and your National Chairman then went by train to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where they were met by the Committee from Arizona on Monday, October 3d. After listening to the claims of 3 towns in Arizona, the Committee rendered a decision in favor of Springerville.

New Mexico: Your National Chairman had the privilege and pleasure of attending two social affairs of the New Mexico State Conference in Albuquerque on October 3d, and enjoyed the hospitality extended her. On Tuesday, October 4th, the site offered by Albuquerque was inspected, and the Committee then motored to Santa Fe to inspect the

site there and review their claims. The decision for the New Mexico monument was rendered in Santa Fe, and the Albuquerque site was chosen.

Colorado: From Santa Fe your National Chairman and party proceeded to Trinidad, Colorado. A very enthusiastic local committee met us there, and we inspected the site at Trinidad on October 5, 1927. From there we drove to Las Animas, in company with the local committee from Las Animas, and after luncheon viewed the site offered us there; and then, together with the local committee from Lamar, who had driven down to Las Animas to meet us, we proceeded on to Lamar to view their sites and hear their claims to the Colorado monument. We were given a banquet that evening at the hotel, and a large community get-together meeting was held in the Elks Club.

The Committee went into executive session late that evening, discussed the sites suggested in the 3 towns in Colorado, and finally made a choice in favor of Lamar, after which your National Chairman, in company with Judge Truman and Mr. Davis, took the midnight trains back to Kansas City, arriving there on October 6

On October 7, your Chairman arrived from this western trip, only to prepare for her trip east to confer with the committees in the respective eastern States in regard to their sites.

Maryland: On Monday, October 17, 1927, the Committee met at the Hotel Lafayette in Washington, D.C., and proceeded to inspect sites for Maryland in the following three towns: Bethesda, Frederick, and Cumberland. Although the Committee inspected a number of sites, no one was decided upon definitely, but several places offered at Bethesda are being given very serious consideration, and it seems to be the consensus of opinion of the Committee that the farthest monument to the east should be erected as near the eastern terminus of the National Old Trails Road as possible.

Pennsylvania: The Committee proceeded next day, October 18th, to Pennsylvania, inspecting sites in the two towns in Pennsylvania to qualify – Uniontown and Washington. The Committee went into executive session upon their arrival at Washington, after a very enthusiastic “get-together” meeting of Daughters and citizens, and the site offered in Washington was chosen by the Committee.

West Virginia: The Committee drove from Washington, Pennsylvania, to Wheeling, West Virginia, Tuesday, October 18th, where they were met by a committee from the Chamber of Commerce and a Committee of the representative Daughters, and together they had a very delightful banquet, after which they went into executive session and voted to give the West Virginia monument to Wheeling.

Ohio: Wednesday, October 19, 1927, the Committee drove from Wheeling, West Virginia, to Zanesville, Ohio, where we were asked to inspect 2 sites and were given historical data bearing on their claims. We proceeded immediately to Columbus, where the Committee was entertained at luncheon, and we were asked to inspect a site on the grounds of the beautiful new City Hall there. The Springfield delegation came over to

Columbus and drove the Committee back to Springfield in time for a late conference at six o'clock that evening. That night your National Chairman enjoyed the hospitality of the members of the La Gonda Chapter, D.A.R., at Springfield. A decision was rendered at a later date, and the Ohio monument was given to Springfield.

Mrs. Moss returned to St. Louis by train on October 20 "after a very successful and happy trip sight-seeing and site-hunting along the eastern half of our National Highway."

She also discussed two other States:

Indiana: The site for Indiana has not been definitely decided upon by the Committee, although the logical place for the Indiana monument is undoubtedly at Richmond. It is the choice of the Indiana Daughters and will be the choice of the Executive Committee just as soon as definite arrangements for the erection expenses can be completed. The site offered in Richmond is in a beautiful park, and it is another site that would be perpetually beautified, and constant care would be given the monument.

Illinois: The Illinois site has only recently been decided upon, and has been very appropriately voted to be located at Vandalia, on the grounds of the old State Capitol Building. The State of Illinois now owns this ground and building, and are restoring the building and beautifying the grounds. The landscape artist has been called in and the monument will be erected under the supervision of the State Welfare Department. It will face the National Old Trails Road, a few hundred feet from the Old Trails, and can readily be seen by tourists as they pass.

During the western tour, the Committee had not been able to go into California, "but when the western monuments are dedicated the Committee will then go on into California and select the site for the California monument."

Mrs. Moss reported that the first monument would be dedicated in June 1928 in Springfield, Ohio, followed by dedication of the Wheeling statue a few days later:

Your National Chairman pledged to Maryland that she should have the first monument, but because of the fact that we could not definitely decide upon the site, we are obliged to go forward with the program, erecting the one that is in readiness first. If by chance Maryland's site has been decided upon and such a thing could be done, the Maryland monument will be erected shortly after the Springfield and the West Virginia monuments. It is necessary now for the Committee to expedite matters and as quickly as possible start the program for the erections.

She commented on several of the chosen sites:

In regard to the sites that we chose in the above-mentioned places, your National Chairman wishes to remark that Missouri's site is a very beautiful one, up on the brow of a high hill overlooking the river and a beautiful new bridge. Lexington is teeming with

the history of early pioneer days, and the Committee felt that this site was very well chosen.

(The Lexington Bridge over the Missouri River was a seven-span truss bridge that opened on October 31, 1924, and dedicated on November 5. It was replaced on June 25, 2005, by the Ike Skelton Bridge, named after a U.S. Representative from the area.)

In Kansas, the site selected at Council Grove is on the right-hand side of the National Old Trails Road as you come into Council Grove approaching the new bridge. They have turned several acres of ground over to the National Society D.A.R. for a memorial park, and in this memorial park will be placed the monument to the Pioneer Mothers. They have moved many carloads and hundreds of truckloads of earth to this site since it was chosen, and the people of Council Grove have never ceased their enthusiastic work to make this site one of the most beautiful. The Boy Scouts of this town proposed to have a medallion struck of the monument, with the Madonna figure and appropriate wording, to sell as a souvenir on a small commission for the benefit of the Monument Fund, the day the Kansas monument is dedicated.

The site at Albuquerque, New Mexico, is located in a very beautiful city park known as McClelland Park. The monument will be located close to the National Old Trails Road, where it may be viewed by the tourists as they pass. Such a setting as this assures us that the monument will always be taken care of and the surroundings will be beautified.

The site for Colorado is located upon ground owned by the Santa Fe Railroad, close to the Santa Fe Station at Lamar. It can be seen by the traveler from the train, and also by the tourist as he passed on the National Old Trails Road. The National Society D.A.R. will receive a 99-year lease on this plot of ground from the Santa Fe Railroad. It is a plot of ground that will always be kept beautified, and the historical data will be recorded and register important facts regarding the old historical "Big Timbers."

We have been offered a choice of two sites in Springerville, Arizona, one of them just off the road facing the National Old Trails and southward toward the White Mountains and southern Arizona points. The other site is close at hand, in the center of the intersection of cross-highways. We are awaiting the approval of the Highway Commission of Arizona before we definitely decide which one of these sites we will take. The National Old Trails Road at this particular point connects with what is known as the Rice-Springerville Highway, later to be named The Apache Trail. The Coronado Trail is to the right about a mile.

In regard to the above-chosen sites, your National Chairman wishes to say that the site given to us for our West Virginia monument is indeed a very beautiful one. Mr. George W. Lutz, a Vice-President of the National Old Trails Road Association, who lives in Wheeling, represented the President, Judge Harry S. Truman, on the eastern trip, and through him, with the cooperation of the Park Commission and the Chamber of Commerce, two very enthusiastic affiliated bodies, the site offered is one of the finest

locations given in any State for our monument. It is at the beautiful entrance of their new park grounds, this entrance being about seventy feet wide. The Commission will spend about \$20,000 to place the Pioneer Mother monument in this beautiful location, and I am sure if she could speak for herself she would say, "I am glad I have been placed in such a beautiful spot in Wheeling."

The Pennsylvania site chosen at Washington was on the grounds of the County Court House, and was a very beautiful site, we thought at the time. However, there is a movement under consideration to change the National Old Trails Highway to the next parallel street east of the present location, and if this is done, the Committee will ask for another site on the new route of the National Old Trails Road.

The Ohio site is on the beautiful grounds of the State Masonic Home. The monument is to be placed on a beautiful knoll facing the north, near the western boundary line of the Masonic grounds, close to where the old Valley Pike joins the National Pike. If every locality seeking the honor of securing one of these monuments had entered the campaign with as much determination and as much enthusiasm as the citizens and Daughters of Springfield, it would have been a very hard task for your National Chairman to make any decision whatsoever. The Springfield Daughters and their friends "went after" the memorial monument long before they ever knew what form it was to take, and when they heard it was to take the form of the Pioneer Mother they did not cease their efforts day or night to win the prize. Their constant, local support of our big national project has been a continuous source of strength and inspiration to your National Chairman, and this little word of commendation in the annual report of the Committee is certainly due them.

Mrs. Moss said that the question she received most frequently was why the National Old Trails Road had been chosen as a memorial highway:

In answer, your National Chairman would say that "This road was built, not by the road engineers, but marked out by the Indians and the buffalo, their choice always being the quickest and best line of travel. In the olden days, day after day, year after year, was heard the music of the creaking wagon and the lowing ox. The mighty host of pioneers who crossed this highway were armed, not alone with the rifle, but with the axe and spade. They took with them, not the ammunition wagon and artillery, but herds of livestock and bales of household goods, implements of husbandry, their women and their children – evidences and guarantees of a future state, the requirements of a permanent settlement, and the basis of an American home.

"The Daughters of the American Revolution have long interested themselves in preserving all of the State and National Highways. They are sacred to us as battlefields. They record the steady triumph of peace. They were built in order that the torch of American civilization might be carried into the wilderness. The trails have not come about by accident. They are the true index of the nation's progress, the life-history of a people. That they are linked in a complete chain from ocean to ocean is not a matter of

chance, and each link represents an epoch in the growth of this Republic. They are the autograph of a nation, written across the face of a continent.”

She concluded her annual report by stating that the time had come to bring this national program to a close, “and your National Chairman fully realizes the great responsibility resting upon her and values the confidence you have reposed in her.” With the help of the committee, “she will go forward with this year’s work, endeavoring to erect for the National Society, D.A.R., a great National Shrine, each State unit to be a link in the beautiful National Memorial we are placing across this broad land of ours in the name of God and with veneration for the high ideals of our Pioneer Ancestors.”

With her report ended, Mrs. Moss exhibited the color of the monuments and the material they were made of:

Mrs. Moss: I shall have it on the desk and anyone who wants to can see it. I would love to have you see it.

Miss Richards: Do we understand you are going to put a duplicate in every one of those cities all along?

Mrs. Moss: Yes.

Miss Richards: What are the dimensions of the monument?

Mrs. Moss: The figure of the Pioneer Mother is 10 feet high. It rests upon a base 6 feet high. That rests upon a foundation 2 feet above the ground. The entire monument is 18 feet over all. The figure weighs 12 tones, 17 tons in all. Daughters, it is a monument, not a marker. (Applause.)

Mrs. Dow (New York): I have been exceedingly interested many years. I was a member of the National Old Trails Association that issued two pictures called the “Madonna of the Trail.” They were very much admired. I wish to ask a question of information. Do you still have them?

Mrs. Moss: Those pictures were never turn over to your present Chairman. I haven’t them.

Mrs. Dow: I am very sorry. They were called the “Madonna of the Trail” and they were very beautiful.

Mrs. Sweeney (Illinois): May I say that I saw the first monument and that the Daughters of the American Revolution will be proud of this monument?

Mrs. Moss: I might say – please don’t all come at once – I have about eighteen of the large photographs of the monument with me and I would be glad to give them out as long as they last.

Miss Richards: Are they for sale or a present?

Mrs. Moss: These are paid for out of the expenses of the National Committee.

Miss Richards: Will you save one for me? (Laughter.)

Mrs. Moss: Yes. [*Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 1928, pages 162-172*]

According to the proceedings, “Mr. Harry S. Truman, president of the National Old Trails Road Association” made an address, but the address was not reprinted. *The Evening Star*, Washington’s leading newspaper, also mentioned the address:

An interesting report on the progress being made in marking the National Old Trails road was given by Mrs. John Trigg Moss, chairman of the committee in charge of that work, and Harry S. Truman, president of the National Old Trails Road Association, addressed the congress on the development of this highway. The road follows across the continent the trails of covered wagon days. [*Proceedings*, page 78; “D.A.R. Resolution Assails Pacifists,” *The Evening Star*, April 21, 1921, 1928, page 4]

Truman’s Take on Selection

As described earlier, Harry Truman often wrote to his wife Bess about his daily activities while traveling the National Old Trails Road. The letters continued while he traveled the road to help select sites for the Madonna of the Trail monuments, providing a somewhat more detailed – and personal – explanation of the selection process.

August 30, 1927

Lyons, Kans. Tuesday, August 30, 1927

Dear Bess:

Yesterday as I was driving along west of Olathe I picked up the nicest looking fellow thinking he belonged somewhere around west of town and that I could put him down at home. He told me he owned a cleaning shop in Borger, Texas, and that he had been making as high as eighty dollars a day running it, but that the governor of Texas had ruined his business by sending rangers in there and chasing all the girls and gamblers out of town. Claimed he was trying to sell his cleaning machinery. Told me his name, which I promptly forgot, and asked me mine. I handed him my card and he looked at the Judge on it and said, "Well I wish I'd been in your court in K.C. yesterday, I'd have had you send me to St. Joe. I began to wonder what I had aboard and he said he was a dope fiend and that he had been since the war, got the habit in the army, and that he was either going to quit or die in the attempt. When I went north to Topeka he got out and went south, said if he went to a big town some uplifter would try to sell him dope or hire him to rob a bank. I told him if he'd come into court Monday I'd send him to St. Joe for the cure. I think he was honestly trying to quit.

I saw the big Auburn 8 that those two fellows were killed in at Council Grove. It was some wreck. They were actually driving a hundred miles an hour when they hit. A little too fast. The whole works ought to be exhibited for the benefit of the wreckless drivers' club.

Thompson couldn't go after I got there and the Mayor of Council Grove came with me. His name is Young. He owns nine farms, fifteen or twenty business buildings in Council Grove, a winter home in Florida and spends his time building and running the finest

tourist camp in the Country at Council Grove. Just worries his head off if some body at Dodge City or Lyon or some other place on the Old Trails routes a tourist around some way to miss his town. You'd think his life and bread and butter depended on how many groceries he sold in his camp and how many paid customers he had in his park. He's making about \$500.00 a month off it. Told me he had to ship 4 carloads of corn out of his grainery to make room for the new crop on just one of the nine farms. He's a very nice pleasant fellow and has invited you and me and Miss Margie to come down and stay a couple of days at his camp free. He has a slide, merry-go-round, monkeys and a dozen other things to entertain touring kids. His park is an elaborate affair.

We found the roads fine. I drove from Topeka to Council Grove in two hours and then waited around for Mr. Young to get ready until 3 o'clock then drove to Herrington and stayed an hour with Thompson and got here at seven o'clock. It is 68 miles from Topeka to Council Grove and 125 to here so you see the roads weren't very bad.

I hope you and your daughter feel fine and that you are having as hot weather as we are. Haven't needed any vest or coat either today.

Kiss the baby and tell her to kiss you for me.

Love to both, Harry

September 1, 1927

La Junta, Colorado, Thursday, September 1, 1927

Dear Bess:

We arrived at 11:30 from Syracuse where we stayed yesterday evening. There is a Harvey House at that town but it was full when we arrived but we found a place to stay.

We stopped in Great Bend and heard that Davis and his party were there. He has a man and woman driving him out and they are getting up ads for a Natl Old Trails Map. We went uptown to find him and they told us that the party had gone. We drove to Pawnee Rock and stopped and looked around over the country and then went on to Larned but no sign of Davis. We stopped a while and then drove to Kinsley and had lunch from there to Dodge City and called on our friend Mr. Ham Bell who was Mayor of South Dodge in the old days; but still no sign of Davis. We then drove to Garden City leaving Dodge about 5 P.M. and arriving in Garden City about 5 P.M. I forgot to change my watch at Dodge so we drove 35 miles in nothing. We decided to go on to Syracuse and arrived there about 6:30. We stopped at a little town called Lakin to see their camp and there we found Davis. When we couldn't get a place in the Harvey House we went out and stayed with Davis and his gang at the camp.

We are going to Rocky Ford to the fair this afternoon and then back here and to a meeting tonight. Tomorrow morning our road meeting and then back home by Monday morning.

You should have come. The roads were like boulevards and the weather has been ideal.

Tell Marger to be a good young lady. Love to both of you.

Your Harry

Sept 30, 1927

Dear Bess:

We left the Meuhlebach on time arrived in Olathe at 9:30 looked at their site and then went home with ex Gov. Hodges to coffee and toast served by the good looking daughters of the Hodges Bros. They each have one about eighteen. We then made a canvass of the situation and had to wait until 11:45 for the cars from Baldwin to arrive. Got to Baldwin at 1:30 where they gave us lunch and the President of Baker University told us why we should put the monument on the campus. It is a very remarkable school having been founded in the fifties and was coeducational from its founding. It is one of Kansas' three accredited Universities and has about 600 students. About four hundred couples have married from the University and there is only one divorce, happened last year. Some record I'd say.

We had supper in Burlingame where we listened to a plea for the monument by a commissioned officer in the Federal army and a man who had been over all the trails seventy years ago. He is 87 years old, had all his faculties, and made us the best speech we've heard.

We came on to Council Grove where the band met us at 9:30 P.M. march down the street in front of the cars and delivered us at the city hall where the D.A.R. women were in session. They read us the history of the town showed us the site and then I called you.

We'll be in Herington at 9:30 at Marion at 11:00 for lunch at McPherson in the afternoon and Lyons to stay all night. We are to get through all right. You should be along. I haven't spent a nickle and I can't. They won't let me even the phone call was free. Hope I see a letter at Lyons or Dodge or somewhere. We'll be in Dodge at noon Saturday. Saturday night at La Hunta [sic] at the Harvey House.

Kiss my baby and look at my sweetie for me in the mirror.

Your Harry.

September 30, 1927

The Palace Hotel, Lyons, Kans. Sept. 30, 1927

Dear Bess and Baby:

We left Council Grove this morning at 8:30 and arrived in Herington at 9:30, where we were shown more sites and heard more conversation. Left Herington at 10:30 and arrived at Marion at 12 o'clock where we had dinner. Marion was having an old settlers picnic and didn't pay us much attention. They turned us over to an old man 87 years old who told us a lot of Indian stories and then we left for McPherson where we had a grand reception by the D.A.R. chapter. They have a beautiful little city with parks and boulevards, two colleges and a lot of history just like all the rest.

Lyons met us at McPherson and they will give us a grand banquet tonight. Tomorrow Great Bend will come and get us and then we'll go to Dodge City where we'll have lunch decide the Kansas town that gets the monument and go on to New Mexico, where we'll decide the Arizona and New Mexico points and then decide Colorado.

Kiss my baby and look at my sweetie in the glass and kiss her too.

Harry.

Dodge City, Kans.,
Oct. 2, 1927

Dear Bess:

The Kansas situation is settled. Council Grove won. It was a hard thing to settle but abiding by the rules and weighing all the historical data obtainable, Council Grove won.

We woke up in Lyons this morning to find it raining, and our transportation from Great Bend had stuck in the mud and didn't arrive. We went down in the salt mine, supposed to be the largest in the world. It is 1,043 miles deep and the finest looking I've seen – nineteen feet thick. The deposit was made some centuries ago by the sea. There are fourteen miles of tunnels and a theater down there. They have mules in the mine that haven't seen daylight in six years. We got some fine examples of salt

Lots of love to you and everyone else in our family (kiss the everyone else).

Your Harry

Franciscan Hotel, Albuquerque, N.M.
Monday, October 3, 1927

Dear Bess:

I sent you a telegram today but I couldn't tell you what a time we've had. Arizona put up its claim and I want to tell you it was some job to decide. L. S. Williams from Williams, Arizona, made the best plea I ever listened to, but Williams was like Independence – they never had done anything for the National Old Trails. Springerville, which happens to be the residence of J. W. Becker, national vice president of the N.O.T., has never missed an opportunity to boost the road and pay its money. Davis and I voted for Springerville and Mrs. Moss voted for Williams. Kingman had a little old maid here who was a member of the committee and was supposed to have an unprejudiced mind but who put forward an argument for Kingman every time a point was made for another town. Her name was [illegible] and the man from Williams named her incompetent. She was. She lost her town every opportunity to win.

The state conference of the D.A.R. for New Mexico is being held here today. They invited Davis and me to their reception this evening and I had to make a speech. Then they had refreshments. An old lady by the name of Joyce got hold of me and told me her home had been Pleasant Hill [Missouri] some twenty years ago and wanted me to recollect a lot of people who had been dead before I was born.

After she got done with me the Albuquerque delegation backed me into a corner and tried to force me promise to vote for this town for the monument. Then a Santa Fe outfit did me the same way, and then Albuquerque started all over. Santa [sic] followed us to the hotel and wouldn't let us loose and I am writing you at 1:00 a.m. at home. I've got to get up at six-thirty, meet Mrs. Moss at seven-thirty, and at 9:00 a.m. hold another court to hear this town, then drive to Santa Fe sixty-six miles, hear Santa Fe come to a decision, and then start at Trinidad, Colorado, and hear Las Animas and Larimer and decide Colorado, and then I'm coming home.

It will be Thursday before I arrive, but I'd better get this over now than to make another trip. I am crazy to see you and my baby. I don't know how much I love you till I get away for a day or two.

Kiss my baby and tell her to kiss her mamma for Daddy.

Love to you,
Harry

On October 4, the committee considered sites in Colorado. They considered Trinidad, La Junta, and a cite north of Las Animas on the Santa Fe Trail. The Lamar Daily News summarized their visit to that city:

Lamar cars picked up the delegation at 4:40 and arrived in this city shortly before 6 o'clock to find the main Street adorned with Flags and the High School Band in uniform. The procession moved to Santa Fe Park, the site offered by the local committee.

Mrs. Moss, Judge H. S. Truman, Independence, MO, president of the National Old Trails Association [sic], Frank Davis, Kansas City, secretary of the association and Judge Herman Bailey, Las Animas, were honored guests at a delightful dinner served at the Ben Mar Hotel at 7 o'clock. Following the dinner the party of twenty repaired to the Elks Home, where a group of members of the Fort Bend DAR and other interested local citizens met. [Quoted in Mallinson, Jane, "Harry Truman and the Selection of Sites for the DAR Madonna Statues, Part II," *Wagon Tracks*, May 1995, page 6]

April 14, 1928

Hotel Mayfair, St. Louis, Mo. April 14, 1928

My Dear Mamma & Baby:

We left Independence at 10:40 A.M., got to Columbia at 1:40 and arrived here at 6:30 P.M.

I saw Fred in Columbia and found that he didn't know the name of the book he wanted either but I guess I can find it anyway. Al Saengli was there to meet me and try and get his guest out of trouble. I turned him over to Fred and I guess they accomplished it.

We stayed an hour in Columbia and then slipped along down here arriving in good condition all around. Old Dave Nail talked without intermission from start to finish. We just finished our dinner and Davis and Mr. Nail have gone for a walk. I am going to bed pretty soon and I am hoping I wake up in time to call you.

I had a letter from Mrs. [Alfred J.] Brosseau [President General of the D.A.R.] saying she had reserved a seat on the platform for any lady I cared to have up there and I am writing her thanking her but reserving no places for ladies.

Kiss my baby and tell her to be a good girl and maybe daddy will have something in his pocket when he gets home. I wish you were both along. Love to you both from

Your Daddy.

April 16, 1928

Hotel Gibbons, Dayton, Ohio April 16, 1928

Dear Bess and Marger:

I had driven so far yesterday that I was too tired to write you last night. We had an excellent Sunday. Saw our Bolshinks in Vandalia and got them all straightened out and then went to Terre Haute where we made the acquaintance of the Auto Club & Chamber of Commerce while we were eating a fine dinner. Then drove to Indianapolis where we met Mr. Nail's son and daughter-in-law. They took us to dinner at the Claypool Hotel and we had a very pleasant visit. We got to Indianapolis an hour ahead of time but when we went to pull out, found our hose connection to the pump was broken and had to wait an hour and a half to fix it. There were so many of the inhabitants of Indiana in cars on the road between Indianapolis and Richmond that it took us two hours and a half to make and that [illegible] two hours late which was the cause of the late call.

We left Richmond at seven fifteen but they changed the clock on us here and made us half an hour late in spite of our half hour earlier start.

We are due in Springfield at eleven A.M. and I hope to make it. Will phone you from Wheeling.

Kiss the baby.

Your Harry.

Fort Cumberland Hotel, Cumberland, MD.

April 17, 1928

Dear Babies:

We arrived here at 5:30 p.m. and the leading banker of the town wanted to take us to dinner, so we just decided to stay here all night. We are only a half-day's march by auto from the Capital anyway and we can get more rest by doing that.

Mr. Lutz came down to the hotel this morning and went over to Washington, Pennsylvania, with us where we met one of our vice presidents for Pennsylvania and had a meeting with him and the Chamber of Commerce and the president of the country club, McGinnis by name, and tried to settle the monument location for Pennsylvania. Then we went to Uniontown to a Rotary Club meeting, after which we met the president of the Chamber of Commerce and the manager of the Motor Club and found out that Washington and Uniontown are at swords' points because the former got the monument.

They've even brought in the governor and the state auto commission. They're worse than Kentucky mountaineers. Same here in Maryland. But Davis and I are going to straighten them out I believe if we can get the feminine part of the row satisfied. The local D.A.R.s in both states are at outs with Mrs. Moss and with each other.

I saw General Braddock's burial place today, was on top of the Allegheny Mountains 2,908 ft. above the sea level and there was the remains of a snowstorm of last night, just enough to see.

It has cleared off and is very pleasant tonight. We'll be in Washington at noon tomorrow. Hope to see at least four letters there from you. Tell Margie to be a good young lady and tell her to kiss her "mudder" for daddy. Wish you were both here.

Yours,
Harry

Hotel La Fayette, Washington, D.C.
April 19, 1928

Dear Bess and Baby:

Got your letter soon as I arrived and another one this morning. I'm glad they are at last getting the bond business going. If we carry that, there'll be no stopping us from being a real court. I just had to call you last night. Maybe my phone bill will be the biggest bill I have, but what do we live for anyway. Money or nothing else matters when you have a real sweetie and a baby.

Mrs. Moss and an old maid niece of hers had dinner with us and took us to the Congress, where Secretary Davis was the main speaker [not Truman as the proceedings and *Star* had indicated]. I met the president-general and a whole string of women, from Maine to California – every one of them Mrs. Mark S. Salisbury type, but nice to talk with. We go to a reception for the Missouri delegation tonight. Glad to stop here and go down in town with Dave and Davis. We called on Reed, who was gone, and Capper and Curtis and I left a card for Hawes and George Combs. George was out too. He made a speech to the women Tuesday night and they all want to adopt him. His speech was to the Missouri women not to the whole Congress. Only Coolidge, the Cabinet, and a county judge from Missouri do that – he-haw.

Be sure and kiss my baby and other of you be good girls until I get home and after too – I'll bring you a stick of gum.

Your Harry

Truman was referring to Senator James A. “Fighting Jim” Reed of Missouri; Senator Arthur Capper (KS); Senator Charles Curtis (KS); Senator Harry B. Hawes (MO); and Representative George Hamilton Combs, Jr. (MO). [*Dear Bess*, pages 332-334, plus additional letters from the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum]

Saving the Names

By 1928, the U.S. numbered highway system was an accepted way for navigating around the country. The named trails and their supporting associations were fading in importance.

That did not mean the named trail associations were not clinging to hope of revival. For example, on March 13, 1928, Representative Charles G. Edwards of Georgia introduced H.R. 12040:

A BILL

Requiring the names as well as the numbers of memorial highways to be given on maps and directional signs to perpetuate the purposes of such memorials.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all highways built or maintained by and through Federal aid should be designated by numbers and by names, where such highways are known by names, on the directional signs erected along said highways and upon the maps authorized and published by the States or the federal Government; and in the case of memorial, or other distinctive highways, built or maintained by Federal-aid funds, such as the Lee, Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson Davis, Dixie, Bankhead, Victory, Atlantic Coastal, and others well known by name, shall be designated on such markers, signs, and maps, by names, as well as by numbers.

The bill was referred to the Committee on Roads.

On April 26, 1928, not long after the visit by Truman, Davis, Mrs. Moss, Senator Capper of Kansas was even more explicit in S. J. Res 138, perhaps a result of Truman’s visit:

JOINT RESOLUTION

To provide for the designation of the route of The National Old Trails Road and the markers thereon.

Whereas the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution has been active for years in the work of preserving the history and sentiment attached to a transcontinental highway from the colonial East to Spanish Southwest; and

Whereas these famous trails, to wit, the Washington or Braddock Road, the Old National or Cumberland Road, the Boone's Lick Road, the Old Santa Fe Trail, and the Grand Canyon-Petrified Forest Road have been placed end to end to form a great transcontinental highway under the name of The National Trails Road [sic]: Therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this highway extending from Washington, District of Columbia, and Baltimore, Maryland, via the States of Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, to Los Angeles, California, shall hereafter be known as The National Old Trails Road.

Sec. 2. That the road herein described as The National Old Trails Road shall follow present designated highways which are as close as economic and topographical conditions will permit to the routes traveled by the pioneers in their journeys westward over said trails, which shall be via the following route:

Across the State of Maryland from Washington, District of Columbia, to Frederick, Maryland, via United States Highway Numbered 240; from Baltimore, Maryland, via United States Highway Numbered 40 to the Maryland-Pennsylvania State line.

Across the State of Pennsylvania via United States Highway Numbered 40.

Across the State of West Virginia via United States Highway Numbered 40.

Across the State of Ohio from the West Virginia-Ohio State line to the town of Brandt, Ohio, via United States Highway Numbered 40; from Brandt to Dayton via Ohio State Highway Numbered 201; from Dayton the Ohio-Indiana State line via Ohio State Highway Numbered 11.

Across the State of Indiana via United States Highway Numbered 40.

Across the State of Illinois via United States Highway Numbered 40.

Across the State of Missouri from Saint Louis to Boonville via United States Highway Numbered 40; from Boonville through Arrow Rock to Marshall via State Highways Numbered 41 and 20; from Marshall to Waverly via United States Highway Numbered 65; from Waverly through Lexington to Kansas City via United State Highway Numbered 24.

Across the State of Kansas from the Missouri-Kansas State line via United States Highway Numbered 50 to Baldwin; from Baldwin to Larned via United States Highway Number 50 north; from Larned to Kinsley via Kansas State Highway Numbered 37; from

Kinsley to Garden City via United States Highway Numbered 50 south; from Garden City to the Kansas-Colorado State line via United States Highway Numbered 50.

Across the State of Colorado from the Kansas-Colorado State line to La Junta via United States Highway Numbered 50; from La Junta to Trinidad via United States Highway Numbered 350; from Trinidad to the Colorado-New Mexico State line via United States Highway Numbered 85.

Across the State of New Mexico from the Colorado-New Mexico State line via United States Highway Numbered 85 to Socorro; from Los Lunas through Gallup to the New Mexico-Arizona State line via United States Highway Numbered 66; from Socorro through Magdalena to the New Mexico-Arizona State line via United States Highway Numbered 70.

Across the State of Arizona from the New Mexico-Arizona State line east of Springerville, Arizona, via United States Highway Numbered 70 to Holbrook; and from the New Mexico-Arizona State line west of Gallup, New Mexico, via United States Highway Numbered 66 to the Arizona-California State line.

Across the State of California via United States Highway Numbered 66 to Los Angeles.

Reference herein to United States Highway and State Highway route numbers is to those in effect January 1, 1928.

Sec. 3, That the memorial character of The National Old Trails Road may be perpetuated, it is hereby recommended to the Bureau of Public Roads, Department of Agriculture, and to the Highway departments of the States across which The National Old Trails Road as herein designated passes, that along this highway the signs on which the numbers are placed, while conforming to the size, shape, and design adopted by the American Association of State Highway Officials, shall contain a distinctive red, white, and blue color combination.

The joint resolution was referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. The committee's chairman, Representative Charles L. McNary of Oregon, transmitted the bill to the U.S. Department for Agriculture examination.

Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Renick W. Dunlap (April 1, 1925-March 6, 1933), an Ohio

farmer and former Ohio Secretary of Agriculture, replied for Secretary Jardine on May 16, 1928:

Dear Senator McNary:

Senate Joint Resolution No. 138, submitted with your letter of April 27, has been carefully examined and I feel that comment should properly go somewhat beyond the merits of the action specifically provided for by this resolution because H.R. 12040, which resembled S. J. Res. 138, but which is more general in its scope, has recently been brought to the attention of the Bureau of Public Roads of this Department.

I feel that very doubtful advantage would result from any such action as that proposed in either of these documents. Certainly, before giving specific consideration to the route to be known as The National Old Trails Road, or to any other single route for which a name has been proposed, the whole question of policy should be first carefully considered. Bills of this character in effect instruct the States to give certain names to certain trans-state highways which are parts of these named routes and further provide that the routes shall be marked in a particular way.

Inasmuch as the States have already taken in hand on their own initiative the matter of designating and marking transcontinental and interstate routes, it appears to me unnecessary that specific bills should take the time of Congress and the committees for covering some particular route, especially when it may not be satisfactory to many of the States through which it passes. I think it would be much better to leave these matters in the hands of the States.

Considered simply from the historical standpoint it would be regrettable and very easy to introduce anachronisms. The present bill contains at least two, so that its historical significance is blunted, and at least one of the instances in the present bill, as I know from previous discussion of the matter, abandons all idea of history and sentiment for the sake of purely selfish business advantage.

Should a policy of designating such routes be acceptable to the Congress, the work should certainly be well done and it is suggested in such cases that the question of routes be left entirely to the States; that the general policy should be to retain the old historic names; and that a selection of routes be insisted upon that would avoid either the duplication of names on the same route, or the duplication of routes having the same name.

I feel, however, that such a policy or such specific recognition in isolated cases, like that covered by the resolution, is more likely to result in endless controversy than in any good. An attempt to administer such acts would result in pressure being brought through every possible channel in order to influence decisions under the act. Cities large and small would attempt to influence the selection of routes and between such places there would be serious differences of opinion as to which existing present-day highway most nearly represents the historic route or trail.

You will, I think, readily appreciate the serious embarrassment of any Government agency that might be called upon to administer an act of this kind in view of the fact that there are more than 250 named trails on record in this Department and over a hundred

separate trails organizations promoting these routes. Recognition of any one trail or organization by official action would be considered discriminatory by those not so favored and recognition of all would unquestionably be ill-advised and probably impossible. It was the confusion resulting from the uncoordinated action of these voluntary organizations that led the States to take this matter into their own hands, and I believe the States have adjusted it in the most advisable and least controversial way.

I think S. J. Res. 138 would lead to endless controversy were it adopted, and I certainly do not recommend it. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

The reply is odd in some ways, particularly the reference in the second paragraph to the National Old Trails Road, one of the best known roads of its era, as if it were being designated by the resolution. Nevertheless, the letter reflected the official view that the named trails era of highway promotion was over.

The National Old Trails Road Association was not about to give up. AASHO had a process for considering changes in the U.S. numbered highway system, and that seemed to offer a way to proceed.

In a typed message dated June 24, 1927, George L. L. Gann of Pueblo, Colorado, offered a “Plan” for correcting what National Old Trails Road Association considered a mistake:

End U.S. 66 at Las Vegas N. Mex.

U.S. 66 is not a THROUGH NUMBER and it would not be any violation of rules to end it where ever it intersects a THROUGH NUMBER. Also the “Official” influence within the Assn. of State Highway Officials which brought about this diagonal irregularity has been removed.

Take U.S. 50 N. as now located via Pueblo to Montrose and thence south to Gallup N.Mex.

Take U.S. 50 S. from La Junta via Trinidad, Las Vegas and Santa to Gallup N.Mex.

And U.S. 50 from Gallup thru Ariz. and Calif. To Los Angeles.

Thereby giving a uniform, continuous number from Kansas City to Los Angeles.

Continue U.S. 40 S. from its present dead end at Grand Junction over the route now designated U.S. 50 to Salt Lake City and a connection with U.S. 40 and thereby making that a real thru line instead of a make believe.

In stating that the “Official” influence within AASHO had been removed, Gann was referring to the departure of Avery, Piepmeier, and others who had created the Chicago-to-Los Angeles route, initially as U.S. 60, then as U.S. 66.

Frank Davis replied to Gunn on June 27, 1927:

Dear Mr. Gann:

I wrote you on June 25 and the next day received yours of June 24th covering your findings concerning the U.S. Numbering System.

We indeed do attach much importance to this numbering system. We think it was a great work and if they had adhered to the announced plan of giving continuous numbers to routes along the "trend of travel" it would have met with little opposition.

But as it now stands there is much dissatisfaction throughout the entire country and U.S. Congressmen and Senators are being importuned by their constituents to do something about it.

The unfairness to the National Old Trails and Kansas City in giving two continuous numbers to San Francisco [U.S. 40 and U.S. 50, which ended at U.S. 40 in Sacramento] and NONE to Los Angeles and giving both Chicago and St. Louis a continuous number with a road crossing all the other through routes to Los Angeles is a glaring and outstanding irregularity in their system which the dissatisfied element all over the United States is using in their argument against the whole plan, and they are beseeching the N.O.T. to take the lead in a fight to tear down the whole system, which we are not inclined to do.

But we are taking steps to enlist the help and sympathy of Senator Reed of Missouri, who is both politically and personally a friend of our president Judge Truman.

In a letter pertaining to this U.S. Numbering system written by Thos. MacDonald of the office of public roads, to Senator Mayfield of Texas, MacDonald says "The plan to use numbers for uniform marking of important interstate road is NOT an activity of the Federal Government."

But if the correspondence that I have on file here from all over the United States is any indication, there will be proposed at the next Session of Congress some National Legislation bearing on this U.S. Numbering Stunt and unless the American Association of State Highway Officials takes some action to cover up the glaring irregularities that they have incorporated in their plan as now proposed, they are likely to land in some embarrassing situations.

We do indeed attach much importance to this numbering system and even tho the Highway Assn. may think the matter is closed, we expect to stay on the job of advocating a continuous number from K. C. to L.A. which position we can support with indisputable evidence concerning the "trend of traffic". Thanks for your interest and sympathy.

In a letter dated July 2, 1927, Davis tried to enlist support from L. D. Blauvelt, Colorado's State Highway Engineer, for a meeting to discuss the best way to protest the unfairness to the National Old Trails Road:

We expect in the very near future to stage a meeting in Southern Colorado to voice a protest against the unfairness to the National Old Trails Road of the U.S. Numbering System, and our loyal friend Mr. Geo. L.L. Gann of Pueblo writes us that you would be a valuable ally to us if you understood our position and he urged that we invite you to attend the meeting and even that we fix a date to suit your convenience.

Therefore we would like to know what dates between July 24 and August 10th you could be present at a meeting at La Junta Colo. [sic] to discuss this matter and we will try to arrange our meeting to coincide therewith.

As indicative of our position in this matter I inclose copy of my last letter to Mr. Gann; also a suggestion for relief that would conform to the plan of the Association of State Highway Officials.

We would appreciate from you a frank criticism of this suggestion, for we would rather co-operate in building up than to attempt to tear down, and if you can see your way to give us any encouragement, we will attempt to organize all Southern Colorado (even Colorado Springs and the towns on 40 S.) to support you in your own State; and our friends and Legislators from the States thru which the N.O.T. passes in support of your angle of the National legislation pertaining to this marking which is sure to be presented to the next National Congress.

Blauvelt replied on July 6, 1927, that because of the construction season, he would be unable to attend the meeting. He offered his comments in the letter:

I would suggest that the proper way to handle this matter, from your point of view, would be to submit a petition, endorsed by the Highway Departments of the various States affected by the proposed number "U.S. 50-South" to the Executive Committee of the American Association of State Highway Officials at its annual meeting in Denver, October 3rd, where I think that other matters pertaining to U.S. road numbering will be taken up and receive due consideration.

There is nothing that I could personally do at your meeting, other than advise you of the proper procedures, i.e., to take up through the affected State Highway Departments the proposed request.

On June 16, 1928, Davis wrote to AASHO's William C. Markham:

Dear Mr. Markham:

Following the plan suggested to us at the Denver meeting we have proceeded to secure the "official" endorsement of the Highway Commissions of the States effected for a single U.S. Number from K.C. to Los Angeles and to date we have such resolutions passed by every state except one, and in that one, we have been assured by our friends it will be passed.

Now as you have always been our friend I am giving you this information in advance so that you can advise us of the procedure to accomplish our object. The basis of our claim will be that the “trend of traffic” from K.C. to the Pacific Coast is overwhelmingly to Los Angeles.

We are going to miss very much the advice and help of B. L. Thompson (deceased) of Herington who has already represented us in this matter but we expect to leave no stone unturned to get righted the wrong done the N.O.T. in this U.S. Numbering System.

Please let me know your suggestions at an early date so that we will not be caught unprepared. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

After AASHO approved the U.S. numbered highway system on November 11, 1926, the organization considered changes only if they were submitted directly by the members of the association, namely the State highway departments. AASHO would not consider a proposal directly from the National Old Trails Road Association, even if it included State highway department concurrence. The proposal would have to come in the form of a joint proposal from all the States involved.

Davis may not have been aware that those who had conceived U.S. 66, originally U.S. 60, thought of it as one of the greatest routes in the new network. It cut across most of the transcontinental routes to provide a link to the southwest, including of course Los Angeles. It would, in their view, be one of the most heavily traveled.

As Susan Croce Kelly explained in her biography of Avery, he was proud of his role in seeing that such a road could be connected – via Tulsa – and securing a single number for it. As early as July 1926, he was talking with John Woodruff, like Avery a veteran of the named trail era, about ensuring the road was improved:

Years later, Woodruff remembered that afternoon. “He [Avery] was particularly impressed with the importance of Highway 66. I suggested that we should organize a 66 Highway Association to promote the early completion and permanent maintenance of this great highway, but we did not perfect plans at that time.”

In October 1926, as AASHO was finalizing the map of the new system, Avery again visited Woodruff “and a handful of other local diehard road promoters:

Their purpose: to see that U.S. 66 was the first cross-country highway paved from end to end. These veteran highway men were all well aware that even with federal aid funds and the public’s relentless determination to have hard-surfaced roads, U.S. 66 would not become a national highway in the public’s eye without their help. At least not on their schedule.

Avery's vision was large, promising 5,000 cars a day on U.S. 66 once it was paved. "'We designed Route 66 as the most important highway in the U.S. and it will carry more traffic than any other road in America,' he told the eager group."

They invited the towns from Chicago to Los Angeles to send representatives to Tulsa in February for a meeting to organize the U.S. 66 Highway Association:

Together, these promotion-minded business leaders wrote bylaws that allowed for a general membership with an annual five-dollar fee for individuals. An annual meeting would be held the second week of March. They elected John Woodruff as the first president of the U.S. 66 Highway Association, and Cy was selected as the state vice president from Oklahoma. [Kelly, pages 189-191]

Although Avery and Piepmeier were no longer in office, the idea that Frank Davis had floated about changing the number, U.S. 66, assigned to the southwest end of the National Old Trails Road was doomed by the new highway that had been designed to carry a single number for its entire route between Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Monuments

When Mrs. Arline Trigg Moss took over as National Chairman of D.A.R.'s National Old Trails Road Committee, she abandoned the ideas pursued by her predecessors. Their ideas were worthy, she acknowledged, but had never been achieved – and their prospects had not improved with the coming of the U.S. numbered highway system. Mrs. Moss's new idea was bigger in scope, and required her to coordinate a nationwide effort that could have gone off-track in many ways. Now, she was to see the first of her Pioneer Woman monuments dedicated in Springfield, Ohio, on July 4, 1928.

On March 6, 1928, the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Charles L. Bauer, held a special concert to raise the \$2,000 needed for the shipping cost. At an admission charge of 50 cents, 3,000 people filled Memorial Hall. Additional funds came from private donations:

When the monument arrived in Springfield from the sculpturing firm on railroad car, it was crated and packed so deeply in sand that only the sunbonnet was visible. Because they had the necessary equipment, a Xenia firm transported it to the Ohio Masonic Home grounds – the exact spot where the Federal Government had stopped paying for the National Road in 1839.

(For several years, Illinois and Missouri had vied for the crossing of the Mississippi River – Illinois for Alton, Missouri for St. Louis. The debate continued for so many years that it was never resolved before Congress stopped funding the work. For that reason, the Cumberland or National Road ended in Vandalia, then the capital of Illinois.)

Mrs. Moss and Judge Truman were present on July 4 at 2 p.m. for dedication of the first of the 12 monuments. The program included:

Ohio State Masonic Home Boys Band
 Salute to the Flag – Lagonda Chapter, D.A.R., Mrs. C. C. Cory, Regent
 Springfield Vocal Octette – “America Triumphant”
 Invocation – Rev. J. B. Markward, D.D., Pastor First Lutheran Church
 Raising the Flag – Wm. C. Shultis, Commander of the American Legion, officiating
 Unveiling of the Madonna Statue by Gen. J. Warren Keifer, Ex-Speaker of the
 National House of Representatives
 “Star Spangled Banner” – Ohio State Masonic Home Boys Band
 Presentation of the Statue to Springfield and Lagonda Chapter, D.A.R., and Dedication
 Address, Mrs. John Trigg Moss, St. Louis, Missouri, Chairman of the Old
 Trails Road Committee, N.S.D.A.R.
 Addresses Accepting the Statue
 For Springfield, Clark County, and the Ohio Masonic Order;
 Mr. John B. McGrew
 For Lagonda Chapter, D.A.R., Mrs. Frank W. Harford, Retiring Regent,
 Lagonda Chapter, D.A.R.
 Octette – “We’ll Keep Old Glory Flying”
 Greetings from Mrs. Walter P. Tobel, Hamilton, Ohio, Vice-State Regent, Ohio D.A.R.
 Addresses – “Inception of the National Road” – Hon. Chas. H. Lewis, Columbus, Ohio
 “The National Old Trails Road” – Judge Harry S. Truman, Kansas City,
 Missouri, President, National Old Trails Road Association
 Unveiling Poem – “Mrs. Lida Keck Wiggins’
 Octette – “Medley of American Airs”
 Address – Judge D. D. Woodmansee, Cincinnati, Ohio
 Benediction – Rev. Paul Ewing Davies, Pastor, Oakland Presbyterian Church

(General Keifer had been Speaker of the House during the 47th Congress – December 5, 1881-March 4, 1883.)

For its inscriptions, the local D.A.R. chapter chose the following on one of the side panels:

THE NATIONAL ROAD
 COMPLETED BY THE
 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
 TO THIS POINT IN 1839
 FROM THIS POINT WESTWARD
 BUILT BY THE STATES THROUGH
 WHICH IT PASSES

The side panels contained the following:

THREE MILES SOUTHWEST OF HERE
 GENERAL GEORGE ROGERS CLARK
 COMMANDING
 KENTUCKY FRONTIERSMEN

VANQUISHED THE SHAWNEE
CONFEDERACY AUGUST 8, 1780
THUS OPENING THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORY [Bauer, pages 19-26]

Lida Keck-Wiggins, who read the unveiling poem, recalled the event:

When the sites had all been chosen suitable unveiling exercises were held, and at each of these Mrs. Moss was present. A sentence used by her on one occasion is revelatory of her own conception of the ethical and patriotic significance of the Old Trails Road and of other National Trails. She said: "The trails are the autograph of a nation written across the face of a continent."

I stood at the side of Arline Nichols Moss when at Springfield, Ohio, the veil dropped which revealed the first of the completed Madonnas to be placed. I felt her tremble. I saw tears well in her eyes. I whispered to her "I know just how you feel." She smiled then and said: "Pardon me, but you cannot imagine how much it means to me to see my dream of the blessed Madonna of the Trail a reality at last." I replied as I pressed her hand, "I think I understand, dear," and I am sure that all who read this will likewise realize what it meant to see the glorious Figure silhouette itself against the blue of a July sky, and to observe that somehow it cast over every heart present the spell of the covered wagon days! [Quoted in Bauer, pages 80-81]

When U.S. 40 was widened to four lanes in 1956-1957, the State paid \$22,257 to move the Madonna of the Trail monument east to the entrance of the Snyder Park Golf Course. "The state restored the statue, cleaned and wired it. Since 1957 the Springfield Park Board has maintained the site of the monument." [Bauer, page 27]

One D.A.R. member, Edna Massman, who attended the dedication ceremony, recalled at the time of Bauer's book, "that Harry Truman was so pleasant." [Bauer, page 28]

The claim that Springfield was the end point for Federal involvement in the National or Cumberland Road was not accurate, although it had a grain of truth. Even before the monument was shipped from St. Louis to Springfield, a question was raised about the claim. Vandalia's N. C. Gochenour wrote to Representative William W. Arnold about the topic:

You have probably heard of the movement of the D.A.R. to erect twelve statues of the figures representing the Pioneer Woman, one of which is to be erected in each of the 12 States through which the National Old Trails road passes. Vandalia has been selected as the site for one of these memorials, and the monument is to be placed in the Court House yard.

The D.A.R. leave part of the space on the monument for suitable wording, and a part of the space is allotted to the local community. In examining one of the monuments which will be erected in Ohio, and which is now in St. Louis, we find the wording prepared for

the monument by that locality is to the effect that at that point in Ohio was the terminus of the National Road so far as the government work was concerned. We do not believe this is true. All of the accounts that we have of the matter show that Vandalia marked the end of the work done by the United States Government, and we have never read of anything showing that the State of Illinois contributed in any way to this project.

We hate to bother you about this matter, but if you can confirm our belief that Vandalia marks this spot, we will appreciate it very much. We have always been led to believe that the bridge over the Kaskaskia River was built by the United States Government contractors. Any information that you give us will help us to put a truthful historical statement on the monument. Can you send this request to some authority in Washington who can give it prompt attention?

Representative Arnold forwarded the letter to BPR on June 19, seeking information on the exact termination spot of government work on the National Road.

P. St. John Wilson, serving as Acting Chief of Bureau, replied on June 22. After the introductory paragraph, he wrote:

There is no data available at present in the Bureau of Public Roads which will enable us to satisfactorily decide the point in question, and I am taking the liberty of referring your letter, together with a copy of Mr. Gochenour's, to the Chief, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, with the thought that possibly through the records on file in his office an authoritative decision may be reached.

West of the Ohio River, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had been responsible for construction of the National Road. (East of the river, the Department of the Treasury had overseen initial construction of the road from Cumberland, Maryland, to Wheeling, then in Virginia; the Corps took responsibility for the Cumberland-to-Wheeling segment after the Treasury Department completed it.) Thus, Wilson was forwarding the inquiry to the most likely source of an answer. How the Corps handled the inquiry is not known.

After the National Road reached Wheeling, Congress decided to extend the road west through the State capitals of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to the Mississippi River, eventually with a continuation to Jefferson City, Missouri. Corps engineers surveyed an alignment for the road on as straight a line as possible linking the State capitals, including in Missouri. The expectation was that the Corps would employ contractors to build the most modern type of pavement known at the time – the crushed rock macadam style pavement – all the way to Jefferson City. During the 1830s, Congress engaged in lengthy debates about continuing to fund the work, with the result that macadam pavement made it only as far as Springfield, Ohio.

That was not, however, the end of Federal activity on the road. Contractors continued building it to a much lower construction standard (grading, possibly removing tree stumps, building culverts and bridges in some cases, and applying a layer of stones in some areas) in the expectation that Congress would eventually fund completion of the road to full macadam standards. In Indiana

and Illinois, the road never progressed beyond a graded dirt track while under Federal control. This Corps work continued all the way to Gallatin Street in front of the State House in Vandalia – and ended there. The final appropriation for the National Road, signed by President Martin Van Buren on May 25, 1838, included funds for the road in Ohio and Indiana, as well as \$9,000 for the road in Illinois.

In 1848, Congress ceded all rights and privileges associated with the road to the State of Indiana, and did the same in 1856 for the segment in Illinois. Years of local debate over whether the road would continue to cross the river at St. Louis, Missouri, or Alton, Illinois, delayed construction beyond that point even as the railroad had begun its dominance of surface transportation. When Congress ceased appropriations for the work, the Corps ended its activities on the road. [*America's Highways 1776-1976*, pages 21-22; Stewart, *U.S. 40*, page 116]

Thus, the claim on the Springfield monument is accurate only if an asterisk were possible to explain that construction to full macadam standards ended in Springfield, but Federal funds were employed beyond that point, with the States having to complete the work, usually by chartering companies to operate it as a toll road.

More Monuments

WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA

Three days later, on July 7, 1928, the Wheeling monument was dedicated. Its inscriptions:

TO THE PIONEER MOTHERS
OF OUR MOUNTAIN STATE
WHOSE COURAGE, OPTIMISM, LOVE
AND SACRIFICE MADE POSSIBLE
THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY
THAT UNITED THE EAST AND WEST

BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
AND CHIEFLY THROUGH
THE STATESMANSHIP OF
HENRY CLAY
THIS ROAD WAS MADE POSSIBLE
IN 1806

Bauer explained:

The monument at Wheeling, West Virginia, dedicated July 7, 1928, stands on the National Highway (now U.S. 40) with the Washington Elm to the right. It was located in Wheeling because Colonel Moses Shepherd, a contractor on the original National Road lived there. Henry Clay was a frequent visitor in the home of the Shepherds, so they

erected a monument on their lawn to him. The home became known as Monument Place and is about a mile from the site of the Madonna. The Shrine owns Monument Place now The address before unveiling was by Mr. H. S. Truman and the dedicatory address was by Mrs. John Trigg Moss.

The statue faces west, overlooking the Park Apartments across U.S. 40.

The site includes a marker at the edge of a short, curved drive in front of the statue:

THE NATIONAL PIKE
The National Pike, called
“Old Cumberland Road,” was
Started in 1811 and used to
Wheeling in 1817 and by mail
coaches from Washington by
1818. Most of it followed the
Nemacolin Path and Braddock’s
Road from Cumberland, Md.

In addition, a later addition to the memorial area was a large elm tree with a marker:

This American Elm Tree
Planted by Old Trails Society
N. S. D. A. R. – Nov. 18, 1939 [Bauer, pages 102-103]

In September 1928, five monuments were dedicated.

COUNCIL GROVE, KANSAS

On September 7, the monument in Council Grove, Kansas:

Council Grove is considered the most historic town on the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas. The monument was placed in old Santa Fe Camp Ground, now Madonna Park, in the center of the main street with the Post Office Oak at the end.

The unique inscriptions read:

1825-1866 TRAILSMEN
CAMPED ON THE SPOT.
1847-1873 KAW INDIANS
LIVED HERE.
1847 – FIRST WHITE SETTLER
SETH HAYS
1847 COUNCIL GROVE

A TRADING POST

HERE, "EAST MET WEST"
WHEN THE 'OLD SANTA FE TRAIL'
WAS ESTABLISHED AUGUST 10, 1825
AT A COUNCIL BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES COMMISSIONERS
AND OSAGE INDIANS

Bauer explained:

In July of 1964, a flag pole to the right of monument, presented by the conservation department of the State Society, was dedicated by the Kansas State Society of the National Society. The following June a bronze plaque at the base of the flag pole was dedicated by a group of distinguished State and National officers of D.A.R. That same year the Council Grove Chapter received an award at Continental Congress for the best slide program of the year and, with the money, placed two cement benches beside the Madonna. [Bauer, 103-104]

LEXINGTON, MISSOURI

The Missouri monument was dedicated in Lexington on September 17, 1928:

In Missouri, the Madonna overlooks the Missouri River from the east bank at Lexington, known as Missouri's "History City." Here the three-day battle of Lexington in the Civil War was waged in September 1861. Lexington was so named by pioneers from Lexington, Kentucky in 1822 and also is the namesake of the first battle of the Revolutionary War – Lexington, Massachusetts – the site of the "shot heard 'round the world."

In Lexington pack mules and ox teams, caravans of pack ponies, long trains of ox-drawn wagons, picturesque teamsters and wagon bosses were a common sight in the 1830's and 40's when they took off for Santa Fe and the southwest. These pioneer freights were founders of the famous Pony Express to Mexico and California

In the center of history, our Madonna of the Trail was dedicated on September 17, 1928, by the Honourable Harry S. Truman, then presiding judge of neighboring Jackson County. This date marked the 67th anniversary of the battle of Lexington of the Civil War and was some 153 years after the Lexington battle of the Revolutionary War.

The Lexington D.A.R. chose the two inscriptions:

LEXINGTON
SETTLED IN 1820 BY

VIRGINIA AND KENTUCKY
PIONEERS
EARLY TERMINUS OF
RIVER TRANSPORTATION
STARTING POINT ON THE
WESTERN TRAIL OF THE
PACK PONY AND OX CART

JOHN, JAMES AND ROBERT AULL
RUSSELL MAJORS & WADDEL
DONIPHAN
PIONEERS – TRADERS
SOLDIERS – CITIZENS
OF LEXINGTON
WHO GAVE VALIANT SERVICE
TO THE WINNING OF THE WEST [Bauer, pages 104-105]

LAMAR, COLORADO

The Colorado monument in Lamar was dedicated on September 24, 1928. With Trinidad, La Junta, and Las Animas competing for the monument, “the Fort Wm. Bent DAR Chapter, the Lamar Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations worked very hard for the monument”:

Once the monument was awarded to Lamar, a Mr. Steward, without any charge for his labor, erected it on the corner of South Main and Beach Streets next to the Chamber of Commerce. The 72 yards of muslin veiling the monument were donated to Ellis Island. As honored guests at the biggest celebration – a red letter day – Lamar has ever had, were the living pioneer mothers of Southern Colorado

It was placed at Big Timbers, which took its name from large Cottonwood trees extending up and down the Arkansas River, over an area 20 miles long and three quarters of a mile wide. Big Timbers was the finest camp after Council Grove and a haven for travelers and the Indians.

Many celebrities attended the dedication, and Harry S., Truman was the speaker.

The dedication program included a poem that “very simply describes the great migration along all the trails that penetrated our great country”:

“I HEAR THE TREAD OF PIONEERS
OF NATIONS YET TO BE
THE FIRST LOW WASH OF WAVES WHERE SOON
SHALL ROLL A HUMAN SEA”

The two unique inscriptions read:

IN COMMEMORATION OF
“BIG TIMBERS” EXTENDING
EASTWARD AND WESTWARD
ALONG ARKANSAS RIVER
APPROXIMATELY TWENTY MILES
AND OF BENT’S NEW FORT
LATER FORT WISE, 1852-1866

A PLACE OF HISTORICAL LORE
NOTED FOR INDIAN LODGES;
SHELTER FROM STORM AND HEAT;
FOOD SUPPLY FOR BEAST;
BIVOUAC FOR EXPEDITIONS;
SCENE OF MANY COUNCILS. [Bauer, pages 62-64, 105-106]

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Three days later, on September 27, the Albuquerque monument was dedicated. Initially, Santa Fe, the destination of the Santa Fe Trail, had the historical edge for the monument in New Mexico, but it went to Albuquerque because:

The Madonna did not fit in with the Spanish Art in Santa Fe
and

The Lew Wallace DAR Chapter came up with the necessary money to bring the
monument to Albuquerque.

(Lew Wallace was a lawyer, a Union General during the Civil War, a Territorial Governor of New Mexico (1878-1881), a diplomat, and an author (best known today for *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*.)

The Lew Wallace Chapter dedicated the New Mexico Madonna at Albuquerque on September 27, 1928, in McClellan Park, located in the 800 block of Fourth Street, N.W. A memory box was placed in the base of the monument containing names of donors to the fund. Many celebrities attended the luncheon which was served at the Franciscan Hotel. Lew Wallace Chapter hosted guests to “The First American” in natural showgrounds with the Sandia Mountains as a backdrop:

INTO THE PRIMITIVE WEST
FACE UPSWUNG TOWARD THE SUN,
BRAVELY SHE CAME,
HER CHILDREN BESIDE HER.
HERE SHE MADE A HOME.
BEAUTIFUL PIONEER MOTHER!

TO THE PIONEER MOTHER OF AMERICA
THROUGH WHOSE COURAGE AND SACRIFICE
THE DESERT HAS BLOSSOMED
THE CAMP BECAME A HOME,
THE BLAZED TRAIL THE THOROUGHFARE.

The program included a speech by Harry S. Truman. [Bauer, pages 67-69, 106]

SPRINGERVILLE, ARIZONA

The final dedication in September 1928 was in Springerville, Arizona. By then, the main route of the National Old Trails Road was part of U.S. 66 from Gallup, New Mexico, to Holbrook, Arizona. Bauer noted that, "The nearest DAR chapter is one hundred-fifty miles away in Flagstaff." Nevertheless, Springerville, with a population under 600 at the time, secured the monument based on the city's long record of support for the National Old Trails Road Association.

The inscriptions chosen for Springerville were:

CORONADO
PASSED HERE IN 1540
HE CAME TO SEEK GOLD –
BUT FOUND FAME

A TRIBUTE TO THE PIONEERS
OF ARIZONA AND THE SOUTHWEST'
WHO TROD THIS GROUND
AND BRAVED THE DANGERS
OF THE APACHE
AND OTHER WARRIOR TRIBES

The first inscription, Bauer wrote, "calls attention to the fact that, long before the English established any settlement on the Eastern Seaboard, the Spanish were most active in Mexico and the southwestern part of the United States." In November 1519, Hernando Cortez had arrived in Mexico and quickly conquered the Aztec nation and confiscated large amounts of gold. In February 1540, Spanish leaders dispatched Francisco Vasquez de Coronado to locate what rumors said were seven wealthy cities to the north. They found no such cities.

Judge Truman was among the speakers. [Bauer, pages 71-72]

VANDALIA, ILLINOIS

Dedication of the monument in Vandalia, Illinois, took place on October 26, 1928. During the period when the United States Government was involved with extension of the Cumberland

Road west of the Ohio River at Wheeling, the law required that it reach each State capital: Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; Vandalia, Illinois; and across the river, Jefferson City, Missouri. Although the Federal Government did not complete the road, some limited construction work was done as far as Vandalia, and surveying continued to Jefferson City, pending a decision on where the road would cross the Mississippi River. As noted earlier, Congress ended funding for the project before a choice had been made.

The inscriptions read:

AT VANDALIA, ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
MEMBER OF ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE,
FIRST FORMULATED
THOSE BASIC HIGH PRINCIPLES
OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE
WHICH GAVE THE SLAVES
A LIBERATOR,
THE UNION A SAVIOR.

THE CUMBERLAND ROAD,
BUILT BY
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT,
WAS AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS
AND APPROVED BY
THOMAS JEFFERSON IN 1806.
VANDALIA MARKS THE
WESTERN TERMINUS.

The monument was placed on the northwest corner of the old Capitol Square:

Between the monument and present U.S. 40 is a small marker telling the story of the Cumberland Road:

“Vandalia was the western terminus of the Cumberland or National Road which extended eighty feet wide for 591 miles from Cumberland, Maryland, through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Construction by the Federal government began in 1811 and ceased in 1838, the approximate cost being seven million dollars.”

Mrs. A. M. White of Old State Capitol Chapter in Vandalia has designed a seven inch replica of the Madonna in plaster of Paris which she sells as a souvenir of Vandalia. Her profits go to the Old State Capitol Chapter treasury. It is her desire to place figurines in other “Trails” towns when she can make enough available.

Harry Truman addressed the crowd at the dedication. [Bauer, pages 106-107]

RICHMOND, INDIANA

Bauer discussed the rivalry for the monument in Indiana:

There was a three-chapter rivalry for Indiana's Madonna of the Trail: Richmond, Indianapolis, and Terre Haute. So certain was Indianapolis of being chosen that a year before the dedication, the Rotogravure section of *The Indianapolis Star* printed a picture of Leimbach working on a monument with the caption: "...to be placed in Indianapolis by N.S.D.A.R." But a year and a day later, Sunday, October 28, 1928, an immense crowd gathered at the entrance of Glen Miller Park for Indiana's dedication in Richmond.

Colonel John Ford Miller, a railroad executive, bought the land and sold it to the city to operate as a park that opened in 1885. Glen Miller park was named after the healthy water in the springs of Glen Miller:

The spot selected is across the present U.S. 40 from where the first toll gate in Indiana stood – "Gateway to the West" – and near the site of the earliest burying ground in Wayne County. Mrs. Moss gave an eloquent address, and Mr. Truman was in attendance. The Sons of Veterans Drum and Bugle Corps took part, depicting "The Spirit of '76." The local brass foundry donated a 4x8x8 inch memory box, filled with photographs, clippings, and two sonnets by the Honourable William Dudley Foulke (read at the dedication): "The Settler's Wife and "The National Old Trails Road."

Mrs. Frederick S. Bates, chapter chairman of the project, died before its completion, so her daughter was asked to draw the veil which was made of canvas. The monument stands amid pine trees. On the north of the base is inscribed a poem written by Richmond's Chapter Regent Mrs. J. F. Hornaday and selected by the National Committee:

A NATION'S HIGHWAY!
ONCE A WILDERNESS TRAIL
OVER WHICH HARDY PIONEERS
MADE THEIR PERILOUS WAY
SEEKING NEW HOMES
IN THE DENSE FORESTS
OF THE GREAT NORTH-WEST.

The south face read:

THE FIRST TOLL-GATE
IN INDIANA
STOOD NEAR THIS SITE
ON THE NATIONAL ROAD

Bauer described the scene:

The Monument is illuminated at night by one ray of light. On snowy winter days, the Madonna, when approached from the east, seems to be wearing a heavy white shawl and bonnet. Three phrases used about the Madonna at her dedication are most interesting in relating the next dedication: (1) "... in its setting of green it is an object of art"; (2) "... magnificent piece of sculpture"; (3) "...artistic monument in no small degree."

Truman, who had helped pick the site, was scheduled to attend the dedication ceremony, but a few days earlier, he had to cancel. He was, he explained, "very busily engaged in politics."
[Algeo, Matthew, *Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure: The True Story of a Great American Road Trip*, Chicago Review Press, 2009, pages 197-198]

WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA

Many States had multiple candidates for the monument, but Pennsylvania also had controversy,

as Bauer explained:

The story in Pennsylvania, which climaxed in a dedication in Washington County on December 8, 1928, is one of controversy. Washington and Fayette counties were contenders for the location of Pennsylvania's Madonna. Arguments were taken to Harrisburg where politics were powerful and for a while it looked as if Pennsylvania would be the only state along N.O.T.R. without a Madonna monument. Finally, it was awarded to Washington County and a site on the Court House lawn at Main Street and West Cherry Avenue was selected in the town of Washington. However, the State Art Commission of Pennsylvania refused to approve because "the monument was not a work of art." The Commission has power to control placing of anything on publicly owned property in Pennsylvania.

The second site suggested was on the lawn of the Elks Home on East Maiden Street, but it was not logical to place a monument of one fraternal organization on property of another. The third suggestion was on the campus of Washington and Jefferson College, but this was off the route of N.O.T.R.

Chairman James P. Eagleson approached President Charles E. MacGinnis and his Board of Nemacolin Country Club, who subsequently donated a plot of ground across the highway from the entrance to their club house. Next was the problem of \$2,500 for freight, handling, erection, landscaping, and dedication expense. Mr. Eagleson devised a 50-50 club (there were 50 members, each giving \$50), and without prior planning at their one meeting, there were 25 men and 25 women, each of whom received an engraved certificate. The balance after dedication was held for future repairs. A memory box with the names of the 50 women and men was placed in the base of the monument, and is to be opened by the Washington County Chapter of D.A.R. on December 8, 1978.

Local D.A.R. members feel that the action of the State Arts Commission was really a blessing because no more desirable site could be used than this on the north side of National Pike about a mile east of the town of Beallstown, which was laid out September 13, 1819 and has enjoyed interesting history on National Pike. [Bauer, pages 108-109]

In 1981, Harriet Branton of the *Observer-Reporter* of Washington, Pennsylvania, looked back on these events:

The tenth monument was destined for erection on the grounds of the Washington County Courthouse in Washington, Pa. All seemed to be in order until the Pennsylvania State Art Commission got into the act. As early as March 1928 the Commission had issued a preliminary opinion that it was “unable to find in the figure submitted for the proposed memorial . . . such qualities as would justify its erection in the State of Pennsylvania.” In September the Art Commission announced its final decision: it disapproved of the statue’s erection on public property because “the figure submitted has not sufficient artistic merit to justify its erection” Since the Commission had the power of veto over monuments to be placed on public grounds, it became necessary for the DAR and the Old Trails Road Association to look for another site.

In the meantime the flap over the project so distressed Miss Nancy J. Hall, Regent of the Washington County Chapter of the DAR, that Julian Millard of the Pennsylvania State Art Commission felt compelled to write a letter of apology. In it he expressed his sorrow that adverse publicity about the matter had caused her concern and he assured her that the Commission had no intention of interfering with the erection of the statue on private property; the Commission had, in fact, “no further interest in the disposition of the monument.”

What to do? Well, two influential Washington men came to the rescue. It so happened that James P. Eagleson, a local attorney, was vice-president of the National Old Trails Association; indeed, he had been instrumental all along in obtaining the statue for erection in Washington County. Faced with rejection of the courthouse site, Eagleson set about acquiring private land and went to Charles E. McGinnis, president of the Nemacolin Country Club, for help.

McGinnis and the club’s board of directors enthusiastically agreed to help. They donated a small parcel of land on U.S. 40, “which turned out to be more suitable than the original courthouse location anyway.”

Eagleson organized the Pioneer Fifty-Fifty Club to finance the \$2,500 fee for installation and dedication:

Fifty people were recruited to contribute \$50 each to cover expenses involved in the erection of the monument. When the list was closed it turned out that exactly 25 men and 25 women had subscribed as members of the select group. Since the mission of the club had been explained as the erection of a “suitable tribute” to pioneer mothers and an effort

to place them on an equal basis with pioneer fathers, it was regarded as a curious coincidence that the supporters of the “Fifty-Fifty” club were equally divided between men and women.

The club’s only meeting was held before a banquet the night before dedication of the monument.

The monument arrived by train to Scenery Hill on Saturday, December 1, 1928. On Monday and Tuesday, the 10-foot Madonna of the Trail was hoisted onto its 8-foot base:

On Friday evening a gala banquet was held at the Nemacolin Country Club. Violin and piano music was provided by members of the Washington High School Orchestra, and among the honored guests were Dr. Louis J. Lyle and Miss Margaret Bureau. Miss Bureau, 89 years old, was a retired piano teacher who had been a member of the Washington County Chapter of the DAR for 35 years. She was presented with a bouquet of roses (one for each year of membership) by Miss Hall. Others in attendance at the banquet were Mr. Eagleson, Mrs. N. Howland Brown, Pennsylvania State Regent of the DAR, and Mrs. Moss.

On the following afternoon, a blustery December day, formal dedication ceremonies were held in the clubhouse at 2 o’clock. A capacity crowd of 500 listened with interest to a program presided over by Mr. Eaglson. It included music by the American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps; vocal selections by Glenn P. and William I. Carson, accompanied by Miss Margaret B. Acheson; and addresses by Mrs. Alfred J. Brosseau, President-General of the National Society of the DAR; and Mrs. Moss. The program also listed a speech by Judge Truman; unfortunately he was unable to attend and his letter of regret was read by Eagleson.

After the ceremony, the guests went to the site opposite the entrance on U.S. 40 to the golf club, “where the canvas-shrouded monument awaited its unveiling”:

Miss Ethel Boughner of Uniontown, chairman of the Pennsylvania DAR Old Trails Committee, officiated and the statue was formally accepted by Miss Hall.

The inscriptions chosen for the monument were:

ERECTED IN
NINETEEN HUNDRED TWENTY EIGHT
IN WASHINGTON COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA
THE OLDEST COUNTY WEST OF
THE ALLEGHENY MOUNTAINS
NAMED FOR THE FATHER
OF OUR COUNTRY

ON THIS HISTORIC SPOT

THE HUNTING GROUND
OF THE FRIENDLY INDIAN
NEMACOLIN
THIS MONUMENT
IS ERECTED AND DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF OUR
PIONEER MOTHERS

Branton concluded her article:

While there was some controversy about the artistic merits of the statue, it has come to be regarded as an appropriate likeness and descriptive tribute to pioneer women. It also provided Washington County with another interesting historic site, and the inscriptions on the monument remind visitors of the area's rich heritage.

Her article was accompanied by a large photograph of the monument on the day of its dedication, with five participants in the ceremony in their heavy coats: James P. Eagleson, Mrs. N. Howland Brown, Ethel Boughner, Mrs. Alfred J. Brosseau, and Mrs. John Trigg Moss. [Branton, Harriet, "Madonna of the Trail," *Observer-Reporter*, November 7, 1981]

According to Bauer, the monument was rededicated in October 1978 at the Nemacolin Country Club. [Bauer, page 44] The statue was restored and rededicated in 1990. The Washington County Chapter of the D.A.R. is responsible for maintenance of the monument.

UPLAND, CALIFORNIA

The original location for the California monument was San Bernardino. However, the city did not like the proposed site and refused to pay the \$2,500 fee for erection and dedication. Instead, the monument was awarded to Upland, in San Bernardino County near Los Angeles County.

The monument was dedicated on February 1, 1929, at the intersection of Euclid Avenue and Foothill Boulevard (the address is 1010 Euclid Avenue), as Bauer described:

The site on which she stands is a double drive parkway (encompassing a bridle path) lined with pepper, grevilla and evergreen trees

The dedication day was somewhat disappointing in that it rained (in California), but the parade and rededication ceremony went on On February 1, 1929, a pageantry of progress was depicted in an impressive parade. First came Indians on horseback with luggage slung between poles dragged behind an animal. Then came Spanish and American modes of travel including covered wagons and stage coaches and finally the automobile and aeroplane.

Unveiling the statue was 81-year old Mrs. Carolyn Emily Cook who had come to California from Brighton, Washington County, Iowa, by ox-cart and covered wagon when she was three years old. Her mother was the only woman in the party of one hundred "covered wagon" pioneers. As Mrs. Cook pulled the covering away from the statue, one hundred carrier pigeons were released.

Mr. John Steven McGroarty of California gave the dedication speech. Participating in the ceremony was Mrs. Theodore Jesse Hoover, sister-in-law of President Herbert Hoover.

On February 9, 10 and 11, 1979, the California State with the San Antonio Chapter as the hostess chapter, and assisted by citizens of Upland, held a three-day celebration to rededicate this statue. The time capsule from the base of the statue was removed and the contents displayed at the Civic Center. Items for a new capsule were reviewed, then sealed in the cornerstone to stay for another fifty years.

Our California Madonna stands facing south. Mt. Baldy of the San Gabriel Mountains looms behind her as the present Highway 66 makes its way ahead of her to the blue Pacific where writer Betty Simmons in a soliloquy imagines her dreaming of throwing off her heavy boots to splash barefooted in its tide and laughing as she burrows her toes into the gritty sand to face the challenge of stinging salt spray. [Bauer, pages 72-73, 110-111]

The road on which the monument stands has had several names:

First it was the Mojave Indian Trail established as early as 1776. Then as the Spanish came into the area, it became known as The Spanish Trail. American explorers, settlers, hunters, traders and gold seekers renamed it The Santa Fe Trail.

The inscription on the east reads:

THIS TRAIL, TROD BY
THE PADRES IN SPANISH
DAYS, BECAME
UNDER MEXICAN RULE,
THE ROAD CONNECTING
SAN BERNARDINO AND
LOS ANGELES, LATER
THE AMERICAN POST ROAD.

In July, 1769, Spanish Missionary Father Junipero M. J. Serra founded the first of twenty-one Franciscan Missions in California. Taking its name from Saint James of Alcala, Spain, seat of a great university, this mission was known as Mission San Diego de Alcala. It was from this mission that the city of San Diego took its name.

On the west, the inscription reads:

OVER THIS TRAIL
NOVEMBER 1826,
JEDEDIAH SMITH, SEEKING
A RIVER FLOWING WESTWARD,
LED A BAND OF SIXTEEN
TRAPPERS, THE FIRST
AMERICANS TO ENTER
CALIFORNIA OVERLAND

Smith was one of the best known of the era's mountain men. "In 1831, he was killed by Indians as he led a caravan over the Santa Fe Trail."

According to the Route 66 Times Website:

This statue has seen some tough times, having been knocked down by a falling tree in 1957 and years later being damaged so significantly by an earthquake in 1991 that she had to be taken down and restored. The restoration went well and she's back on the pedestal where she belongs paying tribute to the courage, strength, and resilience of women everywhere. [<http://route66times.com/l/ca/upland-madonna-of-the-trails.htm>]

The D.A.R.'s 1929 Continental Congress

Mrs. Moss scheduled dedication of the final Madonna of the Trail monument to coincide with the Thirty-Eighth Continental Congress of the National Society of the D.A.R., April 15-20, 1929. During the congress, Mrs. Alfred J. Brosseau, President General of the National Society D.A.R., introduced Mrs. Moss as "our very hard-working chairman who has achieved a great thing for our own city. (Applause.)"

Mrs. Moss began her report to the congress on the work of the Committee on National Old Trails Road by proclaiming:

"Excelsior" is the triumphant cry of The National Old Trails Road Committee for 1929. Our dreams of almost 20 years have come true, and our vision has crystallized into a real fact! It has been the privilege of your present National Chairman to serve you on this Committee for the past 6 years, and it is a matter of pride that she, a native-born Missouri woman, should bring to a very successful close a program that was begun practically 20 years ago in Missouri by a group of women who, loving the history of the past, formed a committee to locate the old Santa Fe Trail in Missouri.

She recalled the committee's history, beginning with its formation by Mrs. John Van Brunt, who "was influential in securing an appropriation from the State of Missouri to mark this Trail with suitable boulders or monuments":

Encouraged by the splendid achievement of this small group, the State Regent of Missouri, Mrs. R. B. Oliver, appointed a Missouri D.A.R. Good Roads Committee, with Miss Elizabeth Gentry as Chairman, assigning as their work the locating, exploiting, and advertising of the old historic roads and as far as possible to see that the new automobile roads being built in the State were upon old historic trails. Reports show that this Good Roads Committee came into being at the psychological moment. The State of Missouri was about to select a route and build a cross-state highway. Three roads had been surveyed. Our Committee opened a campaign appealing to a group – to the State Highway Engineer, to commercial clubs, to men of influence in the county through which the trail runs. They marked the route for miles, at first with flags nailed to fence posts and trees. Through this Committee, the route selected for the Missouri Cross-State Highway was the Boone's Lick Road from St. Louis to Old Franklin, and the Santa Fe Trail from that point to Kansas City. A bill was introduced in the House of Representatives by the Honorable A. P. Borland, of Kansas City, on January 15, 1912, to:

Provide a National Ocean to Ocean Highway over the Pioneer Trails of the nation, thus making a continuous trunk line on to California; another branch was to lead from Gardner, Kansas through Kearney, Nebraska to Olympia, Washington, also to aid the State through which the highway therein described as the *National Old Trails Road*, shall run, in extending, constructing, rebuilding and repairing same.

This bill received the ardent and enthusiastic support of the Daughters of Missouri, and interest in the work of studying old trails or traces spread through the rank and file of the Daughters of the American Revolution like wild-fire, and the President General, Mrs. Matthew T. Scott, appointed the first National Committee, with Miss Elizabeth B. Gentry as Chairman

In 1913, the National Chairman, Miss Gentry, reported briefly that “the object of the Old Trails Road Committee is to get the Old Trails Road designated by Congress as the National Highway, and the first road to receive Federal aid.” She reported the organization of a society of men known as “The National Old Trails Road Association” that stated in its by-laws that it had organized “to assist the D. A.R. to establish the Old Trails Road as a National Highway,” and that organization of men adopted the Daughters of the American Revolution route and the name we had given it, “The Old Trails Road.” It was this year that the Chairman suggested the red, white, and blue bands to be painted on telephone poles to mark the National Highway with the national colors. Many miles of this marking was accomplished by the D.A.R. women with paint-pots and brushes, and motorists used the slogan, “Follow the Flag of the D.A.R.”

Mrs. Moss recalled the committee's work over the years through 1924, when she became National Chairman and the congress adopted a resolution to erect “one marker of dignified and pretentious proportions” in each of the States through which the National Old Trails Road passed:

The resolution was adopted unanimously, and with this program in view your National Chairman set to work.

In 1925, Mrs. Moss reported having conferred with Judge J. M. Lowe, National President of the National Old Trails Road Association, who gave hearty and enthusiastic approval to the new plan the Daughters had voted to follow.

She discussed the process for raising the necessary funds:

In 1927, your National Chairman reported progress in the committee work that sounds as though she had “Put on Seven-League Boots” and was leaping forward! The National Old Trails Road Monument Fund to date had reached the sum of \$12,414.03, with unpaid pledges of \$493.60 still to hear from. It had long been a vision of your National Chairman to erect a monument, not a marker, and your National Chairman caught the vision of a Pioneer Mother clad in homespun, clasping her babe to her breast – the figure of a mother showing fortitude, perseverance, and energy in her bearing – one in the act of going forward, expressing firm determination – her face to be of strong character, beauty, and gentleness – the face of a mother who realized her responsibilities and trusted in God. This vision was suggested to your National Chairman by the picture of the Indian squaw carrying her papoose upon her back which was a piece of statuary at the World’s Fair in St. Louis. And after months of carrying this vision in her mind, your National Chairman, collaborating with her son, John Trigg Moss, Jr., who is a graduate of Princeton University, an artist and architect in the Graduate College there, worked out the vision into the design for our monument. Mr. A. Leimbach, a sculptor of St. Louis, willingly took the ideas as presented to him, catching the real spirit of our dreams, and fashioned them into a very beautiful and a very representative and distinctive memorial to those Pioneer Mothers of ours whose granite virtues were so outstandingly great.

She recalled displaying a miniature statue during the 1928 congress:

The most important matter that was presented to you in the report of 1927 was that the National Old Trails Road Association had guaranteed very material aid and cooperation to the National Old Trails Road Committee of our Society for the marking of the National road, providing the monument be entirely different from the boulder or tombstone variety. It was this generous offer of The National Old Trails Road Association, through its president, Judge H. S. Truman, and its Secretary, Mr. Frank A. Davis, that made it possible for us to proceed with our program, for, while the sum of our fund would cover the cost of the twelve monuments, it would not, by any means, cover the cost of freight or erection, the expense of which was equal to, if not more than, the cost of the monuments. The Algonite Stone Company is located in St. Louis, from which central point these monuments would have to be shipped, and it was not until this offer of the National Old

Trails Road Association was accepted by vote of Congress, April 1927, that the project could be considered.

The cost of erecting the monuments varied according to the distances from the shipping-point and the nature of the celebration held at the time of the unveiling. The National Old Trails Road Association took the lead in the publicity, and working in connection with chambers of commerce, civic clubs and federations, business men's clubs, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and in many places the masonic groups and church federations in these different sites respectively, they secured financial backing to cover the cost of freight, erecting monuments, committee expenses, programs, etc. It has cost approximately \$30,000 dollars to deliver these monuments to their destinations and erect them on their respective sites. Our society has not been called upon to pay any of this amount, except in certain localities where the Daughters preferred to take the lead in their community during the celebration.

The fund for the monuments had raised \$13,170.73 from a 10-cent per capita voluntary contribution from all chapters of the organization:

Thus, the records show that we have able to erect a National Memorial costing approximately \$50,000 with an outlay of but a little over \$13,000, the actual cost of the 12 monuments. Like anything else of its kind, the initial cost of the first monument was greater in proportion to the remainder of the series, and we would not have been able to secure a group of 12 monuments for anything like the amount of \$12,000 had it not been that they were alike. That the Daughters could have the able assistance of the National Old Trails Road Association proved a very fortunate circumstance, indeed, for their marking program.

During the hot summer days of 1927, your National Chairman watched the figure of the mother and her children grow under the skilled hands of the sculptor. The idea of your National Chairman and her son, in thinking out this design, was to have a figure that would be compact and solid, and that would look better from a distance than close up, and *that* is the great outstanding feature of our statue of the Pioneer Mother and Children that has been commented upon so favorably everywhere. The children are clasped to the figure of the mother, with no jutting parts to be broken or marred easily. It at once gives the idea of something solid and substantial, something that will stand through all ages and not be easily destroyed.

In 1927-1928, the National Old Trails Road Association sent bulletins to every town along the National Old Trails Road "announcing the fact that our Society was ready to erect their memorial monuments on the main Ocean to Ocean Highway, and requested each community that felt it had a claim as a point of historical interest to send in their data." The applications were due by August 20, 1927. Many States had more than one application – "Kansas, with great enthusiasm, had 10 towns enter the contest." She explained the selection process:

A committee of 7 decided on the location or site in each state respectively. Your National Chairman accompanied the President of the National Old Trails Road Association, Judge Harry S. Truman, and Mr. Frank A., Davis, Secretary, all the way west to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and east as far as Bethesda, Maryland. Close to 5,000 miles were covered by your National Chairman in the interest of locating these sites.

After listing the cities selected for the monument, she continued:

The actual plot of ground in each one of these places upon which the Pioneer Mother Monument stands is in every instance the best location the community had to offer. In 5 places these monuments stand at points of advantage in beautiful city parks. In the other 7 places, the most advantageous location to be secured along the highway has been given to our monument. In all but one of the respective towns a flood light has been placed to display the “Madonna” at night. In the meantime, much publicity was given to the project, many pictures and articles were presented in papers and magazines from one end of the country to the other, bringing very favorable comment from all sections. Full pages of dignified publicity were given to the program, not only in the 12 states receiving one of the monuments, but east and west, north and south, the pictures and stories copied to the value of many thousands of dollars, had we been obliged to pay for them. But this program, though idealistic and inspirational, seemed to appeal to the innermost heart of the thinking men in the publicity world, and their editorials and comments far and wide show that they believe, like the 12 stones set up by Joshua in the River of Jordan, “It is a fitting memorial to those who have gone before.”

(Mrs. Moss was referring to *Joshua 4:6-7*: “that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.”)

With the unanimous consent of the society’s executive committee, Mrs. Moss had taken out letters patent and copyright on the design of the monument:

Your National Chairman, through Rippey & Kingsland, Patent Lawyers of St. Louis, patented the design, and a certificate of copyright was granted to your National Chairman December 4, 1928. This copyright and patent design was turned over immediately to the National Society by your National Chairman, Mrs. John Trigg Moss, for all time.

The full responsibilities on her over the past year hit her as “an overwhelming realization.” For example:

One of the most difficult things to decide upon was the date upon which to hold the dedicatory ceremonies. May 30th was the first date, given to Ohio, but owing to the fact that not enough time had been allowed for transportation and erection, etc., this schedule could not be followed out, and the first dedication was postponed to July 4, 1928, and the second one three days later, July 7, was held in Wheeling, West Virginia. When one stood by these immense figures, it seemed almost an impossibility to transport them safely from one end of the country to the other, and it was with fear and trepidation that your National Chairman saw the first one go out of St. Louis. However, everything can be made a work of art, and if you could have seen this Mother cradled in her great cradle of sand, fully protected and safe-guarded in every way, you would have understood how she would safely reach the farthest distance without a broken bone.

She cited the dates of the dedications, adding that while in Springerville, Arizona, for the dedication, “the Committee proceeded on to California for a hurried trip to definitely decide the location of the site for the monument in California”:

The week of April 19, 1929, during the 38th Continental Congress, we shall dedicate the twelfth link of our Great National Shrine in Bethesda, Maryland, thus fulfilling our pledge given years ago and bringing to a final close one of the most dignified and representative pieces of memorial work ever attempted by any organizations.

Over 10,000 invitations had been sent out for the dedications in the name of the National Society of the D.A.R. and the National Old Trails Road Association – to National Officers, State Regents, and National Chairman. “These invitations were sent directly from the home of your National Chairman, and with pictures, papers, booklets, and maps, it would be a conservative figure to estimate that between 15,000 and 16,000 pieces of mail have been sent out from her office during the past year.”

So many “perplexing problems” presented themselves, and “it grew to such gigantic proportions that at times it seemed an impossibility,” but the task was finished. She had crossed the country “from one end of the continent to the other” practically three times. “We have reached the goal; we have marked in a very wonderful way our main National highway, 3,050 miles across our land.”

She concluded her speech:

May our Madonna of the Trail create an atmosphere of love and peace, for surely no memorial was ever erected with higher ideals, nor a greater love of nation, or a more tender sympathy for mankind than this beautiful *Madonna of ours*. May she speak to you always as she does to me:

To the Honor and Glory of the
Great Motherhood of the past,
I stand . . . A Sacred Shrine.

May all who pass within the
Shadow of my Form, pause
Awhile, and Understand the Faith,
the ideals, and the real Inner
Beauty of Soul of those Mothers

of Old, as they Passed Down the
Great Homing Trail of the Nation.

--A. B. N. Moss

Respectfully submitted,

Arline B. N. Moss
(Mrs. John Trigg Moss),
Chairman.

[*Proceedings* of the Thirty-Eighth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 1929, pages 175-185]

The Dedications

After her report to the continental congress, Mrs. Moss submitted a report summarizing the 11 dedications of the monuments that had taken place before the annual congress.

To a great extent, she let the towns involved set the dates for the ceremonies. “The wishes of the men of the National Old Trails Road Association and their ability to attend these celebrations on the certain dates, were always first taken into consideration.” The inscriptions were another factor:

The inscriptions on the two sides of the pedestal base of each monument had to be submitted and passed upon, allowing from 3 to 4 weeks for the base to be made after the inscriptions were accepted.

The matter of freight delivery was a very serious part of the entire program, as your National Chairman did not want the monument delivered too far ahead of time and still, on the other hand, it had to be delivered early enough to allow delays in transit or for any possible breakage which was very likely to happen. Your National Chairman considers it a very unusual record to make that, of these 12 figures and pedestal bases, not one was broken in transit.

She commented on each site, beginning with the “very fine ceremonies” dedicating the monument in **Springfield, Ohio**. Columbus, Dayton, Hebron, and Zanesville had sought the monument. All but Dayton, which was not on the National Old Trails Road, were qualified, but

Springfield secured the honor:

General J. Warren Keifer pulled the cord that revealed the first statue to the public gaze. The knoll on which the statue was erected is part of the State Masonic Home grounds and was donated for that purpose by the trustees of the Home. The statue marked the spot approximately where the National Pike, as constructed by the National Government ended, and also is in reasonably close distance to the site of the “birth of Tecumseh” and the battlefield of Piqua where the Shawnee power was broken by George Rogers Clark, August 8, 1870. The Government had surveyed the road westward into Missouri and had even built a few culverts and bridges beyond the point in question, but the building of the road progressed no further than the knoll, a short distance west of the city of Springfield . . . because of the bitter debates in Congress over the means by which the maintenance of the road might be kept up and whether the road might be used for military or other service in case on internal warfare among the states, for “state’s rights” figured mightily then in National affairs. A compromise was effected and Congress agreed to turn the much contested National Highway over to the states for further completion and maintenance. The spot likewise is only 3 miles from the site of the George Rogers Clark monument erected a few years ago by the State of Ohio on the ground where the Battle of Piqua was fought, August 8, 1780. The importance of this battle, which is the only battle of the Revolutionary War fought on Ohio soil, concerned the opening of the Northwest Territory to American colonization.

She summarized the ceremony, noting that Judge Truman had delivered a short address. She added:

The spirit of cooperation was very fine and the interest was rife. One of the most interesting features connected with the erection of the statue was the placing of a strong metal box made of copper 11x8x8 inches in size, hermetically sealed within the pedestal before the statue was placed thereon. Miss Zimmerman, local Chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee, to whom the National Chairman is greatly indebted for her splendid cooperation and wonderful assistance, filled the box with records, newspapers, clippings, photographs, histories of the city and county, and city directory, a telephone directory, year books of Lagonda chapter, coins, and various other things which would be of interest in the future

An interesting part of the day’s program was the taking of some moving picture films of the ceremony, for which Mrs. Teresa Adelsperger, Chairman of Better Films, was responsible

The festivities of the long summer’s day were concluded by a tea given by Lagonda chapter at the home of Mrs. P. O. Crabill to all of the out-of-town guests

Lagonda chapter feels grateful in every way that she secured this lovely monument for Springfield. It is a beautiful work of art, majestic in its completion, inspiring us through its simplicity and its humble realism to a recognition of the dignity, the worth, and at length the grandeur of the deeds wrought by our Pioneer Mothers

It is fitting that the Ohio monument should be placed in Springfield. It is a matter of no small pride to the Daughters of the American Revolution to have been able to take the lead in the erection of this great Ocean to Ocean memorial to the Pioneer Mothers of our Nation.

The second monument was dedicated in **Wheeling, West Virginia**, on July 7, 1928:

The choice of the site was particularly fortunate, facing, as it does, the National Road just to the right of the entrance to Wheeling Municipal Park within a semi-circular wall of stone work and backed by the beautiful shrubbery of flowering plants. In the background may be seen the surrounding municipal golf course and many beautiful forest trees.

The West Virginia chapters paid their quota of 10c per capital and over a total of \$230.15 to the fund for the purpose of providing these monuments. The completion of the monument in West Virginia was made possible by the generous contributions and earnest efforts of the Wheeling Park Commission, as well as the many individuals who were sincerely interested in this completion. These patriotic citizens gave splendid cooperation to the Wheeling to the Wheeling chapter, and assisted them in arranging for the beautiful site and the program and came forward in a very generous way to finance the expenses of freight, foundation, and the cost of placing the monument, amounting to approximately \$3,200.

She pointed out the role of Judge Truman, Secretary Davis, and George W. Lutz, vice-president of the National Old Trails Road Association in selecting the site:

Mr. Lutz, being a very active and patriotic citizen of Wheeling, was the prime mover in the program for the monument and contributed a beautiful flag and flagpole and large urns to be placed in front of the monument, amounting to the sum of \$125. The Wheeling chapter assumed the other expenses to the sum of \$302.

During the ceremony:

The monument was unveiled by Mrs. Edward F. Hartley, National Vice Chairman for West Virginia, the National Old Trails Road Committee and Mrs. John Trigg Moss, National Chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee, then made a very inspiring and interesting address of dedication. Mr. George Lutz made a short address and Mr. Frank A. Davis represented the National Old Trails Road Association and gave an address

With the representation at the dedication exercises of Wheeling's civic, patriotic and fraternal organizations, and the attendance of a vast throng of citizens interested in the placing of an impressive monument at the city's beautiful public park, it is probable that a record will be set in local annals for a greater display of general interest in public ceremonials.

In the event that future generations become bent on historical exploration, the sealed lead box which was placed in the base of the monument will prove a rich find. In heavy black envelopes are stored clippings and data relative to the history of West Virginia, Wheeling and Ohio County, its industries, its monuments and institutions, a copy of the city charter, photographs of the sponsors of the project, together with information and statistics, National, State, City and of the Daughters.

Wheeling chapter has always been specially interested in the marking of the National Old Trails Road, and in 1922 the chapter placed 5 bronze tablets at historic spots along the 16 miles of road in West Virginia.

In Kansas, interest in securing the monument was intense, with 10 towns competing, but **Council Grove** "was chosen because of its great historic lore and a willingness to formulate plans for a memorial park situated at the entrance to Council Grove." She added:

Nothing had ever come to this town that induced a better civic spirit and patriotic endeavor than this project of the National Society. The site given to the Daughters was at one time under water and required thousands of truck-loads of earth taken from the river bank to build up to the required level for a park. Citizens and farmers volunteered their time and labor, their teams and trucks, and worked day after day to get the site in readiness for the monument.

The plot of ground has been filled in to the height of over 6 feet and approximately 10,000 loads of dirt were moved by different groups of interested citizens. This meant hard work on their part, but records show that one day 225 farmers, 50 teams and 10 trucks moved 711 loads of earth one mile distance to "Madonna Park," while the band played from under the famous 300-year old "Custer Elm" tree. Dinner was served at noon to the 292, and families came from far and near to make the work of the day "a picnic." With a civic spirit such as this, and led by the Mayor of Council Grove, Mr. W. L. Young, a man of indomitable energy and intensely interested in the project, is it any wonder that Council Grove, Kansas, recorded the largest gathering to assemble at any of the dedications? Between ten and fifteen thousand people from all over that section of the country witnessed the unveiling of the statue of the Madonna of the Trail at Council Grove, Kansas, Friday, September 7, 1928.

(General George Armstrong Custer and his 7th Cavalry camped around the tree in 1867 while patrolling the Santa Fe Trail. The tree died of Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s. [The Historical Marker Database, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=44938>])

She described the “vivid spectacle” of the ceremony:

Four hundred years of Kansas history was reenacted in a pageant of pioneer times. Indians brilliantly beaded and painted, Spanish adventurers in shining armour, soberly garbed priests, trappers, and hardy bands of pioneers, a colorful pageant depicting successive epochs in the Kansas history, moved slowly down a crowd-lined Main Street. It was a procession of successive dilapidated prairie schooners and vehicles of ancient lineage. Coronado and helmeted Spaniards, Father Padilla and Don Pedro were recalled. The “‘49ers,” the pioneer settlers, the birth of the Santa Fe Trail, the old Mission, “Custer Elm,” the Pony Express, the Brown Jug School, and occasionally a gorgeously handsome modern float made a vivid splash of color in the procession. Pioneer wagons bore eloquent signs “Kansas or Bust” and “Busted.” The old Prairie Schooner rumbled along with a coop of cackling chickens wired to the rear of the wagon filled with a family of small children.

The contrast in transportation of the past was introduced by one who rode a bicycle of the early '80's. Sprinkled through the pageant were Fort Riley's soldiers, trappers, scouts, veterans from the Blue and Gray Armies of the Civil War, clowns, and slaves in chains – all portraying incidents and periods in the history of the west. A dramatic stage coach “hold up” was possibly the best feature of the historical parade of the picturesque Pioneer Day. The stage coach in which the National Chairman, Mrs. John Trigg Moss, and Judge Harry S. Truman, President of the National Old Trails Road Association, were riding with Mayor W. L. Young, was “held up” in true frontiersman style.

After a recitation of the monument's unique inscriptions, the report continued:

Historic and current matter was sealed in the memory box to be opened each quarter or half of a century with public ceremony. In the box is placed a list of all donors to the monument fund, names of all volunteers, workers on the park site, and the history of the original townsite, compiled by R. M. Armstrong, current newspapers, centennials, booklets, telephone directories, photographs, etc.

The Daughters of the American Revolution have been deeded the plot of ground with a 70-foot frontage on Union Street paving to add to the city's site for the National Old Trails Road monument. The County Commissioner agreed to deed the Daughters 70 feet bordering the City Park site on the north. The gift is for the purpose of adding to the Madonna of the Trail sites, and is to remain property of the Society forever free from taxes, if used for the purpose given.

The fourth monument was dedicated in **Lexington, Missouri**, “with very impressive and befitting ceremonies” on September 17, 1928:

The entire day was devoted to the ceremonies of the monument erection, and the unveiling of the 5 bronze tablets marking historical sites in Lexington. Throngs of visitors and local citizens witnessed the ceremony and enjoyed the various activities of the day. The weather was ideal for comfort and enjoyment.

Fifty out of 85 Daughters of the American Revolution chapters in Missouri had representatives at the dedication A colorful parade was the first feature of the day's program at 10 o'clock promptly. The parade marshalled by Sanford Seller, Jr., represented the evolution of transportation from pioneer days of the era of ancient stage coach times down to the present day of the perfected motor car and truck. Prizes for floats, decorated cars, and old vehicles, were awarded

The Indians, one of the most realistic groups in the parade, were noteworthy for their picturesque dress, war paint and blanketed ponies upon which they were mounted. This group was contributed by the Red Men Lodge. Lexington Boys' Band and the Richmond Boys' Band added materially to the parade. The Wentworth Military Academy, led by the Wentworth Band, marched in the parade in highly approved fashion. The decoration of the bronze tablets marking the historic spot was held at 11 o'clock with Dr. C. T. Ryland, President of the Rotary Club, presiding

A luncheon was held at the Lexington High School building at noon with 1,146 guests in attendance. Music was rendered and Mrs. John Trigg Moss, Chairman, the National Old Trails Road Committee, and Mrs. Henry Chiles of Lexington, were presented with beautiful framed pictures of the Pioneer Mother monument taken by Miss Alice Spencer. The unveiling ceremonies were at 2 o'clock at the monument site. They were preceded by the presentation of a flag and flag-pole by the American Legion.

Among the speakers was Mrs. Moss, who made the "dedicatory address following the formal unveiling of the monument by Colonel George P. Venable, 92, a veteran of the Civil War." Judge Truman "delivered an address on the National Old Trails Road." After the ceremony, a "public reception and dance was held at the Lexington High School at 8 o'clock Monday evening":

Very beautiful souvenir booklets on the National Old Trails Road and "The Part Played by Lexington in the Westward Movement," written by Mr. B. M. Little, were given to the guests in attendance that day. This little brochure is a very splendid piece of work and it is a cherished souvenir. Many out-of-town guests were entertained, among whom were Miss Elizabeth Gentry of Kansas City and Mrs. John Van Brunt of Belmont, former National Chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee. The National Committee for the Old Trails Road work was established in 1911, under the leadership of Miss Elizabeth Gentry, a Missouri woman, and it is fitting that the work of this Pioneer Committee should be brought to a successful culmination.

Missouri has 302 miles of the National Old Trails Road across State. Facing westward into the setting sun toward which the brave and shining eyes of many a Pioneer Mother

must have looked – striving to pierce the far away distances – the Madonna of the Trail stands sentinel at the graceful curve of State Highway No. 13 as it enters Lexington from the North and West

A copper box was placed in the monument holding articles that will be of value in years to come: pictures, books, clippings, newspapers, directories, stamps, etc.

Many beautiful social functions were given to honor the guests of the town that day. Mrs. Chiles gave a beautiful dinner in honor of Mrs. John Trigg Moss, National Chairman.

The location committee had chosen **Lamar, Colorado**, to receive the monument that was dedicated on September 24, 1928. “The Committee on ‘Selection of Sites’ in search for points of historical interest on the National Old Trails Road decided for Lamar when their two citizens, Senator A. N. Parrish and Mr. L. M. Markham related in detail the story of historical incidents that took place in ‘The Big Timbers.’” After reprinting the inscriptions, she explained:

The legend is that here in “Big Timbers” white men smoked pipes of peace after blazing the way for a nation over “The Trail” and found that the Indians had chosen the camp after Council Grove had been left behind. The most famous trading post within the limits of Colorado was Fort William Bent on the Arkansas River, and here the trappers and Indians came with their furs. Here in the “Big Timbers” Major Fitzgerald established his agency trading with the Indians and by his proper handling of the “Children of the Plains,” saved the lives of settlers and turned the Red Men toward the path of useful citizenship.

Colonel John C. Fremont, in his trip across the plains, reported that he found 600 Indian Lodges located, in the “Big Timbers” and there the Pioneer Mother and her brood found, because of the Arkansas undrained by irrigation, protection from the rays of the sun and from the chilly blasts of winter.

The site upon which the monument stands in Lamar was given by the Santa Fe Railroad, and is adjacent to the Santa Fe station. Several officials of the Santa Fe Railroad were in attendance at the dedication and were introduced from the platform. September 24th was considered to be “the red letter day” in the history of the community. One of the largest crowds ever known to gather in Lamar came for the entire day’s program, beginning with the parade at the noon hour and ending with a ball at night. Many “mementoes of the past” were brought forth and displayed in the show windows of Lamar merchants. Beautiful old relics including pieces of old china, old glassware, quilts and pictures, beautiful old spinning wheels and many beautiful gowns were displayed. The parade depicting pioneer scenes was witnessed by thousands of people and the first cars in the parade carried the Pioneer Mothers of Southeast Colorado.

In the first car rode Mrs. Felix Cain, who had been in Colorado since 1865, accompanied by Mrs. A. D. Hudnall of Las Animas, who came to Colorado when 6 months old. Three

Civil War veterans followed the Pioneer Mothers, namely: A. Deeter, Commander Sheets and P. S. Lynch. The Spanish American War and World War veterans came next and hosts of grade and high school children followed the veterans. The yoke of oxen and the Prairie Schooner attracted attention from young and old, as the driver, walking alongside prods his team along the “Dusty Trail” – the Santa Fe Trail. Then came the Pioneer Prospector with his two burros with pack, shovel, gold pan and grub. The different steps in the progress of the country were portrayed by the team of horses, the cattlemen on horseback, and the Santa Fe Railways, miniature reproductions of “Chief.” The Pioneer Mothers at her spinning wheel; the Pioneer people on horseback: the float showing progress in lighting from the torch through the candle and old lamp stages to the modern electric light stage. The progress in road building from the day of horses and plows to the day of grader and tractor: the parade closing with a long procession of the last made, high powered, shining new automobiles. In fact everything but the aeroplane was in the parade.

A very touching and beautiful sight was presented when, during the program, the Pioneer Mothers were seated about the Madonna of the Trail and Mrs. Felix Cain was presented to the audience and was given a beautiful spray of flowers.

Frank Davis, representing the National Old Trails Road Association, “opened the program” and Mrs. Moss delivered the dedicatory address. In addition:

On the morning of the 24th of September, upon the arrival in the city of Mrs. John Trigg Moss of St. Louis and the representatives of the National Old Trails Road Association, a short memorial service was held at Fairmount Cemetery for the late Senator A. N. Parrish, who so ably represented his town in the first committee to select the site.

(On May 23, 1928, the Fleagle Gang, headed by Jake and Ralph Fleagle, robbed the First National Bank of Lamar. State Senator Parrish, the bank’s 77-year old president, went into his office, grabbed a Colt .45 he called “Old Betsy,” and opened fire on the robbers, shooting a member of the gang, Howard Royston, in the face. In the ensuing gunfire, Senator Parrish and his son John, who worked at the bank, were killed. The robbers left with \$10,664 in cash, \$12,400 in Liberty Bonds, and almost \$200,000 in commercial paper. After a second gun battle with local authorities on the way out of town, the gang escaped to a farm in Kansas where they tricked a doctor into a house call to treat Royston’s wound. They then killed the doctor. The Fleagle Gang’s robbery became known to history because a single fingerprint on the doctor’s car led authorities to the killers – the first time a fingerprint enabled the Bureau of Investigation, later known as the FBI, to identify suspects and secure their conviction. Three of the four robbers were sentenced to execution by hanging. The fourth, Jake Fleagle, died in a shootout while fleeing arrest.)

The monument in **Albuquerque, New Mexico**, was unveiled on September 27, 1928. The city, with a population of 30,000, was “a thoroughly modern city” and was the largest city in the State:

It has beautiful homes and many attractions and points of real interest. It is located in the heart of the Indian country. From the time the National Old Trails Road enters this section of the country it traverses a region of intense interest as its many civic wonders greet the eye of the traveler. It is a land of limitless panoramas.

During the week of the dedication, “the fiesta known as ‘The First Americans’ was taking place at the Fairgrounds”:

The pageantry of “Early American Pioneers” gathered there for protection. No word picture can describe the color that greeted the eyes of the visitors in Albuquerque at this time. The vivid Red Chili and all the colors of the rainbow against the adobe background was beautiful indeed, and formed a perfect setting. Several thousand Indians were there for this celebration, and picturesque, indeed, were the garbs of the different tribes as they surged back and forth on the streets with gay colored flags and bunting.

The site selected in Albuquerque is in McClellan Park in the pretty residential section of the town facing directly upon the old Santa Fe. Trail. New Mexico has 450 miles of this old trail, entering the State to the northeast and going directly south to Albuquerque, turning west a short distance beyond.

Impressive ceremonies marked the unveiling of the monument. The procession to the park was led by the Indian School Band. Then came a car of Pioneer Mothers, including Mrs. J. A. Maloy, who has since passed into the Great Beyond. This was followed by cars bearing the distinguished city officials, officers of the Daughters of the American Revolution, members and citizens. More than 2,000 people surrounded the Park and listened to the interesting program with eyes aglisten as the real significance of the monument was presented to them.

Mrs. Moss delivered the dedicatory address; Frank Davis, representing the National Old Trails Road, spoke; and Mayor Clyde Tingley accepted the monument for the city:

In the memory box were placed documents of interest to the Daughters, as well as those of interest to the community. All the names of those who cooperated in financing the movement were placed in the base of the monument in the memory box, this being done by Mrs. Homer Ward, Vice-Chairman, National Old Trails Road Committee, after which Mrs. George K. Angle, retiring State Regent, and Mrs. Ada M. Bittner unveiled the monument.

The dedication took place at 11 o’clock, followed by a luncheon, hosted by the Lew Wallace Chapter, for honored guests. After lunch, the guests were taken to the Fairgrounds to see the “First Americans” performances.

Local newspapers had held a contest to select the inscriptions on the sides of the monument, both honoring the Pioneer Mother.

Two days later, on September 29, Mrs. Moss, Davis, and others were in Springerville to dedicate Arizona's monument. Although Springerville had been part of the main line of the National Old Trails Road from the start, it had become a bypass now that the Gallup-Holbrook road had been approved and included in U.S. 66, while Springerville was on U.S. 70. Mrs. Moss explained:

Out in the Western country, "The Land of Enchantment," distances are great and what would seem a long trip to the Easterner is "but a short side trip from the main Highway" to the Westerner. This was exemplified when Springerville, Arizona, put forth every effort to secure the Pioneer Mother monument for the State for its very own. Springerville is located on the National Old Trails Road at the intersection of the Coronado Trail, 95 miles from the railroad. Several towns entered the contest and presented briefs to the Committee, but a State-wide influence was brought to bear for Springerville. The Governor of Arizona [Governor Hunt] added his plea for Springerville to hundreds of others

The site upon which the monument was erected in Springerville is located at the junction of the National Old Trails Road highway, and the famous Coronado Trail from Clifton, the approximate route traveled by Coronado and his men in 1540 on their way from New Mexico to the Seven City of Cibola.

Splendid publicity was given to the program throughout the entire country for several months beforehand and on September 29, 1928, all roads seemed to lead to this White Mountain City, for hundreds of people came from every direction all over the State to attend this celebration. Springerville was found to be dressed in gala attire and every possible thing was done to show the true spirit of western hospitality to the honored guests. Every part of the program was given in true western style, even to the applause when the cowboys used their "six shooters" to applaud effectively.

The ceremony opened with a covered wagon parade at 2 o'clock led by Governor Hunt of Arizona on a saddled burro leading a burro with a pack as he did years ago when he entered the State as a young man for the first time. Included in the parade were many covered wagons, cowboys, pack trains, etc., led by the Round Valley and Roosevelt Indian bands. This parade stopped in front of the reviewing stand, and the participants grouped about in colorful array to take part in the program.

As usual, Mrs. Moss delivered the dedicatory address while Davis spoke on behalf of the National Old Trails Road Association. Governor Hunt gave an address titled "A Tribute to the Pioneer Mothers." Gustav Becker of Springerville, "the honored patriarch and pioneer citizen of the town," accepted the dedicatory address while Mrs. Frederick Winn of Phoenix accepted the monument for the National Society:

The program continued on through the evening, with a very delightful musical program from five to six. And at eight o'clock, the Apache Indians gave their weird Devil Dance, which lasted an hour. Though the Apaches have been in the past a warlike tribe, today, of course, the Apaches are peaceful, although they were the last of the southwest Indians

to be subdued and placed upon their reservation. A dance at the High School that evening completed the day's program.

The members of the Committee remained in Springerville several days, the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Becker, and when you have the good fortune to visit Springerville, go prepared to enjoy yourself every minute, and with the idea in mind that you will find something new to fascinate and interest you constantly.

The dedication in **Vandalia, Illinois**, took place a few weeks later on October 26, 1928, "the hundredth anniversary of the completion of the western terminus of the Old National Road (Illinois has 172 miles of this Old Trails Road across State)." The monument was installed on the grounds of the old State House, dating to the days when Vandalia was the capital of the State:

The dedication of the "Madonna of the Trail" memorial in Illinois was a celebration in song and pageantry that Illinois will long remember. From all sections within the State and from surrounding States came the members of our National Society, and from the farms and villages of surrounding counties came the people that massed before the old State Capitol and the monument, in a throng that is estimated between ten and fifteen thousand.

The amplifying truck was set in place, the business houses were closed, and upon platforms erected for the purpose, entertainments were staged during the morning hours. Daughters of the American Revolution were registered from Indiana, Missouri, Louisiana, Florida, California, Arizona, and Texas, and the District of Columbia as well as hundreds from Illinois.

The hour for the program was sounded by a stirring march from the Boy Scout band, and Miss Columbia and her court, drawn by four white horses, followed as the first float. Behind the float marched "The Spirit of '76" in wigs and cockades, followed by a stage coach bearing Abraham Lincoln, Stephen Douglas in whose company rode the National Chairman of the National Old Trails Road [Committee], Mrs. John Trigg Moss. Indians on their ponies in war bonnets and paint; the frontiersmen, the trappers, the old time fiddlers, and approximately 1,000 school children in the guise of Indians formed a big chorus at the monument.

Joseph C. Burschi, president of the Chamber of Commerce, presided during the program. He related the history of the foundation of Vandalia, on the spot where the hunters shot deer, of the arrival of the Ernst Colony from Germany in 1820, and the arrival of the State Officers from Caskaskia with the territorial records." Frank Davis "recounted the history of the old road." Mrs. Moss gave the dedicatory address. Burschi accepted the monument for the city, "and Mrs. William J. Sweeney of Rockport, State Regent of Illinois, accepted for D.A.R. and spoke at length of the early history of the country:

A panoramic picture was taken of the crowd and of the participants in the big event.

Following the program, the Benjamin Mills chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, of Greenville, was hostess for a reception in the roof garden of the Hotel Evans. They were assisted by the Unalilyi Camp Fire Girls. In the receiving line were many National Officers and State Regents of other States, as well as State Officers of Illinois.

In **Richmond, Indiana**, the ninth monument was unveiled on October 28, 1928, “with very impressive ceremonies before a large audience and in the presence of a number of State and National officers of our Society.” The monument was erected “at the west entrance to the beautiful Glenn [sic] Miller Park, near which place formerly stood the first toll gate on the National Road in Indiana, and on the site of one of the earliest burial grounds in Eastern Illinois, where the dust of many settlers still rests”:

A background of trees gives an effective setting to the statue which, besides its historical significance, also has artistic merit in no small degree. The Indiana dedication was the only one of the 12 to be held on a Sunday, and the exercises were impressive and dignified as befitted the day.

A luncheon was given at the beautiful new Richmond Leland Hotel at one o'clock honoring all visiting guests.

Guests included Mrs. Moss, Frank Davis, members of the National Old Trails Road Committee, D.A.R. State Regents from Indiana and nearby States, “and officers and Regents from many chapters in Indiana and Ohio”:

The day was very cold and cloudy, but despite the chill of the weather a vast assemblage of people greeting those who drove out following the luncheon and occupied the platform. The program was impressive and inspiring, from the raising of the Flag on the new flag pole to the unveiling of the beautiful figure of our Pioneer Mother by Miss Elizabeth Bates. Miss Bates is the daughter of the late Mrs. Fred S. Bates, who was the Chairman of the local committee of the National Old Trails Road Committee for a number of years, and mainly to the untiring efforts of Mrs. Bates and her interest in having Richmond selected as the site for the statue because of the historical pre-eminence of Wayne County, can be attributed the presence of the statue in Glenn [sic] Miller Park. Beautiful tributes to Mrs. Bates were impressively made throughout the dedication program, and it seems as if the “Madonna of the Trail” in Indiana was dedicated and unveiled in the memory of this loyal woman who worked so diligently to bring this beautiful monument to her home city

The outstanding part of the program was the address given by our National Chairman, Mrs. John Trigg Moss, who delivered the dedicatory address in a clear ringing voice that could be readily heard by everyone of the several thousand people who composed the vast audience, many hundreds of them standing motionless throughout the address – and, indeed, the entire program.

Frank Davis addressed the crowd for the National Old Trails Road Association. The account concluded:

Mrs. James B. Crankshaw gave a greeting from the Indiana Daughters, and Mrs. James F. Hornaday a eulogy to Mrs. Fred S. Bates, closing with “America the Beautiful” and the benediction. Thus ended the dedicatory service, “and it was truly a service, with a very real and impressive atmosphere of something sacred, almost holy.” The people stood intense with silent expectation as the white canvas was gracefully lifted from the face of the massive figure. When the unveiling was taking place the Sons of Veterans Drum and Bugle Corps came from over the hill playing the “Spirit of ’76.” These men, as they approached in costume and “make up” of the days of ’76, awakened the memories of many of the elderly gentlemen with snow white beards and hair.

Mrs. Hornaday had submitted one of the inscriptions on the base of the monument:

A Nation’s Highway!
Once a wilderness trail
Over which hardy pioneers made their perilous way
Seeking new homes in the dense forests
Of the Great North-west.

She had been present for “practically all of the time during the erection of the monument and it was appropriate that her verse be chosen, not only for sentiment expressed, but as a tribute of appreciation to her for time and effort expended”:

Through the efforts of the National Old Trails Road Association, the total expense incident to the transportation and erection of this mammoth monument memorial was financed by the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Lions Club, and the Elks Club, and other local civic groups who were most generous in helping to make this project the great success that it was. Even the White Water chapter, Children of the American Revolution, rendered their loyal service.

The local Brass Foundry donated the heavy solid bronze box 4x8x8 inches for the memory box, which was filled with photographs of those who had any part in the projects, clippings from local newspapers, two sonnets by the Honorable William Dudley Foulke, who was gracious enough to give those two poems during the program of the afternoon. Many other valuable papers were placed in the box, and Mr. John P. Emlie of the local Monument Company took charge of the erection.

The final dedication of the year – the 10th – took place on December 8, 1928, at 2 p.m. in **Washington, Pennsylvania**. The Cumberland Road, and now the National Old Trails Roads, and more recently U.S. 40, in Pennsylvania was only 82 miles long “entering the State in the southwestern boundary line between Grantsville, Maryland, and Addison, Pennsylvania, taking a northwesterly direction through Uniontown, Brownsville, Beallsville, to Washington, then a southwestern route crossing the border near West Alexander”:

The site chosen for the Pennsylvania monument is very appropriately placed on the Old National Road in Washington County near Beallsville, on land donated by the Nemacolin Country Club. One hundred seventy-nine years ago there lived on the banks of the Monongahela at the mouth of the Dunlaps Creek, Chief Nemacolin, a chieftain of the Delaware tribe of Indians, and it is generally supposed that at one time this chief had a very respectable following of warriors, but at the time the Whites found him there he had very few and they were quite peaceable. It is interesting to follow the history of the old Indian who was known throughout that section of the country as the “Friendly Chief, Nemacolin.”

It seems eminently fitting and proper that the “Madonna of the Trail” should stand guard over the old Turn Pike in this region of Pennsylvania, and particularly over the grounds of this Country Club which takes its name from and in memory of that fine friendly old Delaware Indian who played such an important part in the laying out of what is now known as this National route from “Coast to Coast.”

The report included the resolution Mrs. Moss had received from Mrs. James P. Eagleson, vice-president for Pennsylvania of the National Old Trails Road Association, who headed the Committee on Arrangements for Pennsylvania:

RESOLUTION

Whereas, The National Old Trails Committee of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, have made application to the Nemacolin Country Club, located in Washington County, Pennsylvania, for a site for the location and erection of their memorial designated as the “Madonna of the Trail” statue; and

Whereas, The Board of Governors of said Nemacolin Country Club are desirous of granting said privilege to said Committee;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, by the said Board of Governors of the Nemacolin Country Club in regular meeting assembled that the privilege of location, constructing and maintaining said monument be granted to said Committee on the location chosen and selected on said grounds of the Northern side of said National Road directly opposite to the entrance of driveway to the Country Club grounds and that the necessary grounds be granted to said Committee for the erection and construction of the same, the area of said ground not to exceed one-half acre (1/2 A.) free of cost, this grant to continue so long as the said ground is used and occupied for the purpose herein granted and at the expiration of that time, the same to revert to the Nemacolin Country Club, its successors and assigns, and the proper officers of the Nemacolin Country Club are hereby authorized to execute the necessary agreement in connection with the carrying out of this grant.

The National Old Trails Road Committee, “needless to say,” accepted “this generous offer.”

Mrs. Eagleson's husband, "with intense interest in the project and patriotic loyalty to his county and state, rendered a splendid service to the Daughters of the American Revolution of Pennsylvania and to the National Committee on the National Old Trails Road:

He organized what is known as the "Madonna of the Trail – Pioneer Fifty-Fifty Club" of Washington County, Pennsylvania. This Club was composed of 50 members paying \$50, entitling each member to a life membership paid and non-assessable in the said club. The membership list was closed when 50 members were listed and this charter list was placed in a sealed box with other valuable papers to go down in history as the only club of the kind ever organized with a membership of 50 with full dues of \$50 and known as the "Pioneer Fifty-Fifty Club." A copy of the charter and list of members was sent to the National Chairman, Mrs. John Trigg Moss, and 4 honorary members were presented: one to Mrs. Alfred J. Brosseau, President General, National Society; one to Mrs. N. Howland Brown, State Regent of Pennsylvania; one to Mrs. John Trigg Moss, National Chairman, National Old Trails Road Committee, and the fourth to Judge Harry S. Truman, President of the National Old Trails Road Association. Embossed membership certificates were presented the evening of December 8th at the Washington Hotel, Washington, Pennsylvania, during a very delightful banquet that was given in honor of the visiting guests by the Washington County chapter of Washington, Pennsylvania.

On the day of the dedication the weather was very cold and threatening, but the long automobile journey did not seem to dampen the ardour and enthusiasm of patriotic residents of that section of Pennsylvania.

Due to the inclement weather, the ceremonies were held in the Nemacolin Country Club House. Mrs. Moss gave the dedicatory address, after which Mr. Eagleson accepted the monument on behalf of the Pioneer Fifty-Fifty Club. Miss Nancy Jane Hall, Regent of the Washington County chapter of the D.A.R., "accepted the guardianship of the monument for the local chapter."

After the ceremonies, the audience was led by the American Legion Drum Corps, to the site of the monument, "where it was unveiled by Miss L. E. Boughner, after which 'America the Beautiful' was sung and the benediction by the Reverent H. M. Jenkins of Beallsville completed the day's program." Miss Boughner was National Vice-Chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee.

The 11th monument was dedicated in **Upland, California**, on February 1, 1929:

The State of California has 302 miles of the Old National Road. The route of the Old Santa Fe Trail guided thousands of the early settlers to California through the valleys and deserts and over the mountains in the early days of the State's settlement. Upland is a small city large enough for a wonderful civic spirit and strong enough to assume any ambitious civic enterprise. It is a city of 5,000 people in the heart of California's richest citrus district, 42 miles from Los Angeles

Ten dedications had taken place in as many States respectively, and it seemed the hand of fate that “Sunny” California should produce the only “rainy day” of all the celebrations. The enthusiasm and splendid spirit of the people were not at all dampened

Owing to the inclement weather the program could not be carried out as planned. The amplifiers were in place, the platform had been built and everything was in readiness for the complete program at the site of the monument, but the Chairman in charge, Mr. C. E. Kirk, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, and his committee, deemed it unwise to proceed with the program in the rain.

Nevertheless, the parade took place:

Hundreds of automobiles were parked all along the way and the pageantry of progress from early days to the present was depicted in an impressive parade. First came the development of transit, beginning with Indians on horseback and with luggage slung between poles dragged behind the animals. Then followed the succeeding epochs in transportation including Spanish Colonial and other early American types leading to covered wagon and stage coach, and then the motor car in its various stages from 2 cylinders to 12 and, finally, the aeroplane. Beautiful historic scenes and striking displays were prepared by many committees and organized for the costly float decorations of the parade. Floral decorations, flags and insignia of our Society added colorful charm to the last division of the parade. Chief Standing Bear, hereditary head of the Ogala tribe of the Sioux Nation, was a distinguished visitor and took part in the ceremonies.

Too much admiration cannot be expressed for the wonderful spirit of loyalty and patriotism which prompted the carrying out of so excellent a parade even though it was raining. The disregard of personal comfort and the fine determination to make a success of the entire dedication program showed a marked inheritance of the true pioneer spirit of those of the early days who were being honored.

Addresses, including Mrs. Moss’s dedicatory speech, were delivered in the auditorium of Chaffey High School. Mayor A. H. Johnson accepted the monument for the city:

The site upon which the California monument is erected could hardly be more beautiful. It is located at the intersection of the Old Santa Fe Trail and Euclid Boulevard. This is a double drive highway with a parkway in the center lined with pepper, grevillea, and other beautiful ever-green trees. On each side of the avenue are groves – most of the time displaying the golden fruit of the orange and lemon. Intermingled among the groves are palatial residences and artistic landscapes. What could be more picturesque than this boulevard extending from the base of the hills through Upland to 7 miles south of Ontario?

The memory box was not sealed within the base until Lincoln's Birthday, February 12th. It contains newspapers, books, coins, and other valuable printed matter. This is placed in the base to be opened February 1, 1979. [*Proceedings* April 1929, pages 185-207]

The Final Dedication – Bethesda, Maryland

On April 12, 1929, Mrs. Moss visited Bethesda to see the site of the final monument that would be dedicated at Wisconsin and Montgomery Avenues, facing the Montgomery County Building. She conferred with S. H. Miller, chairman of the Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, who was in charge of erecting the monument. He supervised as workers completed the base on April 12.

Walter R. Tuckerman had donated the site for the monument near the subdivision known as Edgemoor. Tuckerman was an attorney, entrepreneur, banker, and philanthropist; he founded Edgemoor. He and Mrs. Tuckerman presented the deed for the site to Mrs. Moss and Mrs. Enoch G. Johnson, Maryland's national vice chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee. ["Last D.A.R. Marker Rising at Bethesda," *The Washington Post*, April 13, 1929, page 3]

The dedication took place on April 19, beginning at 4 p.m. The continental congress had cleared its afternoon schedule to allow delegates to drive to Bethesda for the dedication. Mrs. Moss's report on the dedications explained:

The day of the dedication, April 19th, was one of sunshine and clean crisp air after a week of spring rains and cloudy weather. A large crowd attended the exercises, which were held out in the open, near the site and under the shelter of century-old trees. National Officers, State Regents, and hundreds of D.A.R. members from almost every State in the Union, as well as officials of Bethesda city government, and prominent residents participated.

The special guest was Vice President Charles Curtis, who had represented Kansas in the House of Representatives (1893-1907) and the Senate (1907-1929). He had taken his oath of office on March 4, 1929, along with the new President, Herbert Hoover.

The dedication, presided over by Mrs. Robert A. Welsh, State Regent of Maryland, began with a concert by the First Tank Group Band of Camp Meade in Maryland. After an invocation, a salute to the flag by the Children of the American Revolution, and the singing of the "Star-Spangled Banner," Mrs. Johnson gave an address of welcome. President General Brosseau "recounted the hardships and self-sacrifice of the early pioneer mothers who followed ox carts along the early trails":

It is preeminently fitting that in following a plan of dedication of the statues in each of the twelve states, the first should be last, and that Maryland, which was the scene of the first questing, should experience the fulfilment in this tribute to her pioneering spirit.

In eleven of the states, statues have been erected and dedicated, and now we come to Maryland, the twelfth state and the source of inspiration. Here we rest, and into the keeping of the citizens of Bethesda do we commend in imperishable stone, the soul of the pioneer mother.

Proud as I am of the joint accomplishment of the National Old Trails Association [sic] and the Daughters of the American Revolution in their notable plan of marking this historic highway with the statues dedicated to the pioneer mothers, I shall make no comment upon the glorious monument itself. When it is revealed to you, I know you will be reminded, as I am, of the definition of eminence as “something that is created in stone, stops in animals and lives again in man.”

But I shall indulge in a bit of personality and allow you to share with me a secret which I am sure is known to but few, and that is the bit of beautiful and patriotic sentiment which attaches itself to the creation of this symbolic group.

The young college student, son of Mrs. Moss, our efficient National Chairman, whom you have here today, designed the statue. That the mother was able to capture the past, envisage the future and, through the rare gifts of her son, synchronize all with the present – with the ideals and the practical aims of our great Society is quite the perfect expression of patriotic service.

Also do I want to pay a tribute to our own Mrs. Talbott and the years of service that she gave to the work of this Committee. But for her zeal and patient efforts we would not be standing here today, helping to make immortal this phase of our nation’s early history.

She closed by reciting William D. Foulke’s “The Settler’s Wife,” previously read during the dedication in Richmond, Indiana. [“The 38th Continental Congress, N.S.D.A.R.,” *Daughters of the American Republic Magazine*, June 1929, page 344]

Judge Truman was the next speaker, delivering a version of his address on the Old Trails:

The National Old Trails Road Association, ladies and gentlemen, has helped the Daughters of the American Revolution to finish a Memorial to the woman who made this country great – the Pioneer Mother.

It was the grand old pioneer mother who made the settlement of the original thirteen colonies possible. She came to Virginia in 1609, she came to Massachusetts in 1620 and after that to all the colonies, thus making their settlement a permanent undertaking.

When that great and fertile plain, west of the Alleganys [sic] needed settlement, she went with the hearty pioneers who made an empire of it. She crossed the Mississippi and she went to Oregon and California.

She made this country what it is by being the hearty mother [sic] she was and producing sons and daughters to make it great.

It is exceedingly appropriate that the Daughters of the American Revolution should have originated the idea and it is also proper that the National Old Trails Association [sic] should have helped them to carry it out. It was over the old trails that those wonderful women made their trek [sic] to the Ohio Valley and from there to Louisiana territory and the great west.

The Old Trail started here, or some where not far away. The first road from Baltimore to the west was laid out over the trail taken by Braddock and Washington in the French and Indian War. It is yet the best and shortest road from here over the mountains and to the west.

From 1750 to Revolutionary times those good women were going over that trail to the head of navigation on the Ohio and down that great river to Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana.

After the Revolution the National Government recognized the necessity of land transportation and adopted and laid out the National Road from here to St. Louis and later to Jefferson City, Mo. Daniel Boone used the road to Booneville, Mo., in his salt business and it is today known as Booneslick trail.

About 1825 the National government recognized the necessity of a trade route to old Mexico and after making treaties with the Plain's Indians authorized and had completed a survey from Sibley, Mo., to Santa [sic] Fe, Mexico, then in a foreign country. Therefore the National Old Trails Road follows the history and development of all this country beyond the Alleghenies. There isn't a foot of it but what is linked with the history of the country. Over it those pioneer mothers went to make the winning of the West really and truly stay won. They were just as brave or braver than their men, because in many cases they went with sad hearts and trembling bodies. They went, however, and endured every hardship that befalls a pioneer. They fought Indians, want, and loneliness and won. My grandmothers were pioneer women and that is why I am here.

There she stands, ladies and gentlemen, the mother of the country – the finest thing on earth and here at the beginning of the trail and the foundation of the country it is appropriate that we erect the last monument to the pioneer mothers, originated by the Daughters of the American Revolution and carried to completion with the assistance of the National Old Trails Association. [Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum; Quoted in Mallinson, Jane, "Harry Truman and the Selection of Sites for the DAR Madonna Statues, Part II," *Wagon Tracks*, May 1995, page 6]

As Algeo explained, the Pioneer Mother monuments were "a project close to Truman's heart" because both of "his grandmothers had made the arduous trek from Kentucky to western Missouri in the 1840s." [Algeo, page 50]

Tuckerman formally presented the deed to Mrs. Moss, who presented it, in turn, to Mrs. Brosseau to be placed in the national society's archives.

Mrs. Moss delivered the dedicatory address, which was reprinted in the *Daughters of the American Republic Magazine*:

The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution organized under a constitution, of which Article 11, Section 1, reads:

“The objects of this Society are: To perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved American Independence – the acquisition and protection of historical spots – and the erection of monuments.”

And wholly in keeping with this very first sentence in this section “to perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and woman who achieved American Independence,” in 1911, the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, established a National Committee known as “The National Old Trails Road” Committee, whose work primarily was to definitely establish the Old Trails Road as a great National Memorial Highway – a Memorial to be of great National scope, expressing a great National love for those sturdy pioneers whose memorials *shall live forever* like a “thing devine.” To that end, this loyal band of women went about their work enthusiastically and untiringly, an inspiration to the country at large, awakening interest in locating, exploiting and advertising old historic roads, and influencing the new automobile roads in course of construction at that time all over the country, to be built upon the old historic trails.

During the early work of the Daughters, the National Old Trails Road Association came

into being, stating in its own By-Laws, Article II, Section 1 –

“The object of this Association shall be to assist the Daughters of the American Republic in marking the Old Trails and to promote the construction of an Ocean-to-Ocean Highway of modern type worthy of its memorial character.”

They also adopted the temporary marking of the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway as suggested by the National D.A.R. Committee, of marking the National Highway with our own National Colors, and they, too, went forth with the paint-pot in hand, as many of the Daughters had done before, banding the telegraph and telephone poles with red, white, and blue, so that the character of this road might be evidenced to the traveler of the day, whose slogan was “Follow the flag of the D.A.R.”

From that time on these two patriotic groups, the National Old Trails Road Committee of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the National Old Trails Road Association, have had much in common, and while our D.A.R. Committee gave the first organized

impetus to this plan of a Pioneer Memorial Highway across the Continent, and issued the first map, named the road, originated the first road-sign, and painted it on telegraph poles and introduced a bill in Congress calling upon the Government to build the road, we Daughters most gratefully acknowledge the impetus and far-reaching power, the able assistance, and never-ceasing cooperation given to this movement by the splendid men of the National Old Trails Road Association. Like the wise men of old, we have followed the same bright star together, and it has been “a long, long trail awinding into the land of our dreams” – there has been “the long night of waiting” – but even that is spent, and we are here to realize the vision we caught of this “Thing Divine,” and, while we know that “Gone is the last frontier and the steady grind of the wagon train,” we know that the Great Spirit of the Pathfinder, the Trail Blazer lives – and will ever live in our heart of hearts – for the trail he took to the glorious West was that wonderful trail of Love!

The National Old Trails Road that we memorialized at Bethesda was the “Homing Trail” of a young nation, for it was the most natural route of travel when our early Americans began to pour across the Alleghenies and plant their homes in the Great Western wilderness.

This road was built, not by road engineers, but was marked out by the Indian and the buffalo, their choice always being the quickest and best line of travel. In the olden times, day after day, year after year, was heard the music of the creaking wagon and the lowing ox. Just why the mighty host of Pioneers left their comfortable homes to plunge into the Great Unknown, we will never know, except that the restless spirit of adventure possessed them. And after the heat of the warfare and strife of the early Revolutionary days, they had one desire in their souls – to establish their own homes and live in peace and happiness with their neighbors the rest of their days. To come into this great possession they were willing to pass down the great “Homing Trail” of the Nation, into the land of mystery and romance, of hardship and endurance, and with them they took, not the ammunition wagon and artillery, but herds of livestock and their household goods, implements of the farm land; they took with them their women and their children – the guarantee of a future state, the earnest of a permanent settlement, the basis of an American home.

We carry our banner aloft for “Home and Country”; hence the Daughters of the American Revolution have long interested themselves in preserving all State and National Highways. They have studied the Old Indian trails or traces, the stage coach lines, military roads, federal roads, and the old post roads and mail routes, and marked them all over this country. The Pony Express, The Rainbow Route, and The Santa Fe Trail, the Cumberland Pike, Ye Old Kings Highway of the East and the King’s Road of the South and East; the Oregon Trail of the West, the Old Indian Agency Road and the Mormon Trails; also The Old Territorial Road of the North, the Natchez Trace, the El Camino Rail, the Dixie Highway of the South; the Jackson Trace, the Lincoln Highway, the Old Boston Post Road and the Mohawk Trail, the Boone’s Lick in Missouri, and the Old Braddock Road in Maryland – all these and hundreds of others, have been marked, and are as sacred to us as battlefields. They record the steady triumph of peace; they are the true index of a Nation’s progress – the life-history of a people. That they are linked in a

complete chain from ocean to ocean is not a matter of chance, we are told, each link representing an epoch in the growth of the Republic.

In the words of the late Honorable W. P. Borland, of Missouri, who supported the National Old Trails Road to the end of his days, “they are the autograph of a Nation written across the face of a Continent.” Surely, these sacred names shall not perish – *numbers must not, shall not*, take their places. These time-worn, time-honored names ring down the ages like sweet music of old. They tell the story of hardship you and I will never know; they speak to us of the old Prairie Schooner slowly wending its way, – of the tent, – of the plain – “and dust, alas, on breasts that rose not up again!” They interpret the fortitude of the Pioneer Fathers who opened the way and the enduring faith and ever-abiding hope of the Mothers, the great hosts of known and unknown Mothers, who went forth “with mother love” in their hearts, and a “mother song” upon their lips, who represented then – and we pray God they do now – the very heart of the whole world!

These mothers of the covered-wagon days never faltered, never ceased to hope, though they stalked the dreary plains with unsteady footsteps, privation and suffering their constant companions.

Possessing the sterling qualities of duty and sympathy, sacrifice and joy, stern reality and romance, gentleness and severity, justice and mercy, faith in God Almighty, and a great dignity of soul – the “Madonnas of the Trail” entered the threshold of their new-found homes and erected an altar therein to country and to God. We are told Mary, the Mother of Christ, entered into sacred history with song, “My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord.” Our Pioneer Mothers have passed into sacred history, and we catch the refrain as it wafts back to us across the mountain and plain, along the Old Trails and Pathways, an echo growing stronger with the passing years – “Praise the Lord, Oh, My Soul!” And the strength of this great echo has made this Nation.

And today we Daughters of the American Revolution present to the Nation our tribute of love and veneration, a great National Shrine reaching from ocean to ocean, and as we unfold the veil that hangs over her, revealing to the world the outward beauty and magnificence of our Monument, may we feel the great benediction of that glorious anthem ringing in our hearts, “Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, last [sic] we forget, lest we forget.” May we dedicate ourselves anew to the great and hallowed ideals of the past, and live true to the Spirit of our Pioneer Forbears, and with their abiding faith, *believing in our Nation*, and *steadfastly* upholding her institutions, we dedicate this, the twelfth link of our Beautiful National Shrine this day – we dedicate it to the honor and glory of our Pioneer Mothers of the Past, and in the name of God, amen. [“The Madonna of the Trail,” *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, July 1929, pages 399-404]

Wisconsin Avenue, as Mrs. Moss explained, was the road that Major General Edward Braddock marched on April 14, 1755, on his way to Fort Duquesne, later the site of Pittsburgh, during the French and Indian War. The British officer, whose troops included young militia leader George Washington, was on his way to dislodge the French. The soldiers had to build or widen a path

through the wilderness. The British force was attacked shortly after crossing the Monongahela River. Braddock died on July 13 from wounds he suffered during the battle, leaving Washington in charge of a retreat. Daniel Boone, a wagon driver on the march, barely escaped with his life. Washington also presided over a funeral for Braddock. To ensure the body could not be found and desecrated, Washington buried Braddock in the middle of the road his men had just built; wagons were driven over the grave and the troops marched over it to hide the site.

According to an account in *The Evening Star*, Mrs. Moss explained beyond her formal remarks, "It is of peculiar interest to recall today that the State of Maryland, where our trail is now completed, the first road law was passed in 1666, and the first mail route was established in 1695. She recalled that the Maryland chapter of the D.A.R. had begun marking the trails about 18 years earlier:

Past records mention Mrs. Morris Croxall as your first chairman, whose zeal and constant efforts were rewarded by interested co-operation from all chapters.

You own Mrs. W. H. Talbott of Rockville, was an interested member of this committee from the beginning – one of the pioneers – and it was while she was serving as vice chairman under the leadership of Mrs. Henry McCleary that the fund to mark the road was established. Mrs. Talbott served as national chairman of this committee for six years, and her untiring efforts kept the interest alive during the war period. I wish to pay Mrs. Talbott this tribute today.

I find the following names mentioned in the records of the past: Mrs. Herbert M. Galt, Mrs. F. H. Markel, Mrs. Albert A. Doub, Mrs. Enoch Johnson and Mrs. Samuel Tubman. All have contributed time and effort in the past in the interest or memorializing these sacred old paths.

Numerous monuments and markers have been erected, but today we are dedicating our long-dreamed-of memorial to our mothers of the past. We are at last paying tribute to the silent and patient "Madonnas of the Trail" – brave in their sacrifice, loyal to their men, following them trustfully, carrying the coming race in their arms.

Former Postmaster General Harry S. New (March 1923-March 1929), a former Senator from Indiana (1917-1923) but now a Bethesda resident, accepted the monument on behalf of the people of Bethesda. Mrs. Robert A. Welsh, State Regent of Maryland, accepted the guardianship of the monument on behalf of the Maryland Daughters.

A parade of State Regents followed:

The escort of State Regents from the 12 States through which the National Old Trails Road passes, formed in line with their State flags carried by their personal pages Coming forward to the front of the platform, each State Regent in turn gave the data recorded on the base of the monument in their own State respectively. They were then escorted to the monument by the Boy and Girl Scouts, and surrounded the statue during

the unveiling by Mrs. W. H. Talbott, who was assisted by 2 small pages, Masters E. Windsor Offutt, Jr., and M. Wilson Offutt 3d, America was sung and the American's Creed was led by the author, Mr. William Tyler Page.

The Offutts were the grandchildren of a pioneer father.

Following a benediction, the ceremony came to an end. [Proceedings, pages 207-210; "Old Trails Road Marker Unveiled," *The Evening Star*, April 20, 1929, page 4; "Statue Is Unveiled To Pioneer Mother," *The Washington Post*, April 20, 1929, page 20]

A Kick for Truman in Santa Fe

Jesse L. Nusbaum was the National Park Service's first archeologist. In 1921, he became superintendent of Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. In 1927, he was given the additional title of lead archeologist and prime enforcer of the Antiquities Act of 1906 for the Southwest. He lived and worked in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for many years until his death there in December 1975 at the age of 88.

Nusbaum recorded an incident – a legend, really – involving Harry S. Truman, and the plan to erect the Madonna of the Trail in Santa Fe. In a recollection for his daughter Rosemary, he wrote that when he moved to Santa Fe in 1932, the arts community was "buzzing with a recent triumph" by refusing the plan to install the Madonna of the Trail monument in the city's Plaza. During the New Deal era of President Roosevelt, Nusbaum was Director of the Laboratory of Anthropology, but "also had a small part in the management of the local chapter of the Arts Commission." At the time, following the collapse of the stock market in 1929, the city's artists and writers were suffering:

Preliminary to New Deal time a Commission was set up in Washington to assist artists, and it was decided that sculptures be included. Joe Davidson, a well-known and fine sculptor was commissioned to sculpt a larger than life size version of a Pioneer Mother. Several copies were to be placed along the old Santa Fe Trail, all at the direction of the Washington Commission and Santa Fe was designated to be one of them.

When the arts community heard of the plan "a great controversy raged." Writer Mary Austin, who had moved to Santa Fe in 1918, and others "decided that the intrusion was unfitting," but debate continued in person and by letter and telegrams with Washington. However, "decisions had been made far away and there was insistence that Santa Fe was a proper place":

Well, the day came for the sculpture to appear and indeed the afternoon the Pioneer Mother arrived at the corner of Shelby and San Francisco Streets on the Plaza by truck, all swathed in wrappings and accompanied by three men – one a short fellow named Harry Truman, then working for the Penderghast [sic] bosses of Kansas City, and soon to become Vice President of these United States under Franklin Roosevelt. As the truck came to a stop, the Santa Fe group there to meet it immediately expressed refusal and loudly ordered the truck to move on. Someone shouted that life was not lived merely

consisting of breathing but in acting and the controversy raged loud and heated, as the Pioneer Mother was unwrapped by the equally determined men on the truck.

When an attempt was made to move the sculpture, Mary Austin, known to all of us as a lady of great literary brilliance and independence, and a formidable and large lady of stature, stepped forward and with no offense to modesty began to kick Harry Truman on the shins.

The Pioneer Mother never left the truck. She was hastily rewrapped and taken to grace the little park on Fourth Street in Albuquerque. [Nussbaum, Rosemary, *Tierra Dulce: Reminiscences from the Jesse Nussbaum Papers*, The Sunstone Press, 1980, pages 59-60]

While the image of Mary Austin kicking Harry Truman in the shins is vivid, Nussbaum's recollection gets a few details wrong. Actually, he got all the details wrong.

The date is wrong. In fact, 1932 was the year President Franklin D. Roosevelt won the presidential election and would take office in March 1933. The New Deal had not begun in 1932. In any event, the decision on where to place the New Mexico monument was made in October 1927.

In a letter to his wife Bess on October 3, 1927, quoted earlier, Truman recalled the monument committee's consideration of New Mexico. The Albuquerque delegation had "backed me into a corner and tried to force me to promise to vote for this town." Then Santa Fe "did me the same way," even following Davis and him to the hotel, "and wouldn't let us loose." The next day, they were going to drive to Santa Fe, 66 miles, "hear Santa Fe come to a decision," and then start on the location for Colorado.

Clearly, he was talking to boosters, not the Santa Fe arts community.

In Santa Fe, the committee viewed possible sites for the monument before meeting at the La Fonda Hotel for a luncheon and further discussion. J. D. DeHuff of the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce explained why Santa Fe was the logical site for the New Mexico monument. Mrs. Francis Wilson, a former regent of the State's D.A.R. and a Santa Fe resident, supported the city for the monument, but a Mr. Kloch of Albuquerque spoke in favor of his city. (This probably was "the Honorable George S. Klock," who would preside over dedication of the monument in Albuquerque.)

Mary Austin and writer Frank Applegate spoke in opposition to the monument in Santa Fe. Jane Mallinson, in the Santa Fe Trail Association's *Wagon Tracks*, wrote about these events:

As DeHuff later explained in the October 14, 1927, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, "it had never once occurred to me, and I feel sure that it had never occurred to Mrs. Wilson or any other supporter of Santa Fe's claim, that any one living here would, or could object to the location of the monument in Santa Fe." Thus he was surprised when "Mr. Applegate soon got up and began with an uncomplimentary reference to the Santa Fe chamber of

commerce, stating that this was another case of where the chamber of commerce was attempting to put something over on the Santa Fe public without letting the public know anything about it. Mrs. Wilson interrupted him immediately . . . Mr. Applegate then made a statement to the effect that he had canvassed all the artists and writers in Santa Fe and that none of them wanted this monument here, that it was not artistic, and Santa Fe did not want something unloaded on it that it didn't want. Mrs. Austin made a few remarks the tenor of which was that the so-called Pioneer Woman monument did not represent the real pioneers of this region at all, that the real pioneers were the Spanish people and that they had not been consulted and were not represented at all."

Mallinson quoted Austin from the *Santa Fe New Mexican* issue of October 18, 1927, as saying she had been suspicious "when I asked what artists had seen and approved the monument. I was informed that 'you will have to rely upon us for that.' Now in matters of art that do not come within my own profession, I am not accustomed to rely upon the judgment of any but experts":

She continued, "Had I known nothing else of the matter, this answer alone would have been enough to make me oppose the acceptance of the monument. When a picture of the monument was shown me, I felt that I would have no right to let Santa Fe in for anything in the way of art so atrocious. Not only is the monument indifferent art, but as a descendant of a long line of Pioneer Mothers myself, I felt that the monument did not represent them truly . . . Moreover . . . the Pioneers of New Mexico are not the Pioneers of the D.A.R. . . . I considered it profoundly discourteous for the D.A.R. to think of setting up one of their monuments in the city of Santa Fe without the widely expressed approbation of the New Mexican pioneers. Austin made it clear that she objected to the "rude interruption of the D.A.R. official who presided [Mrs. Moss]." According to DeHuff, "Mrs. Moss was infuriated."

In the October 19 issue of the *New Mexican*, Applegate stated that when he was asked to address the meeting:

I replied that I would be willing to give ten dollars toward a fund to keep the statue away from Santa Fe and that if the statue was wanted here I had better not be asked to the meeting. Thus I gave fair warning." According to his recollection, Applegate listened to the statements made in favor of Santa Fe at that meeting and spoke out when it "seemed from the tenor of the meeting that Santa Fe was about to be handed the statue.

Now it is an old saying that one must not look a gift horse in the mouth, but I had seen some cuts of this statue and was adversely impressed by it and raised the question of whether Santa Fe, as a whole, wanted the statue unloaded on it in this manner, that the Old Santa Fe association, to my knowledge, had not been consulted and that I had spoken to a number of artists and writers and that none of them cared for the statue. I said further that if a single artist in Santa Fe was found who approved of the statue I would withdraw all further protest. Mrs. Moss interrupted me at this point and said artists had nothing to do with this statue, that it was between the D.A.R. and the chamber of commerce.

Applegate also recalled that Mary Austin, “in a manner to which no one could possibly take exception, questioned the propriety of placing a monument of this subject in Santa Fe on the ground that Santa Fe was an old Spanish pioneer town, and also that the descendants of these pioneers had not been consulted in this matter.” Applegate further clarified his own position, stating that “I had no quarrel with the D.A.R. but what I did object to was the inartistic quality of this particular statue. I said I did not consider it a work of art.” At this point, as he remembered, “Mrs. Moss lost her temper . . . and said I was excused from the meeting. I thanked her very kindly in my most suave and courteous manner and departed bearing no rancor whatsoever. Up until my last remark Mrs. Moss seemed intent on the statue’s coming to Santa Fe, but her anger overcoming her she tossed it to Albuquerque.”

Mrs. Moss asked everyone but the committee to leave the room. The committee then voted 5 to 2 to place the New Mexico statue in Albuquerque. DeHuff and Wilson cast the only votes for Santa Fe.

Mallinson quoted Nusbaum’s recollection of Mary Austin kicking Harry Truman in the shins until he got back in the truck to take the statue to Albuquerque, adding, “This account has no basis in fact, but it may represent the strong opposition of some Santa Fe artists to the Madonna.” [Mallinson, Jane, “Harry Truman and the Selection of Sites for the DAR Madonna Statues, Part III,” *Wagon Tracks*, Volume 9, Issue 4 (August 1995), pages 10-11]

Fern Lyon added details to the meeting. The local Kiwanis Club, which hosted the luncheon, “had invited interested citizens of Santa Fe to join the guests and contribute their own ideas on the statue matter.” Only Applegate and Austin showed up:

Mary Austin has been described by publicists as an internationally known “feminist, mystic, southwestern naturalist and environmentalist.” In Santa Fe she had been described as “God’s Mother-in-Law.”

She and Applegate, “a sculptor, painter, and writer,” were “triumphant veterans of a good many artistic battles.” Lyon wrote:

The two of them were kept cooling their heels in the De Vargas lobby for more than an hour as the luncheon went into overtime.

When they got into the meeting, Mary Austin announced that the statue was inappropriate for New Mexico, that New Mexico’s pioneer mothers were not those of the D.A.R. They were Hispanic. She added that she, herself, came from a long line of pioneer mothers and none of them looked like that statute. She called it a caricature.

Frank Applegate in turn pronounced the Madonna a cheap copy of a work that was inartistic in the first place. He said there had been too much supervision of the sculptor by the D.A.R. and repeated the rumor that Mrs. Moss’ own child was one of the models. Then he pointed out that Santa Fe citizens would be asked to raise some \$1,500 for

moving and installing the statue. He offered to donate \$10 to a fund for keeping the thing out of town.

Mrs. Moss was understandably infuriated. She told Applegate to apologize or leave the room. He left the room. Mary Austin left with him.

Lyon added that on the 50th anniversary of the dedication in Albuquerque, Mayor David Rusk and others gathered to extract the time capsule. She quoted an account in *The Albuquerque Journal*:

The first bad sign came last week when drilling revealed the stone behind the plaque was eight inches thick . . . with Mayor David Rusk, husbands of D.A.R. and perhaps a dozen guests circling the base tapping it with their rocks They found a hollow sounding spot, but no capsule. The D.A.R. president says if they find it they will put in a new one with a copy of the program, a 15-cent stamp (because it's such a horrible postage compared to 50 years ago) and several bicentennial coins. "But we're not going to seal the instructions. They're going in the file."

A week later, the *Journal* published a photo of the senior radiographer at Sandia Laboratories X-raying the base of the Madonna. Still no memory box.

That seems to be the last story so far about the Madonna of the Trail.

If on some Elysian Field the spirits of Mary Austin and Frank Applegate meet they must be exchanging knowing thought waves. [Lyon, Fern, "Madonna of the Trail," *La Crónica de Nuevo México*, Issue number 27, March 1988, page 2]

Some apocryphal stories are too good to fact check. One of those stories is the image of Mary Austin kicking Harry Truman – then-president of the National Old Trails Road Association, future United States Senator, future Vice President, and future President of the United States – in the shins until he drove the Madonna of the Trail monument to Albuquerque. But unfortunately, it is not true.

The Master Highway

In 1921, Cy Avery had encouraged a friend to launch a magazine called *The Nation's Highways*. Kelly wrote, "Most issues carried an article with Cy's byline, pieces about him, or stories about one or more of his projects. It was another bully pulpit." After adoption of the U.S. Numbered Highway System, *The Nation's Highways* was named the official publication of U.S. 66. The U.S. 66 Highway Association brought on a public relations and promotion man named Lon Scott of Springfield, Missouri, as corresponding secretary. Kelly suggested that, "Scott ultimately may have been almost as responsible for Route 66's international fame as was Cy." [Kelly, page 74, 191]

The June 1927 issue featured Scott's article titled "The Greatest Highway Project in America." It began:

America's master highway! The main street of a continent is rapidly passing from the realms of dreamland and fantastic imaginations to become one of the magnificent realities of this wonder age in which we are blessed with the privilege of living.

Believing the time has come when America must be served by a great continuous highway to connect, like a railroad, the centers of population with a region capable of expansion by younger generations, the business men of America's Great Southwest have formed an organization, "The U.S. 66 Highway Association" to bring into being, at the earliest possible date, through Federal and state cooperation, America's widest concrete thoroughfare. They propose to concrete the U.S. 66 Highway from Chicago, Illinois, to Los Angeles, California, to be known as "THE MAIN STREET OF AMERICA."

The association was gathering information on the cost of converting the entire route to concrete. The goal was a unified effort by members to convince their State legislatures and State highway departments to establish "by the end of 1928, an unbroken concrete slab from the Great Lakes to the Pacific."

Scott gave credit where due:

Much of the honor for precipitating the public concern that brought about the U.S. 66 Highway Association, goes to Cyrus S. Avery of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and John T. Woodruff, of Springfield, Missouri, both of whom have had in recent years a deal to do with promoting good roads in the United States. Avery, former Chairman of the Oklahoma State Highway and Chairman of the Federal Highway Marking Committee of the United States Department of Agriculture, looks upon the U.S. 66 Highway as the most important transcontinental road in America.

Woodruff, the association's president, envisioned "a great development, the result of completing at the earliest possible date, a wide concrete highway." The entire route through Illinois and Missouri "has been paved in the usual width," so the focus was on Oklahoma through California:

By every token, he points out, the 66 route should be concentrated upon by the various states to the end of providing soon for its final completion as America's widest strip of concrete road. No other route is so feasible of maintenance, no other route affords so much completed concrete now; no other route to the great centers of population of the Central West and East affords the large cities of the Southwest as good a highway as does U.S. 66. Woodruff's claim, and of particular importance to southwestern cities, is the fact that U.S. 66 intersects every other east and west Federal Highway besides transecting a good portion of the north and south roads. [Scott, Lon, *The Greatest Highway Project in America*, *The Nation's Highways*, June 1927, pages 4-5]

These ambitious goals far exceeded the possible reality. A December 1929 article in *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* identified the surfacing for the entire Route 66, including its detour through Santa Fe. Contrary to Woodruff's statement, the route in Illinois and Missouri was a mix of asphalt, brick, concrete, and gravel. The National Old Trails Road portion of the route from Santa Fe to Los Angeles was described as:

Then 42 miles gravel; 24 miles concrete, to Albuquerque. Then 19 miles concrete; four miles gravel; 31 miles oiled; 46.2 miles gravel; 20.6 miles earth; 50.2 miles gravel, to Gallup. Then 7.6 miles gravel; 13.4 miles earth, to New Mexico-Arizona State line

Then 75 miles earth (23 miles construction to be completed in December) to Holbrook. Then 75.5 miles gravel; one mile concrete; 12.2 miles earth; 1.6 miles concrete; 23.4 miles macadam; 19.3 miles gravel, to Williams. Then one-half mile concrete; 98 miles gravel; 40 miles earth (32 miles construction to be completed in December). Then 23 miles gravel; 16.6 miles earth; 32.6 miles gravel; 3.1 miles earth, to Arizona-California State line

Then 131 miles earth; 35 miles oiled to Daggett; 45 miles oiled; 16 miles macadam; four miles oiled; 11 miles macadam; eight miles concrete; 5.6 miles of San Bernardino streets. Then 28 miles asphalt; two miles macadam; three mile [sic] asphalt; four miles macadam; 15.7 miles of Claremont, Glendora, Azusa, Monrovia, Arcadia and Pasadena Streets. Then two miles macadam and 10 miles of Los Angeles streets. ["U.S. Highway No. 66 From Chicago to Los Angeles," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 15, 1929, from Texaco National Road Reports]

Despite promotion of a completed concrete highway in 2 years, the States were not cooperating. In late 1929, California highway officials reported:

Eastern travelers entering southern California via the Old Trails Highway and southern travelers to the Grand Canyon and Zion Park regions, all go through the Cajon Pass.

The upper part of the old Cajun Pass road has long been a source of anxiety and danger to travelers. The combination of narrow road, many sharp turns and the great chasm below has resulted in in many serious accidents in past years.

An entirely new road is now well toward completion, eliminating the worst part of the present road.

In order to construct a new road on modern standards in this rough country, it is necessary to make great cuts and fills. This has resulted in very heavy construction.

The article stated that the present traveled road included 56 sharp curves, "many of which can not be traveled safety at more than 15 miles per hour." The new road, when completed, would include "11 easy curves, all of which can safely be traveled at full legal speed limit."

The article quoted an October 3 article in the *San Bernardino Sun* describing the work:

Mountains are being moved along the westerly side of Cajon Pass in the reconstruction work being done on the National Old Trails. The work is of such a stupendous nature that the topography of the pass will show a material transformation. Few people conceived the magnitude of the project until they saw the mountain crest moved away and deep, wide cuts made huge fills in the canyons below the new road.

The contractors have progressed with the construction work until it is possible to get an adequate conception of the new highway curves for more than three miles through the pass. The new road will be safe as compared with the present route with its many acute curves. The scenic outlook will be as entertaining as from the present road, and the occupants of an automobile may enjoy it without fear of meeting some wild driver trying to take all of the roadway on a sharp turn.

Those who have traveled day after day through the Cajon Pass may have become so accustomed to it as to fail in appreciation of its charm, but those who traverse the region for the first time are delighted with its peculiar beauty and ever changing phases of interest.

The contractors hope to have the new section of the highway complete and ready for travel in January or February unless the early part of the winter is unusually wet. [“Heavy Work on Southern Roads,” *California Highways and Public Works*, November 1929, pages 11-12]

The National Old Trails Road in the Age of Numbers

Before November 11, 1926, newspapers carried articles about interstate travel on the named trails. After AASHO approved the U.S. numbered highway system on that date, the newspapers still carried articles about interstate travel, but focused on the U.S. numbered highways. Still, they recalled the fading names of years past.

On June 2, 1929, for example, *The New York Times* carried an article by Leon A. Dickinson titled “Good Ways Lead Across Country.” It began:

Vacationists desirous of “Seeing America First,” particularly that part west of the Mississippi, which abounds in natural wonders, may follow any one of a variety of routes out of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington

Three of the main routes shown [on the accompanying map of the West] converge at Chicago, there to spread out again, one toward Milwaukee and Minneapolis, another through Dubuque, Mason City and Spencer, and a third across Cedar Rapids, Boone and Omaha. A fourth stems out of Chicago in the direction of St. Louis, where the motorist may turn westward in the direction of Kansas City or southwest through Springfield, Mo.,

to Tulsa, Okla. All these highways, like so many trees, have branches spreading out into the surrounding territory.

Any such journey “takes a little planning at the outset if one is to see as much as possible in a few weeks”:

As most of the better-known scenic marvels lie west of Denver, one way for the Eastern tourist to gain time is to pass rapidly across the Middle West. This may now be easily accomplished, as most of the main east-and-west highways across the country are paved at least as far as the Mississippi, and several of them offer pavement for a hundred miles or more west of that river.

The National Old Trails Road, to cite on example, is now continuous surface all the way to Topeka, Kan. This is marked as U.S. Route 40 to Salina, Kan., where most tourists drop south for a few miles to Hutchinson, and then west again, following U.S. 50 to La Junta, Col.

Here there is an important parting of the ways. Those headed for Los Angeles via the National Old Trails Road (Santa Fe Trail) will turn southwest to Trinidad and then over the Raton Pass into New Mexico.

Other motorists may pass through La Junta to Pueblo, and then to Colorado Springs and Denver and several National Parks:

If he so desires, the tourist may continue west to Salt Lake City and then across Nevada direct into San Francisco. A more pleasant way, however, considering that Nevada roads are in none too good condition, is to drive south through Pueblo to Trinidad and then follow the National Old Trails Road across New Mexico and Arizona into Southern California. This will permit visits to the cliff dwellings and Indian pueblos in the vicinity of Santa Fé and Albuquerque. Then there are the Petrified Forest, Painted Desert, Grand Canyon in Arizona and the trip across the Mojave Desert in Southern California.

The article was accompanied by a maps of the western United States showing the routes mentioned. Prepared by Dickinson, the map lacked names or numbers on the routes depicted. [Dickinson, Leon A., “Good Ways Lead Across Country,” *The New York Times*, June 2, 1929, page XX12]

A year later, Dickinson advised readers of the *Times*:

A cross-country motor trip is very different from the usual vacation tour. Not much special preparation or planning is required for a jaunt through the White Mountains or the Adirondacks, but when one intends to drive to the Pacific Coast and back it is a different story So great has been the progress in road improvement throughout this entire region in recent years that it is now possible to travel from coast to coast along a number

of different routes, all of which offer excellent conditions, particularly during the months from May to October.

He discussed the attractions available via the Lincoln Highway, which he added was U.S. 30:

Contrast with this the National Old Trails Road, as it has been known for years. This latter, which is now a combination of United States Routes 40, 50, 350, 85, and 66, is celebrated for the wide diversification of its scenery, especially in the Southwest.

This time, Dickinson's map included the U.S. numbers for the routes shown. [Dickinson, Leon A., "Across the Continent," *The New York Times*, May 18, 1930, page XX6]

A year later, with the country well into the Depression, the reporter wrote again about a western

trip, beginning:

There are indications that, in spite of business conditions, long distance motor touring will be as popular this Summer as ever. One reason for this is the continual and rapid improvement of roads throughout the country. This is especially true of some of the Western and Middle Western States, formerly bugaboos for motorists from the East

It is important for the cross-country tourist to recognize the fact that route numbers, and not names, are the essential designations nowadays. A few years ago, when improved roads were few in the West and sign posts almost non-existent, the so-called "marked trails," bearing such curious names as "Sunflower Trail," "Red Ball Trail," "Rocky Mountain Highway," "Black and Yellow Trail," "Custer Battlefield Highway" and Pike's Peak, Ocean to Ocean Highway," served a useful purpose. They were marked and often maintained by private subscription. But the universal adoption of the Federal numbering system, following a similar numbering of practically all State roads, has done away with most of these romantic appellations. To be sure, a few still persist, notably the Lincoln Highway, Atlantic-Yellowstone-Pacific Highway, Custer Battlefield Highway, Pacific and the National Old Trails Road, but even these are also known by numbers.

Despite his recognition of the U.S. Route numbers, they were absent from the map accompanying the article. [Dickinson, Leon A., "Across the States," *The New York Times*, May 17, 1931, page 126]

D.A.R. Congress, 1930

When Mrs. Moss reported in April 1930 on the work of the National Old Trails Road Committee, she could not help but address the Thirty-Ninth Continental Congress with a note of triumph. She began:

This committee, known as the National Old Trails Road committee, functioned for many years past to achieve two outstanding endeavors: First, to secure State or National legislation creating an Ocean-to-Ocean National Highway; and second, to establish this highway as a National memorial to our worthy pioneer fathers and mothers of the past.

Triumphantly, this was reported as an accomplished fact last year, and a full, detailed report was given to Congress, April 1929. The erection of 12 monuments, beautiful in design and heroic in size, had been completed and dedicated as a National shrine, reaching across our land from ocean to ocean, and for a year or more the Daughters of the American Revolution, in different sections of this country, marched down the old sacred pathway, celebrating with song and pageantry the dedication of this National shrine. Conceded to be one of the most outstanding memorials ever erected by any organization, our beautiful Pioneer Mother continues to receive applause and commendation and nationwide publicity. Reports are received from time to time of extensive improvements being made to beautify the sites in these 12 States, respectively, and over 11 of the 12 monuments a strong floodlight shines brightly at night, that the belated traveler may recognize the monument and pause to note its beauty.

Lagonda chapter, of Springfield, Ohio, deserves first honorable mention for the very extensive and expansive improvements they have made, beautifying the site of the Pioneer Mother monument on the grounds of the State Masonic Home in Springfield. The plot was outlined by placing a serpentine wall of West Virginia brick around the small park; sodding and flowers, shrubbery and vines, were planted under the personal supervision of a well-known landscape gardener and artist, creating a very beautiful background and surroundings for the Ohio Madonna of the Trail. The cost of this improvement was approximately \$3,000.

At the Pennsylvania State Conference, last October, a resolution was adopted endorsing the proposed improvements of the site of the Pennsylvania Pioneer Mother monument, between Washington and Uniontown, in Washington County. This resolution called for the laying of concrete walks and steps and planting of trees and shrubbery and rambling roses, all forming a beautiful picture up on the hilltop, surrounding the monument – a view that can be seen for miles. This will cost approximately \$1,000.

Reports come in from the other States that certain improvements are being made to care for the different monument sites – trees, flowers, and shrubbery planted; and in every State the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution keeps a watchful eye and assumes guardianship over the monument located there. Accounts of interesting programs have been sent in; vesper services have been held at the feet of the Pioneer Mother; radio talks have been broadcast, from all sections of the country, telling about the monuments; requests for information and the loan of cuts for printing purposes have been received from historical societies and schools and authors; and very splendid newspaper articles have been sent to the National chairman from all over our own land and from foreign countries, one of the best coming from Shanghai, China, others from Philippines and from London, England.

All of this, together with the requests from ten other States that they, too, should be permitted to own a Pioneer Mother monument, creates within the hearts of your Old Trails Road Committee a feeling of gratification and satisfaction. As a matter of information, the Pioneer Mother monuments were designed as a memorial for the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, marking specifically the pioneer progress from East to West, and any deviation from the original plan would be a mistake. In due course of time, however, if the demand be justifiable, a further distinctive plan of marking other trails might be considered by your National committee.

Three thousand reprints of the National chairman of the Old Trails Road committee for Congress, 1929, were sent by mail to every State regent and National officer, and to every chapter chairman. Including the invitations sent out for the dedication of the Maryland monument, together with historical books on Old Trails, supplied by the National Old Trails Association [sic], as well as maps and circulars of information, over 4,000 pieces of mail passed directly through the hands of your National chairman of Old Trails this past year.

Following the 1929 continental congress, the name of the committee was changed to The National Old Trails with a goal to “continue the study of old trails and traces in a more general way in every section of the country,” rather than focus on a single route:

Years ago, when this committee was organized, every State society entered into the study of old trails enthusiastically, each and every State studying its own pioneer trails. Many boulders, granite shafts, tablets, and markers were erected in almost every State. When it was first decided to mark the National Old Trails Road, the pledge was made that when this memorial highway was completed we would take up the study of the old trails in every State again.

In going over the past records, your National chairman finds many interesting detailed reports of very splendid work accomplished. It is hoped that the Southern States will continue their work, started in the early days when, though remote from the National Old Trails Road, they searched for and marked the pioneer trails of the south that helped to open up our entire Country.

She cited the northwest’s “sacred old Oregon Trail,” which would be “celebrated with a centennial this year.” Similarly, the northeast’s chapters had been “very active, indeed, in this splendid work.” They had studied and marked “many of the old military roads and post roads.” The chapters from the midwestern States “have records to be very proud of. Missouri has never ceased her interest in the study of her old trails. Years have passed since these records were made.”

To encourage renewed interest in the old trails around the country, Mrs. Moss had offered “a prize of \$50 in gold for the best State map, to be accompanied by a paper or story of the old trails in that respective State. Each map was to have the old trails properly placed, and the monuments erected to date listed, and to have the names of these old pioneer trails also listed.” She formed a

committee to consider the 18 submissions, consisting of a historian, a writer, a lay member, and herself:

After due consideration, the committee . . . awarded the prize of \$50 in gold to Miss Katherine B. Rowley, State chairman of the National Old Trails committee for New York. Miss Rowley's paper and map received the highest number of points in the grading of the entries. She herself lives "by the side of the road," and her paper included historical facts and romantic sentiment told vividly.

Honorable mention must be accorded Mrs. Lillian Rice Brigham, of Denver, Colorado, whose very beautiful pictorial map of the State of Colorado was a work of art. The romance of the early history of the State of Colorado lends itself particularly to this beautiful method of portrayal.

She thanked all the participants "who demonstrated that the desire is still great within the hearts of the Daughters for definite knowledge of patriotic lore attached to the old trails of our land."

She emphasized:

One purpose we should all have in view, no matter whether in the north or the south or the east or the west – we want these old names firmly attached to these old routes in the minds of the people. The Lincoln Highway, the Dixie, the National Old Trail, the Appalachian Way, and many others of like character, are loved and cherished in the hearts of American men and women who have labored long and faithfully that these memorials might serve as an inspiration to future generations.

Mrs. Moss reported that erection of the national monuments had cost approximately \$50,000, "yet the actual money expended by the Daughters of the American Revolution chapters has been approximately \$13,000; of this, the sum of \$580.24 was left as a balance." This balance had been transferred into the current fund of the D.A.R.

On that point, she concluded her remarks:

Not all of the requests for photographs of the Pioneer Mother monument could be granted. The supply was exhausted, and this led to giving consideration to the matter of having a small statuette made, so that anyone desiring a replica of the Pioneer Mother could have one for the nominal sum of \$5. With the approval of the President General, details have been worked out by your National chairman with a company in Pittsburgh, and a model (a very beautiful piece of work) for this miniature statuette was submitted to the National Board, Saturday, April 12th. This model was accepted by the Board, and recommendation for its reproduction will come before this Congress for your approval. This miniature model is an exact replica of the monument itself, with one exception: On two sides of the pedestal base will be the names of the 12 States in which the monuments are located, instead of the local historical data which occupied the space on each one of the original monuments. (Applause.) [*Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Continental*

Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 1930, pages 477-480]

After the resolution was adopted unanimously, an order was placed for 1,000 statuettes.

Touring – a Different Perspective

On December 10, 1927, *The Baltimore Afro-American* published a travel article by a Negro writer named Joseph N. Hill. (At the time, the terms “Negro” and “colored” were in common usage. The term “Black” will be used here, but it did not come into common use until the 1960s.) During this era, Black motorists had less access to accommodations, and were subject to segregated facilities, suspicious police officers, and sundown laws (dating to the 1890s, they prohibited Blacks from being within their borders after sundown unless they were with a White employer).

Hill and his wife Louise began their trip in Baltimore, followed the National Old Trails Road, for the most part, to California, then continued on to Portland, Oregon, before returning to Baltimore – a trip of 12,000 miles:

We had but a faint idea of the many things that awaited us as we left Baltimore and Washington behind. Glad to be on our way we yet had a little misgiving over leaving well-known persons and places so far behind.

Within 60 miles, they had reached the Middletown and Cumberland Valleys of Maryland. “Fifteen times we ascended to the top of Blue Ridge summits rising to altitudes of from 2,000 to 2,900 feet above sea level.” Hill noted that the road barely touched Pennsylvania and West Virginia, but he commented on the people they had seen thus far:

As for the people: we found that they followed the same occupations that most of us followed. Some were farmers, many had black faces of mine workers, while still others refused to be classified. Negroes were not numerous and often seemed to be filling the menial positions. At least they seemed to be insignificant in the world of great economic factors.

They stopped at Wilberforce University, a historically Black college in Wilberforce, Ohio, just east of Dayton. It was, Hill wrote, a “beautiful campus with several beautiful buildings. Considerable support from the state of Ohio, a large student enrollment, and all this in the hands of somebody who insists on squabbling, firing men from office or otherwise giving evidence of mismanagement.” While at the university, Hill and his wife picked up two women from the Baltimore-Washington area, Miss Annie Williamson and Miss Lucinda Cook.

Continuing their journey, the four reached Indianapolis, “the city with an excellent new high school for our youths and with another addition to the Poro College enterprises. (Annie Turbo Malone, a self-made Black millionaire based in St. Louis, founded businesses and the related college in St. Louis to help Black women. They learned hair and beauty work with the hair care

and beauty products of the Poro System for merchandising and marketing. [Johnson, Erick, “Who Was Annie Malone?” *Chicago Crusader*, April 24, 2018]

In St. Louis, they saw evidence “of the disastrous Mississippi flood” as they entered the city:

We would not dare leave the city, however, without visiting Poro College. This institution is a distinct credit to the race. Well equipped, beautifully appointed, quiet and perfectly managed and oh – how clean and comfortable.

Hill also commented on another St. Louis institution for the Black community:

By the way, there is a Peoples’ Finance Corporation in St. Louis, Mo. that is doing a great business as the people of Baltimore and Washington have not yet dreamed of doing. They handle loans of various descriptions and handle them speedily, efficiently and apparently safely.

Professor Candacy Taylor, in her history of the *Green Book* guides for Black travelers, wrote about the Peoples’ Finance Corporation:

For those who couldn’t afford to purchase a car outright, it was nearly impossible to get credit or financing from a bank. Some black industrial workers in need of financing went to the People’s Finance Corporation. Created in 1922, it was the first bank of its kind to loan money to black people who had little collateral. The People’s Finance Corporation started in St. Louis and then spread to Cleveland, Detroit, Newark, and Kansas City. [Taylor, Candacy, *Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America*, Abrams Press, 2020, page 39]

The next big city Hill commented on was Kansas City:

Before long we were leaving the extremely progressive and hospitable people of Kansas City, leaving the paved road and actually facing the true West. Not until you have left the good road behind and have faced the possibility of getting stuck in the mud roads of Kansas or of being almost imbedded in the soft newly scooped up earth can you say that you have tasted the real tourist fare of the middle West.

We spent our first uncomfortable night of the trip in the hovel of a good-hearted fellow-being in the little town of Oakley, Kansas.

A Black tourist passed many accommodations that accepted only White customers. The tourist, therefore, often had to rely on the good will of Black residents of the towns they passed through.

Hill and his companions speeded on to reach Denver by noon. Hill wrote that he would never forget the thrill of seeing the massive peaks of the Rockies:

We must have seen most of these peaks, for we climbed to the tops of mountains, descended to the bottom of canyons, rolled over the foothills, skirted the surrounding country for several days. This is the scenic state of America. For two days we drove almost continually in second gear. Climbing or descending the process was slow but never painful.

He thought the city dwellers who see these roads would come to hate cities.

After seeing Mesa Verde National Park, they “finally tore ourselves away from Colorado, passed through the poor Indian reservations of New Mexico. Drove for seventy-five miles without seeing any sign of habitation and stopped for the night at Gallup, New Mexico.”

At this point in the narrative, the subhead in Hill’s article asked:

Prejudice?

Prejudice? Not so much as we had left in Baltimore and Washington. Yes, even Arizona was kind – no I should say civil. And we checked that fact in our little memorandum book. We saw more Mexicans, half-breeds and Indians in New Mexico than any other nationality. In Arizona we were entertained at the homes of members of our own race who opened their doors from the genuine friendliness of people who know no cast, who know no discrimination within the race, who know and care only about being human. I could but pause to make comparisons with the folk back East.

In Arizona, the travelers experienced their first desert experience and two mild sandstorms, but also “the mighty climax – the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.” For Hill, the experience was almost spiritual, more so than “all of the gospel sermons put together.”

From Arizona, they crossed the Mojave desert “and let us rest in sunny California.” They enjoyed the change in scenery. The roadside contained every type of fruit, flowers by the acre, and palm trees waving in the wind:

Drive from the mountain to the desert in a few minutes or, if you prefer, go to the Pacific ocean, or step over to the interesting Catalina island. Better yet, if your taste runs in that direction, drive down millionaires’ row in beautiful Pasadena. Ask what you will and it will be given unto you provided – you have the money.

Visit the poor, visit the McPherson temple, visit the Negro churches, visit the thousands of Movie houses and see the magnificent estates of Harold Lloyd, Mary Pickford or Charles Chaplin.

Hill provided few details of their trip to Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; and Vancouver, British Columbia, but enjoyed stops in Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks. On the way

east, they crossed Nebraska into Missouri and then retraced their trip on the National Old Trails Road:

We met many former Baltimore and Washington people in the West. We noticed greater business activity among the people of the race. One man said that the people out there were more honest. The enterprises are new and are therefore proof of an added progressive movement among the people. Undoubtedly, the people are inclined to be more friendly, this can be said even of white Southerners who are often forced into friendliness by the loneliness and by the experiences of travel.

Hill summarized their experience:

The mountains, deserts, famous knife edge roads, the beautiful national forests, parks and dreamy valleys lift one's self, makes one feel the greatness of the world, the smallness of one's self. Here is a great tonic and I recommend it to any one who has not departed from the East. Go to the West and learn of things. [Hill, Joseph N., "To the Pacific Coast And Back Again," *The Baltimore Afro-American*, December 10, 1927, page 16]

As recounted in the article, Hill, his wife, and their two companions had a relatively smooth trip, unmarred by the prejudice, segregation, and fear that often accompanied Black travel well into the 1960s. He did not mention the recent change from names to numbers, but at least part of their trip, in New Mexico, Arizona, and California, along the National Old Trails Road was on the newly numbered U.S. Route 66.

Route 66 had not yet become America's best known highway; it was just another narrow, two-lane partially paved road, subject to the prejudices of its time. Over the decades, however, it was one of the routes for those fleeing the Dust Bowl who were headed for California; featured for that reason in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), which called it the "Mother Road, the road of flight"; depicted in the 1940 movie adaptation of the novel; prompted the song "Route 66" by Bobby Troup ("Take the highway that's the best"), sung initially by the King Cole Trio in 1946 and subsequently by hundreds of other singers and bands; and the CBS television series *Route 66* (1960-1964) about two men who drove a Corvette from town to town having dramatic adventures; and syndication of the show to a worldwide audience.

By the mid-1980s, AASHO's successor, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), had approved requests from State transportation officials in California and Illinois to remove the Route 66 designation for their bypassed portions of the highway. Route 66 was officially reduced to 1,162 miles.

After the opening of Interstate Route 40 in the vicinity of Williams, Arizona, in 1984, Route 66 was fully bypassed by highways on the Interstate System. On June 27, 1985, AASHTO approved a request by highway officials from the remaining Route 66 States (Arizona, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) to remove "66" from the network. An AASHTO press release began, "Route 66 – the celebrated highway of song and screen – met its final

demise today, wiped off official U.S. road maps by the action of the Executive Committee of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.”

Television, newspapers, and magazines lamented the demise of the famous old highway, sparking a nostalgia for the old road and its colorful roadside attractions, motels, restaurants, and even billboards. Officials in some States acted to assign “Historic Route 66” or similar names to the remaining segments. Many books have been released on the highway, and booster associations formed in the Route 66 States to preserve the road, its history, and its roadside, and to encourage travel on what remained of the old road. The Pixar animated film *Cars* (1986) was based on how the opening of the Interstate highway near Williams threatened the survival of the bypassed businesses and towns on the old road.

Professor Taylor, in her history of *The Green Book*, included a chapter on Route 66 titled:

The Roots of Route 66: Why Black People Aren’t Nostalgic
About the Nation’s Favorite Highway

She wrote that for White motorists, “No other road trip so thoroughly symbolized freedom, prosperity, and the pursuit of the American Dream as a trip along Route 66.” The experience, however, “was not the same for everyone”:

When the *Green Book* was first published [1936] roughly half of the eighty-nine counties on Route 66 were sundown counties. By the 1950s, about 35 percent of the counties on Route 66 didn’t allow black motorists after six PM. And although the road was open to black travelers, it was unknown where they could find a meal or a place to rest because six of the eight states that lined the Mother Road as far west as Arizona had segregation laws

The most insidious reality black motorists had to accept when traveling along Route 66 was that there was virtually no way for them to know what was coming up around the bend. And there was no such thing as a list of sundown towns to assist them in planning their itinerary.

In 1930, six Route 66 towns in New Mexico were sundown towns, as were 10 towns in Arizona, and 14 in California. [Norris, Frank, “Courageous Motorists: African American Pioneers on Route 66,” *New Mexico Historical Review*, July 1, 2015, page 296]

The Green Book alerted Black motorists to sundown towns along the road, but also businesses, restaurants, hotels and other facilities that served Black people either exclusively or in addition to White people.

Although Professor Taylor was writing about a period long after the National Old Trails Road had lost its identity as a single, connected route, her observations provide some idea of how Black motorists experienced the old road.

In the three western States of the National Old Trails Road, now Route 66, New Mexico towns along Route 66 in 1930 had only 653 businesses catering to Black travelers, but mostly in Albuquerque (441), Gallup (118), and Santa Fe (85). Arizona had even fewer, namely 177, with most in Flagstaff (100) and Winslow (65), and several towns had none (Seligman, Peach Springs, and Kingman).

Demographics played a role in the reception of Black motorists. Referring to a later period in the history of the road, Frank Norris observed in an article on the Black experience of Route 66:

Between Chicago and the Texas Panhandle, the racial composition of the passing landscape held a white-black dichotomy. In each of the five intervening states, whites comprised a strong majority of the population, and blacks were the principal minority racial group. West of the Texas-New Mexico line, however, this racial pattern dissolved and gave way to a more complex, multicultural racial composite. In both New Mexico and Arizona, blacks ranked a distant fourth behind white, Hispanics, and American Indians, and they comprised less than 4 percent of the population, a far smaller proportion than in the more eastern states.

Within New Mexico, the reception of blacks by the majority population varied by location. Conditions in southern and eastern New Mexico were similar to those in Texas, while Santa Fe was reputedly more tolerant. Albuquerque was somewhere in between

In Arizona, as in New Mexico, blacks ranked fourth demographically and encountered similar discrimination in public accommodations Along the Route 66 corridor in northern Arizona, blacks numbered less than 2 percent of all residents. Many blacks who lived there worked either in the Flagstaff-area lumber industry or for the railroad in Winslow. Discrimination was in full force, however, all along the way. In both Flagstaff and Winslow, for example, blacks and Hispanics had to sit upstairs at movie theaters, and the Flagstaff sheriff prevented non-whites from patronizing restaurants north of Highway 66, even though there were no specific ordinances enforcing segregation.

These observations are for a later period, but similar concerns affected travelers earlier on the National Old Trails Road/Route 66.

California was a different matter. In 1930, towns along Route 66 had 43,304 businesses catering to Blacks, with the largest number in Los Angeles (38,894). Dating to the 1890s, thousands of Blacks lived in the Los Angeles area. An 1897 law guaranteed equal access to public accommodations, and that law was strengthened in 1919 and 1923. However, “its enforcement was negligible.” [Norris, pages 297-298]

Professor Taylor, writing about the *Green Book* period, reported that only a few hotels served Blacks. Motels along Route 66 from the Texas border to Albuquerque consistently refused

service. Outside Albuquerque, Black travelers would next find accommodations 130 miles away in Gallup; with another gap of 185 miles to Flagstaff. “Flagstaff didn’t have any Green Book listings until 1957.”

Overall, travel was challenging regardless of accommodations, as Professor Taylor wrote:

Driving in the southwestern United States was especially challenging for black motorists because they had to travel through triple-digit desert heat, and the threat of car trouble was always looming. If the car overheated, it was unlikely they would find help, as most of the towns didn’t offer tow service for black people. If they found themselves stranded on the side of the road, they had to pray that someone would give them a ride. It was also doubtful that they would find assistance from other black people, as the black residents constituted only 4 percent of the population, after whites, Mexicans, and Native Americans.

It’s a mystery how black travelers made the trip through this region before the mid-1950s; there was only one Gallup tourist home listed in the 1939 *Green Book*, for example. And it wasn’t until 1947 that the *Green Book* had listings for Albuquerque, which was more than six hundred miles from the next *Green Book* site, in Victorville, California, on the western edge of the Mojave Desert.

We can assume that most black families survived because they were prepared, traveling with ample food and camping along the way.

In California, Murray’s Dude Ranch near Victorville (a sundown town) was the first *Green Book* site a Black motorist would encounter. (It was not open during the life of the National Old Trails Road.) Seventy miles east, the motorist came to Pasadena. “This wasn’t a good place to stop: There were no *Green Book* sites, and some of the pools in Pasadena allowed black people to swim only on ‘International Day,’ which was usually on a Wednesday, the day before the pool was cleaned.”

Regarding the *Green Book* era, Professor Taylor wrote that “the experience most black motorists had on Route 66 couldn’t have been more different from that of the average white American.” She added:

And it’s not that Route 66 was more dangerous than other trans-American road trips. What makes Route 66 different is the branding associated with it. The “Mother Road” lives on in the hearts of tourists as a beacon of American travel. It became a global icon and is still the most celebrated highway of its time. [Taylor, pages 200-228]

In the heyday of the National Old Trails Road during the 1910s and 1920s, the limited infrastructure for Black travelers did not exist. The numerous articles quoted about interstate travel during this period were written by White writers for White audiences. Unlike Hill’s article in *The Baltimore Afro-American*, the writers did not feel a need to discuss prejudice – their White readers need not worry about that.

Fighting for the N.O.T.

The National Old Trails Road Association had not given up hope of recognition. On

September 30, 1931, A. D. Hosterman of Springfield, Ohio, wrote to BPR:

Recent conferences have been held and plans under way for developing increased interest in the National Old Trails Road running as you know from Washington and Baltimore to Los Angeles through the 12 states.

I have been urged to accept and have accepted the Executive Vice Presidency of the Association and plans are being considered for marking the N.O.T.R. uniformly across America and to also develop [sic] plans for publicity and developing not only greater interest locally in the historic highway but also to encourage tourists passing over the National Old Trails Road to see the beauties and the historic values every where to be found.

I will appreciate hearing from you and receive any information or publicity available that your department can furnish or you suggest is available that will be helpful in shaping the new plans.

Among other things I will be glad to have knowledge as to what plans of marking other national highways have been adopted and presume there are publications or organizations that supply this.

Appreciating a reply with any suggestions you may see fit to make now or at any time.

Herbert S. Fairbank, signing as "Highway Engineer," replied on October 7, 1931. At the time, he was Chief of the Division of Information, a position he held from creation of the division in 1927 until 1943. [*America's Highways 1776-1976*, page 181]:

We are in receipt of your letter of September 30 requesting information which will be helpful in shaping plans for the National Old Trails Road and also information concerning the plans for marking other national highways. Under separate cover we are forwarding typical examples of press releases which we have issued in order to acquaint the public with certain of our through roads.

With regard to your request for information concerning plans for marking highways, the Federal Government has not recognized any of the named highways sponsored by unofficial highway or trail organizations and to do so might establish a precedent under which it would be difficult to control recognition of highways or routes having much less significance or historic interest than the National Old Trails Road. In fact it was to remove the confusion that arose from unofficial and unrestrained marking of some of the

main highways that the American Association of State Highway Officials adopted a system of interstate and transcontinental highways such as might be appropriately numbered and thereby facilitate interstate traffic. These routes are known as United States Highways. A current map of the United States numbered highway system and an illustration of the standard marker are being forwarded to you. The State name changes as required but the number remains constant throughout the route.

Notations in the file indicate that BPR sent Hosterman, under separate cover, a U.S. numbered highway map, a picture of the U.S. highway marker, and BPR press releases on U.S. Routes 30, 40, 80, and 90. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

After receiving Fairbank's reply, Hosterman wrote again to BPR on October 12, 1931:

I have just received the information for the press you have kindly sent covering the two southern coast to coast highways also U.S. Highway #30 and U.S. Route 40.

Has there similar information been published as yet regarding what for a long time has been known as the National Old Trails Road which is a direct and no doubt the shortest route between Washington, Baltimore and Los Angeles, paved practically all the way? This as must be admitted, is the most historic coast to coast highway although it travels several highways of different numbers west of Kansas City where it leaves Route 40.

As possibly you know, there has for some 20 years been relations and officials connected with the N.O.T.R. Association in all of the 12 states through which the National Old Trails passes. In each of the 12 states, along this route, as no doubt you already know, the National D.A.R. placed . . . beautiful Madonna of the Trail monuments.

He explained that plans were underway for marking the road with distinctive mileposts.

I will appreciate hearing from you as promptly as possible what, if anything, has been published by the government or what has been contemplated in this direction.

I may say, representatives of the group interested in the National Old Trails in the various states will soon meet in this city for further conference and handling the plans for the future and I will be glad to hear from you as promptly as possible as this may be very helpful to us in further planning.

Fairbank replied on October 17:

We are in receipt of your letter of October 12, relative to plans for marking and issuing information concerning the National Old Trails route. In our previous letter we indicated that this bureau and the American Association of State Highway Officials, which represents the various State highway departments, have agreed upon a system of United States highways and adopted standard signs for the marking of the roads. This numbered

system is now known and accepted throughout the entire country. We do not know of any agency concerned with route designation or supplying touring information which is not using the system of route numbers and the signs have been adopted by all classes of road officials. In view of the success of this plan we are not considering any plans for additional systems of route designation or marking.

With regard to your request for publications, we assume that you refer to publications dealing with plans for marking and route development. All of our publications of this character deal with the United States System of Highways such as were sent in response to your former letter. We will be glad to supply additional information concerning the standard signs and route descriptions, if so desire. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Beginning in 1927, BPR issued news releases describing the main U.S. numbered highways. The releases, including line maps of the routes and photographs, were reprinted by newspapers and magazines. One dated April 29, 1928, was titled:

United States Route 40 –
Great East and West Motorway –
Traces Paths of the Pioneers.

It began:

Westward, in the path of empire, along routes traversed by the pioneers of American from the Atlantic to the Golden Gate, and including, in the Ohio Valley, the longest stretch of practically straight road in the country, United State route 40 crosses 14 States, and offers to the transcontinental motor tourist a panorama of the mid section of the country that epitomizes the westward expansion of the Nation from colonial days to the present.

The news release emphasized the history of the areas the road passed through, including the history of the National Road from Maryland to St. Louis.

On June 21, 1931, BPR released:

U.S. Highway No. 66 From Chicago

It began:

United States Highway No. 66 is an all-year round route from Chicago to Pasadena, California. Several excellent thoroughfares connect Pasadena with Los Angeles, 11 miles to the west. United States Highway 66 is 2,2430 miles long and for practically the entire distance is an improve highway. Almost half the distance is hard surfaced; the remainder is improved with low-type surfaces such as gravel and crushed stone and oiled gravel, according to the Bureau of Public Roads, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Although Fairbank, in his two replies, tried, diplomatically, to discourage Hosterman, these press releases, which covered much of the National Old Trails Road, provided information that would have been of interest to anyone attempting to publicize the old named trail.

On September 15, 1932, U.S. Representative Clifford R. Hope of Kansas wrote to Chief MacDonald:

The Secretary of the Garden City Chamber of Commerce has just been in to inquire of me as to whether or not there has ever been any provision under any of the highway laws or appropriations made thereunder to mark the National Old Trails Highways. I know of no such provision but thought that possibly something might have been done in that connection.

The occasion for making the inquiry at the present time is that an organization known as the National Old Trails Road Association is soliciting funds from chambers of commerce along the old Santa Fe Trail for the purpose of erecting markers along the route of this highway. As far as Kansas is concerned the route which they are marking does not conform exactly with any federally designated highway or even state designated highway at the present time and my understanding is that these markers are to be erected as near as possible along the line of the old trail.

I will appreciate it very much if you will advise me as to whether the federal government has ever made any provision along this line.

Acting Chief P. St. J. Wilson replied on September 21:

Referring to your letter of September 15, I know of no provision in the Federal statutes under which distinctive markers could be erected on the National Old Trails Highways. In fact, no authority for official recognition of named highways reposes in the Federal government at present.

Recognizing the need of marking the main interstate and transcontinental highways to simplify tourist traffic, the American Association of State Highway Officials in 1926 adopted a series of warning signs and highway markers, the latter carrying an identifying number. These signs were approved as standards by the Secretary of Agriculture and upon request from the State highway departments Federal aid may be extended to the proportionate costs of purchase and erection on the same basis as any other item in a Federal aid agreement.

The enclosed copy of the manual and specifications carrying illustrations of the signs and markers in this series may be of interest to the Secretary of the Garden City Chamber of Commerce.

We are also enclosing a map showing the system of interstate and transcontinental highways as adopted by the American Association of State Highway Officials upon

which the numbered markers are erected. The caution and warning signs obviously have a more extended application and are in general use. [National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

Monuments on the Move

The D.A.R. and the National Old Trails Road Association under Harry S. Truman went to a great deal of trouble to find ideal locations for the Madonna of the Trail monuments. As Professor Cynthia Culver Prescott explained at <https://pioneermonuments.net/highlighted-monuments/madonna-of-the-trail/>, the selections were based on such criteria as:

- Town located on designated National Old Trails route;
- Local business community supported National Old Trails effort;
- Town meets population threshold
- Town has D.A.R. chapter
- Town's D.A.R. chapter contributed to the statue program

These criteria sometimes were ignored due to local circumstances. As discussed, some of the locations, such as in Arizona, violated at least one of the criteria, regarding a town with a D.A.R. chapter, while in New Mexico, objections from the arts community in Santa Fe prompted selection of what was likely a second choice, Albuquerque.

Regardless of the basis for the 12 locations, Mrs. Moss, Judge Truman, and the others involved in the selection process had every reason to think the monuments would remain in place for all time.

As Professor Prescott pointed out:

Nearly a century has passed since these statues were first erected across the United States. In some cases, the surrounding area has changed dramatically, while in others it remains relatively unchanged. Five (Bethesda, Maryland; Springfield, Ohio; Vandalia, Illinois; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Springerville, Arizona) have been relocated to accommodate urban growth Most of the Madonna statues have been restored at least once. Because these were local restoration efforts done at different times and utilizing different methods, the resulting appearance of the statues (particularly the color) differ noticeably.

Popular attitudes toward the statues are mixed. Eight of the twelve statues have been rededicated since the nation's 1976 Bicentennial helped to spur interest in pioneer statues. Several are now featured prominently in local tourism advertising campaigns. But others have been pushed aside to accommodate road construction, or have been forgotten by local residents.

Her Website, Pioneer Monuments in the American West, provided information on the status of the monuments.

Springfield, Ohio

Following its dedication on July 4, 1928, the Madonna of the Trail remained in its original location until 1956-1957 when it was moved a quarter-mile west on U.S. 40 to the south end of Snyder's park to make room for a highway interchange. The monument was rededicated in 1988 and 2003; it was restored in 2011. That same year it was moved again, 2 miles east:

Once pushed aside to accommodate highway expansion, in 2011 the Ohio *Madonna* statue was moved into the heart of downtown Springfield as part of a downtown revitalization program. It became the centerpiece of the new \$2.5 million National Road Commons, developed by the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce's Community Improvement Corporation.

Vandalia, Illinois

The monument was moved a short distance to a corner site. It was rededicated on November 4, 1978, and restored in 1990. According to the city's Website, the monument originally "stood at the south entrance of the former Old State Capitol. For aesthetic reasons, the state moved the monument to its present location in 1939." <https://www.vandaliaillinois.com/for-visitors/explore-vandalia/madonna-of-the-trail/>

Albuquerque, New Mexico

At the time of the dedication, the monument was placed in McClellan Park facing the Old Santa Fe Trail section of the National Old Trails Roads. The monument was moved 100 feet in 1998 to accommodate construction of a new courthouse. That same year, it was restored and rededicated on November 27, 1998.

According to the National Park Service:

It was placed in the city's McClellan Park, facing Route 66, the main highway through the city. The statue looked out on Route 66 when a new alignment moved the highway south to Central Avenue.

In 1996, the sculpture was in need of cleaning and repair. Restoration work included removal of the soot and dirt and repair of holes and gouges with mortar. Following its restoration, the statue was relocated approximately 100 feet north of its old location, due to the construction of a new Federal courthouse on the block. The monument was rededicated at its new site on September 27, 1998.

Although moved a short distance, the monument continues to be oriented toward the 1926-1937 era roadbed of Route 66 through the city. The Albuquerque monument retains its integrity of setting, design, and feeling. The only other Madonna that has retained its integrity is the one in Upland, California. The Albuquerque Madonna of the

Trail was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. The Albuquerque statue remains a local landmark, a physical remnant of 1920s ideas about the connection between trans-Atlantic automobile travel and western settlement, and a tribute to the women who helped move the country westward along its earliest roadbeds.
https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/route66/madonna_of_the_trail_albuquerque.html

Springerville, Arizona

The monument was dedicated on September 29, 1928. Professor Prescott stated:

Circa 1957: moved to 100 yards east to accommodate the town's first traffic light;
1987: moved from North to South side of Main Street . . . Today it stands on a small island squeezed between a shopping center parking lot and a McDonald's fast food restaurant.

As Judge Truman had explained, other cities in Arizona had a stronger claim to the monument than Springerville based on the stated criteria. However, the town prevailed because of its longstanding strong support for the National Old Trails Road. As Professor Prescott explained:

Springerville did not fit the established site criteria, because the nearest DAR chapter was 150 miles away in Flagstaff. Some believe that the Arizona statue was "stolen" from Kingman, which met the selection criteria (*Arizona Capitol Times*, 10/30/2009).

Bethesda, Maryland

The dedication ceremony for the Madonna of the Trail took place on April 19, 1929, in a tree lined setting before a crowd of 5,000 people.

A U.S. Post Office building was erected during the New Deal, opening in 1938 to the monument's left. (In 2012, the post office moved out of the building, leaving it for commercial uses.) As development began to surround the monument, it had to be moved to accommodate a road widening and construction of the Bethesda Metro Station. A crane lifted the monument, gently, onto a flatbed truck that took it to the police academy in Gaithersburg, Maryland, "for its own safety." State Senator Howard A. Denis said, "I miss it. It's one of the closest things we have to a county treasure." When construction was completed 3 years later in 1986, the monument could not be returned to its original location. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority had built a Metro elevator shaft at the monument's original location. The monument was moved to a new location with the Post Office building on its right and a new Hyatt Regency Hotel on its left.

The rambles of the 5-ton monument were not over. On December 11, 2004, *The Washington Post* reported on "Listing Madonna Rescued in Bethesda":

This week, she began to lean a little forward and a little to her left, in ways that” prompted comparisons to a tall building in Italy. It seemed as if the Madonna might topple over

So the statue’s owner, the Maryland Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, had her hauled from her sidewalk perch and into storage yesterday, acting in concert with a phalanx of county and state officials and numerous representatives of utilities and public agencies.

Montgomery County’s Fire and Rescue Service set up an “Incident Command Port,” leaving passersby to wonder if a calamity had occurred. Police stopped southbound traffic on heavily used Wisconsin Avenue to allow a crane to lift the monument. The problem was a water main break in front of the Hyatt hotel. The *Post* summarized the monument’s history, quoting Faith Stuart Libelo, a retired high school physics teacher and chair of the Maryland D.A.R. committee:

In 1986, to accommodate the widening of Montgomery Lane, Bethesda’s Madonna was moved from one end of the post office to another. In both cases, she looked east, Libello said, so passersby would see her face, not her backside.

The crane set the monument down, gently as usual, on a flatbed truck. For once, as the *Post* observed, “she faced west.”

[“Pioneer on the Move? No So Fast,” *The Washington Post*, April 20, 2001; “Madonna of the Trail Statue at 7400 Wisconsin Avenue,” Bethesda Historical Society; Barr, Cameron W., “Listing Madonna Rescued in Bethesda,” *The Washington Post*, December 11, 2004]

Although the monument had found its final location (as of this date), it was not for lack of interest in moving it. In 2001, officials in Cumberland, Maryland, argued that the monument should be moved to their city, the starting point for the historic Cumberland Road. Instead of sitting in the midst of Bethesda’s urban landscape where no one knew why it was there and lacked time to find out, in Cumberland it would symbolize the city’s transportation history.

The president of the Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, Jack Alexander, objected. “Not in my lifetime. You are welcome to come look at it, but you’re not leaving with our Madonna.” It stayed in Bethesda.

In 2018, a group of Bethesda residents proposed to move the monument from its relative obscurity to the Farm Women’s Co-operative Market on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue. Advocates for the Bethesda location overcame the proposal, remaining in front of the former post office and hotel.

The Bethesda monument remains between the former post office and hotel.

One problem facing the statues in some cases is that they are part of the infrastructure that residents ignore. To counter that reality, the Indiana D.A.R. rededicated the Richmond monument, still in its original location along U.S. 40 in Glen Miller Park, on its 75th anniversary in 2003. An article in Richmond's *Palladium-Item* by Rachel E. Sheeley, explained:

For 75 years, the Madonna of the Trail has watched over the National Road in Richmond. From her pedestal at the entrance to Glen Miller Park, the statue has seen automobiles evolve, trees rise and fall and families come and go.

In honor of its 75th anniversary, the monument will be rededicated at 3:30 p.m. Saturday by the Indiana Daughters of the American Revolution, which will be having their state meeting that day at First English Lutheran Church in Richmond

DAR members from many of the state's 94 chapters are expected to attend the rededication.

Marianne Hughes of Greensboro is coordinating the event. She said the DAR wanted to mark the 75th anniversary and having the state meeting in Richmond made it convenient to do it in August rather than wait until October for the actual dedication date

"It's been there a long time, and through the years, people forget about it," Hughes said

Hughes said the statue also will need attention in the near future. In 1988, the DAR spent about \$12,000 to restore the monument but it is time again for more conservation improvements to battle the effects of acid rain and other weathering. State DAR dues go into a fund for the Madonna's care.

The Ohio Madonna of the Trail in Springfield recently was restored, and Hughes said the Indiana DAR is contacting the people who did that restoration to learn more about what is needed for the Madonna in Richmond.

The rededication was to include the singing of the National Anthem, a speech on the history of the Madonna of the Trail by Indiana DAR State historian Patricia Fitzgerald Jaracz, speeches by local politicians, and the presentation of a wreath:

Since plans for the ceremony have been announced, Hughes has heard personal memories of the Madonna from several people.

"One lady said before (Interstate) 70, the family would drive by and the dad would say, "Wave at grandma." It took a longtime to figure she wasn't really grandma," Hughes said.

Although the Madonna is a familiar figure to area residents, there are travelers who make seeing her a destination.

“We get calls regularly about where the exact location is and how to get to it,” said Stan Lambert, Richmond Parks & Recreation director, “People regularly stop in the park and want information. Most of the people are out-of-state people.

“We just feel really fortunate that we can host this event. It’s another national tie of the community that’s significant,” Lambert said. [Sheeley, Rachel E., “Madonna Rededicated,” Palladium Item, page B4, August 5, 2003]

Although the National Park Service considers the monument in Uplands, California, to retain its integrity, it has had its share of adventure. Like several others, it was moved slightly to accommodate road construction.

Route 66 Times reports:

This statue has seen some tough times, having been knocked down by a falling tree in 1957 and years later being damaged so significantly by an earthquake in 1991 that she had to be taken down and restored. The restoration went well and she's back on the pedestal where she belongs paying tribute to the courage, strength, and resilience of women everywhere. <http://route66times.com/l/ca/upland-madonna-of-the-trails.htm>

Professor Prescott added:

In contrast to most of the other DAR statues, Upland’s *Madonna* features prominently in local popular culture. In 1930, a historical pageant made a pilgrimage to the statue. In 2014 it served as the starting and ending point for a protest demanding more crossing guards for a nearby school. And local columnist John Weeks mocked a parental warning issued for a nearby Shakespeare festival by encouraging readers to imagine the Madonna of the Trail nude.

Historic Old Trails – D.A.R. 1931

On April 20-25, 1931, the D.A.R. assembled in Washington for the Fortieth Continental Congress. On the third day, Mrs. Moss reported on the activities of the National Old Trails Road Committee. Following the dedication of the final Madonna of the Trail monument in Bethesda, Maryland, the committee had broadened its scope to historic trails around the country.

Mrs. Moss began by commenting on “The Covered Wagon Centennial” promoted by the Oregon Trail Memorial Association. She observed, however, that “in the east, in the north, and all through the southern part of the country, interest has been revived in the study of old roads, old routes, and old trails, dating back to the early pioneer times.”

The committee's plan for the previous year "was to follow the program of former years, the chapters in each state to study the old trails that lie within the border of their states respectively":

Each state was asked to make a search for old maps of value, historical sketches, and fine papers containing valuable data that had been stored away for safe-keeping since before the World War. Chapters were asked to bring these forth and renew the fascinating study of the old trails. Each state chairman was requested to do her very best to send in a complete list, first, the names of each one of the old pioneer trails in her own state, second, a list of markers erected by Daughters of the American Revolution chapters on these aforesaid trails, where these markers are located, and third, the historical data recorded on each marker. Response has been general, and through the national vice-chairmen very splendid reports have been received from each division.

During a lengthy discussion of the results from around the country, she mentioned the States along the National Old Trails Road that had the Madonna of the Trail monuments. For example, during her discussion of the old trails in California, she said:

California has one of the Madonna of the Trail monuments, located on Euclid Drive, in Upland. It is in a beautiful location, overtopped with a canopy of branches of the lovely pepper trees.

The pioneers of California have never had a tribute paid to them such as the organizations of Upland, sponsored last September, when they staged a "Pioneer Pilgrimage" to the statue, "The Madonna of the Trail," erected to the memory of the pioneer mothers who followed the Santa Fe Trail into California. The two local chapters, the San Antonio chapter of Upland, and the Los Serranos chapter, Ontario, took the leading part in the program. John Stevens McGroarty, California historian, gave the tribute to the men and women who made California the great empire of the west. All the modes of transportation in California's many eras were portrayed, from the weary Padre, the horsemen, the ox team, the pony express, the mud-wagon, the Butterfield stage, the Mormon riders, the steam train, the automobile, and the airplane. The men allowed their whiskers to grow and took on the rough appearance of pioneers. Prizes were given for the greatest growth of whiskers. The women of Upland and Ontario donned the garb of the days of '49 and appeared on the streets with quaint costumes, much to the astonishment of the tourists.

After the morning parade, everyone joined in the family picnic, and in the afternoon the pioneers gathered for the concerts of the old fiddlers, as well as several contests, such as "horse-shoe flinging," etc. The Pioneer Pilgrimage Day honoring the Madonna of the Trail will be celebrated in September each year, in Upland.

After summarizing the activities of the State chapters, Mrs. Moss turned back to the Madonna of the Trail:

A resolution was unanimously adopted at Congress, April, 1930, to have a small replica of the Pioneer Mother monument made in the form of a statuette. An order for 1000 was given to a firm in Pittsburgh. Owing to several delays, those statuettes were not placed on sale until after December 1. They are to be sold for \$5 apiece. These statuettes are perfect replicas of the Madonna of the Trail, as nearly perfect a copy as anything so small (8½ inches) can possibly be of a monument that stands 18 feet above the ground. The miniature model is the work of a Chicago sculptor, and is without a doubt a little gem and a work of art. Order blanks have been sent to each state chairman to distribute to her chapters, and 25,000 order blanks have been sent out through the organization. The statuettes are in burnished antique silver finish, and may be used on the table as ornaments, or may be used in the pair as book-ends. One of these statuettes should be purchased by each chapter.

Referring to this Pioneer Mother memorial, your national chairman has had many requests for printed material and information regarding these monuments. The request for loan of cuts for printing purposes have been received from Historical Societies, schools, authors, and a number of magazines have written very fine articles. Of very recent date, April 1, the Bell Telephone Company issued their "Bell Telephone News." The cover carries a picture of the Madonna of the Trail, of Illinois. This is erected in Vandalia, Illinois, in front of the Old Court House, where Abraham Lincoln at one time held court. The original plan of placing these Pioneer Mother monuments on the Ocean to Ocean Highway, marking specifically the pioneer progress from east to west, will be strictly adhered to. Many requests from other states have come to the national chairman for a Pioneer Mother monument, but any deviation from the original plan would be a serious mistake, and these 12 monuments marking the National Old Trails Road must stand as the sacred shrine erected to the pioneer mother of the past. In due course of time, however, if the demand is justifiable, a further distinctive plan of marking these other trails might be considered by your national committee.

Your national chairman . . . gave a number of addresses over the radio on Old Trails, and through the courtesy of the National Old Trails Road Association, she was able to send out, upon request, 75 copies of the book, "The National Old Trails Road," by Judge Lowe. One circular letter was sent out the first of October to state chairmen and National Officers, and over 1,000 letters were written during this year. A number of maps were sent upon request, and 25,000 order blanks for the Madonna of the Trail statuettes were sent out in December, from the house of the national chairman. (Applause.)
[*Proceedings of the Fortieth Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 1931, pages 216-227*]

The following year, Mrs. Moss's report in April 1932 to the Forty-First Continental Congress was similar in covering research on old trails around the country. However, she began with a look back:

"There are peaks as well as plains" and the work of the National Old Trails Committee is one of the highest "peaks" attained in the history of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution. Daughters, you may point to this "peak" with justifiable pride.

This committee has reached the mature age of 21 years, for it was organized in 1911 in a very simple way as the "Missouri D.A.R. Good Roads Committee." It was the enthusiasm and the inspiration of this committee that awakened interest in locating, exploiting and advertising old historic roads, and in a very short time, this committee became of state and national importance.

A bill known as the D.A.R. Bill, was introduced in the House of Representatives by the Hon. A. P. Borland of Kansas City, January 15, 1912, providing for a national ocean to ocean highway over the pioneer trails of the nation, asking the government to aid the states through which the highway herein described ran, in extending, reconstructing, building and also repairing same.

Today this historic "National Old Trails Road," conceived by George Washington and following civilization westward under various Acts of Congress [in the 19th century], and sponsored as a national memorial for the past 21 years by the D.A.R., reaches from ocean to ocean, and in the 12 states through which the National Highway passes, have erected 12 beautiful monuments, a national shrine that is not only representative but a distinctive memorial to those pioneer mothers of ours whose granite virtues were so outstandingly great.

Your National Chairman caught the vision of a pioneer mother clad in homespun, clasping her babe to her breast, this mother showing fortitude, perseverance and energy in her bearing, in the act of going forward, expressing firm determination, her face to be of strong character, beauty and gentleness, the face of a mother who realizes her responsibilities, and trusts in God. Collaborating with her son, John Trigg Moss, Jr., a graduate artist and architect, your Chairman worked out the vision into the design for our memorial monument. A St. Louis sculptor, catching the real spirit of our dreams, fashioned them into the beautiful memorial we have today. These 12 monuments, erecting and dedicating them, cost approximately \$50,000, and is a great credit to the organization. The actual money expended by the D.A.R. chapters was approximately \$13,000. Of this sum, \$580.24 was transferred in 1930 to the current fund of the National Society D.A.R. To the "National Old Trails Road Association," a national organization of Road Men, we owe a debt of gratitude, for it was through their efforts in financing the erection of the monuments, that we were able to complete the project for the above amount.

We all know that transportation marks the foot-steps of time from the beginning of civilization. Twenty-one years ago we had come to a time when the insignificant wagon roads of the country demanded a place on the stage of progress. At that time, statistics showed that less than 5 per cent of the public roads of America were improved for travel. People were appealing to State Legislatures for assistance; State and Federal Highway Commissions were formed, and the automobile was bringing about a radical change greater than was ever expected or dreamed of. Railroads and steamboats carried the greater percentage of passenger and freight traffic, when now the automobile, bus and truck skim over the nation's highways and have the right of way, with the aeroplane fast coming into its own.

The Daughters of the American Revolution, true to their pioneer instinct, knew that they had work to do. They wanted "good roads" above all else, but they wanted these "good roads" in course of construction to be built upon the old historic trails. To this end, they have ever worked diligently, ardently, and without ceasing. For 21 years they have played a big part in the progress of the "good roads" program of the nation. They have played a bigger part in the preservation of historical data pertaining to the Old Trails, the Old Traces, Old Post Routes and Mail Routes in different sections of the country. The boulders, tablets and markers of every description that have been erected by them number up in the thousands, all recording accurately many historical facts that would be lost to the coming generations but for their patriotic effort to keep sacred and intact these bits of Pioneer History.

The program of this committee has moved steadily forward for 21 years, and commendable indeed is the effort that has been made to thwart the oncoming trend of the times to modernize road marking by dropping the old sacred names of our pioneer pathways for the system of numbers. Let us continue this stand we have taken and insist that these old names remain as a part of a marking system for the road of our country.

Our pledge to erect a memorial on the National Old Trails Road – stamping it forever as the great Transcontinental Memorial Highway – has been fulfilled: our dream has been realized, but we still have much work to do in the interest of history and our sacred Old Trails in every other section of our country, and in many ways it has been demonstrated that the desire is still great within the hearts of the Daughters for definite knowledge of patriotic lore attached to the Old Trails of our land.

After going through activities of State committees to gather information on old trails, Mrs. Moss concluded:

Your National Chairman records an ever increasing desire on the part of historians, teachers, and speakers to become better informed in the history and romantic tales of the early pioneer trails. The requests that have come to your National Chairman for information regarding the Pioneer Mother Monuments have numbered into the hundreds.

Extensive publicity is still given to our beautiful "Madonna of the Trails." Pictures are printed of her in magazines, pamphlets, folders and guide books. In prose and poetry she is given dignified recognition by the press everywhere, and this program of ours, though idealistic and inspirational, seems to continue to appeal to the innermost hearts of our thinking men in the publicity world. Their editorials and their comments, far and wide, show that our "Madonna of the Trail" has created an atmosphere of love and peace wherever she stands.

In the course of the past 9 years, over 50,000 pieces of mail have been sent to all parts of the country and abroad from the residence of Your National Chairman. Letters of instruction, invitations to dedications, order blanks, photos, pamphlets, reports, letters, cards, books and maps have been sent out, all under the personal supervision of your

National Chairman.

The small statuette in metal with antique silver finish is an exact replica of the larger Pioneer Mother Monument. These were made by order of [the Continental] Congress, April 1930. They can be purchased for \$5, sending \$4 to the Treasurer General's Office and retaining \$1 in your chapter treasury. Two of these statuettes make beautiful book-ends to ornament your library table.

Mrs. Moss concluded her report with a fitting summary of the history not only of her committee but of the National Old Trails Road itself:

Twenty-one years ago, Gov. Herbert S. Hadley of Missouri said we were "The Pioneer Road Builders, Trail Markers and Trail Makers of the Nation." We have lived true to the panegyric he offered us in tribute that day. Let us look forward to another "high peak" of 21 years hence. Let us in good time memorialize the "Great Homing Trail" of the Northwest, the Old Oregon Trail, and let us keep close to our hearts the thought that we shall in some suitable manner place enduring monuments on the "Great National Highway to the Southwest." This road, the Spaniards recorded as the "Camino Real" and is 400 years old, and let us continue to the end of time to be heralded as the Trail Markers and Trail Makers of our Nation. (Applause.)" [*Proceedings of the Forty-First Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution*, April 1932, pages 674-687]

In 1933, the separate National Old Trails Committee disappeared. It was combined into a Committee on Preservation of Historic Spots, including National Old Trails. The chairman was Miss Lucile Foster. Despite financial problems stemming from the Depression, the proceedings identified extensive State activities on old trails.

Going Out With a Big Splash

By the late 1920s, the U.S. numbered highway system had rendered the named trail associations obsolete. The U.S. numbered highway system did not come with special funding for improving the roads. However, the State highway departments recognized them as their most important roads – the roads most likely to be included in the Federal-aid primary or interstate system. Therefore, the States were using Federal-aid highway funds, matched on a 50-50 basis with State funds, to upgrade the roads throughout in the 1920s and 1930s to form the country's first interstate highway system clearly marked with uniform signs.

The advocacy that was the hallmark of the named trail associations to improve their route – as reflected in Judge Lowe's activities at the State, county, township, and road district levels – was no longer necessary. Further, the Joint Board and AASHO had intentionally divided the trails among several U.S. numbered routes to discourage their backers' continued advocacy.

As the U.S. shields went up along the newly designated roads, officials of the named trail associations began to realize their days were numbered. Each named trail association – whether big or small, famous or fly-by-might – came to its own unique end. They depended on

membership dues from individuals, chambers of commerce, or towns. As these sources of revenue dried up, activities gradually came to an end.

The Lincoln Highway Association was an example. While the Joint Board was developing its plan, BPR's E. W. James had approached the association, as he recalled many years later:

Having assisted the Lincoln Highway Association in the First World War, I next went to Detroit to their headquarters and laid my scheme before them, very frankly telling them that it would mean the end of the Lincoln Highway Association, the Dixie, and all others. They understood it all; said they were for a big plan for roads across the U.S.; would be with my scheme if I would give the Lincoln Highway recognition so far as possible in the No. 30. I agreed to do all I could to put it across, and so had their support toward washing out all the named routes. They were the strongest of all the Associations and with them with us, who could be against us? [Letter, "E. W. James on designating the Federal-aid system and developing the U.S. numbered highway plan," February 21, 1927, on this Website]

Virtually the entire Lincoln Highway from Philadelphia to Granger, Wyoming, was assigned to U.S. 30 (Atlantic City, New Jersey, to Astoria, Oregon), but its eastern and western ends carried different numbers.

From formation of the Lincoln Highway Association in 1913, the leaders wanted a hard surfaced road across the country, a goal that eluded them, but also wanted the Lincoln Highway to inspire similar highways around the country. The success of the Lincoln Highway inspired many similar associations, and now the country was embarked on a Federal-aid plan that would result in an interstate system of two-lane paved highways criss-crossing the country.

The Lincoln Highway Association had achieved its goals. Its leaders were successful businessmen in the motor vehicle industry who had many other activities to occupy their time. It was time to close operations.

But before closing, they wanted to mark the Lincoln Highway with longer-lasting signs than the signs posted by the Automobile Club of Southern California, the California State Automobile Association, and others. They decided to formally end the association, but to do so with one last publicity stunt.

They decided to mark the Lincoln Highway formally, regardless of U.S. number, and dedicate it to the memory of Abraham Lincoln. As the association's official history explained:

Everything, in fact, seemed favorable except that to begin operations the Lincoln Highway Association must first design and manufacture and transport the monuments. They could find no method of financing this work and so the project languished . . . until the end of 1927. Then the Association, about to discontinue major activities, found \$66,600 on hand, the unexpended portions of the Willys-Overland and General Motors trust funds. Roy D. Chapin suggested this balance be drawn on to finance the permanent marking.

The directors approved, as did the donors of the money. The plan involved the Boy Scouts, and the scouting organization was enthusiastic.

The association designed and manufactured the signs and monuments. The signs carried the Lincoln Highway insignia, a bronze medallion ("This Highway Dedicated to Abraham Lincoln") and a directional arrow. With the support of the State highway departments, scout cars were dispatched to identify locations for them:

Shortly after the caravan had completed its trip, the Scouts dug the holes and, on September 1, 1928, on official word from their headquarters, placed the monuments.

Several of the troops set monuments on more than 100 miles of the highway on that one day. The troop at Fallon, Nevada, covered the greatest section of the route, from Austin almost to Sparks, a total of approximately 175 miles.

The only serious gap left was in Illinois, where a misunderstanding prevented the Association from obtaining immediate official permission. Later, special legislative authority was granted to the Association and the monuments were set by the Scouts.

Approximately 3,000 monuments were used. Two were placed at each important crossroad, one at each minor crossing, and others at sufficient intervals to assure the motorist that he was traveling the right road. They were set at the outer edge of the right of way to avoid interference with highway markers placed by the states.

Their permanence, and the value placed on them by the state highway departments, is evidenced by the fact that six years after they were set, less than 5 percent of them had been destroyed or removed. As a rule, when improvements were made, the highway department's maintenance men took up the monuments to keep them from being damaged by construction equipment, then replaced them in proper relation to the newly constructed road.

For all practical purposes, the Lincoln Highway Association came to an end, except for publication of its official history:

The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1935 [pages 217-221]

Long after the Lincoln Highway Association ceased operations, the Lincoln Highway remained part of the country's cultural heritage. For the highway's 25th anniversary in 1938, NBC Radio broadcast a program that featured interviews with Lincoln Highway Association officials, and a message from Carl Fisher, the highway's founder, read by an announcer:

The Lincoln Highway Association has accomplished its primary purpose, that of providing an object lesson to show the possibility in highway transportation and the importance of a unified, safe, and economical system of roads Now I believe the country is at the beginning of another new era in highway building [that will] create a system of roads far beyond the dreams of the Lincoln Highway founders. I hope this anniversary observance makes millions of people realize how vital roads are to our national welfare, to economic programs, and to our national defense ...

He apparently was referring to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1938, which called on BPR to prepare a report on development of a network of toll superhighways. (The result in 1939, *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, found that a toll network financed by bonds to be retired by toll revenue would not work. However, BPR added a lengthy section on “A Master Plan for Free Highway Development” that was the first formal statement of what became the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.)

In March 1940, NBC Radio introduced a Saturday morning drama called the *Lincoln Highway*. In the words of its introduction, the program featured stories that reflected “the heartbeat of America [...] the loves, thrills, pathos of the lives of the people who travel the country’s greatest traffic artery – The Lincoln Highway.” Many of the era’s top stars appeared on the show, which came to an end in 1942.

In April 1988, the University of Iowa Press published *The Lincoln Highway*, an excellent text-and-photo essay by Drake Hokanson about the history and meaning of the highway. Several other books have been published on the subject since then, including:

Anderson, Mary Elizabeth, *Link Across America: A Story of the Historic Lincoln Highway*, Rayve Productions, 1997. (A children's book about the Lincoln Highway.)

Butko, Brian, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway: America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, Stackpole Books, 2005. (A history of the Lincoln Highway with State-by-State information on history, routings, and travel.)

Roe, Bill, *All the Way to Lincoln Way: Coast to Coast Bicycle Odyssey*, Rowhouse Publishers, 2000. (Narrative of a bicycle trip across the country, west to east, on the Lincoln Highway, or parts of it. Excellent photography.)

Wallis, Michael, and Williamson, Michael S., *The Lincoln Highway: Coast to Coast from Times Square to the Golden Gate*, W. W. Norton, 2007. (Wallis, author of one of the most popular books on U.S. 66, and Williamson turn to the Lincoln Highway for what the book calls “The Great American Road Trip.” Each Lincoln Highway State receives its own chapter.)

The renewed interest prompted creation of a new Lincoln Highway Association in 1992. Its mission:

Our present-day association has the responsibility to protect the heritage left to us by those courageous transportation pioneers of nearly ninety years ago. Today our mission is to identify, preserve, and improve access to the remaining portions of the Lincoln Highway and its associated historic sites.

In October 2021, author Amor Towles published a novel titled *The Lincoln Highway*, which went on to become a major bestseller. Amazon.com's plot summary reads:

In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the juvenile work farm where he has just served fifteen months for involuntary manslaughter. With his mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett plans to pick up his eight-year-old brother Billy and head to California to start a new life. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have stowed away in the trunk of the warden's car. They have a very different plan for Emmett's future, one that will take the four of them on a fateful journey in the opposite direction – to New York City.

Bursting with life, charm, richly imagined settings and unforgettable characters, *The Lincoln Highway* is an extraordinary journey through 1950s America from the pen of a master storyteller.

In addition, many histories and biographies of President Dwight D. Eisenhower describe his experience on the Lincoln Highway in 1919 as a participant in the U.S. Army's first transcontinental convoy of army vehicles. The trip began at the site of the Zero Milestone (then a temporary marker) on the Ellipse south of the White House, to Gettysburg where the convoy reached the Lincoln Highway and followed it to San Francisco. In later years, he cited his 2 months on the convoy and his observations of Germany's autobahn network of superhighways during World War II as the reason he promoted development of the Interstate System when he became President – one of his proudest accomplishments.

One chapter of Eisenhower's memoir, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, was devoted to the 1919 convoy (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967). The chapter is titled "Through Darkest America with Truck and Tank." For a detailed account of the Army's 1919 convoy's transcontinental journey, see:

Davies, Pete, *American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age*, Henry Holt and Company, 2002.

By contrast, the Jefferson Highway is largely forgotten, but in its day, it was one of the best known north-south named trails, taking motorists from Winnipeg to New Orleans. The Jefferson Highway Association (JHA) had sought a single number from the Joint Board on Interstate Highways and from AASHO. But as with all the multi-State named trails, its efforts were in vain. As Lyell D. Henry, Jr.'s history of the Jefferson Highway explained:

In sum, segments of no fewer than thirteen numbered highways – several ending in one state only to reappear in a more distant, noncontiguous state – had abruptly displaced the

Jefferson Highway. In these results were major implications for the content of road maps and the signage motorists would now encounter in driving the old route and – even more important . . . the prospects for the continued recognition of the Jefferson Highway.

The JHA leadership could take pride that “the highway so carefully selected that the Jefferson Highway for practically its entire distance was placed on numbered United States highways forming a part of the main trunk line system of highways.” But what role was left for the JHA? Henry explained:

[T]he organization continued through the rest of the decade. At a meeting in April 1929, the JHA advisory committee, still pondering the future of the organization, decided to once again recommend keeping it going, and a month later, the JHA headquarters, still located in St. Joseph [Missouri], announced that twenty thousand Jefferson Highway maps were ready for free distribution. Accompanying the announcement was a somewhat wistful statement from JHA president George McNinch: “Despite the present day system of numbering roads, sentimental and historical significance attaches to the name of the Jefferson Highway. It is the aim of our association, through publication of maps and by many other organized efforts, to retain the identity and prestige of the Jefferson Highway.” The 1929 map was the last one issued by JHA, and what those “many other organized efforts” may have been, if any, remains unknown. President McNinch did show up for the event in October 1930 that celebrated the completion of paving the highway’s route in Iowa and much of Minnesota, but ready evidence of any further significant activity by JHA is virtually nonexistent, and presumably the organization, whether by formal dissolution or mere withering away, was soon gone . . .

What realistic prospect could there be for anchoring the Jefferson Highway in the collective memory in the absence of distinctive trail signs posted along the highway, or of a name affixed to a route on road maps, or of an organization dedicated to publishing route guides and otherwise publicizing the Jefferson Highway? [Henry, Lyell D., Jr., *The Jefferson Highway: Blazing the Way from Winnipeg to New Orleans*, University of Iowa Press, 2016, pages 71-74]

The Yellowstone Trail Association, backing a transcontinental route from “Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound” (Plymouth, Massachusetts, to Seattle, Washington, via Yellowstone National Park), similarly had to face reality. The association, like many others, had sought a single number for its famous highway, but without success. Harold A. Meeks, in his history of the trail, summarized the result:

Parts of the Yellowstone Trail were signed as U.S. 20 in the East and U.S. 10 and 12 in the West. Significant portions of the Yellowstone Trail were not initially designated as interstate routes, but except in one case, were assigned state highway numbers. Some non-designated stretches of road included most of New York state (State Route 5); that portion of the Trail from Cleveland, Ohio, to Fort Wayne, Indiana; a small section in Wisconsin; most of Minnesota, which subsequently became U.S. 212; and finally most of

Washington, which may in part explain the trail relocation which took place there in 1925

On the surface, the Yellowstone Trail Association seemed to be struggling along, but it was certainly not the dynamic organization that had previously existed.

A history of the Yellowstone Trail by Alice A. Ridge and John Wm. Ridge provided the stark numbers of the decline:

The group had been plagued with financial problems its whole life. The year 1921 was a period of national recession and the Trail association survived. But in the late 1920's, almost a year before the Joint Board of AASHO and Bureau of Public Roads engineers replaced names with numbers, a desperate bulletin was issued by General Manager H.O. Cooley to the membership at large. In it he stated that he would feature one town each week in the bulletin that was in arrears in paying its assessment. He called it the Debt Paying Bulletin and likened paying debts unto a game in which he was the scorekeeper and would publish names of debtors for the featured town of the week. He proceeded to do so, in which process he probably embarrassed and alienated more than he shamed into paying up. In August of 1927 a financial report showed that almost \$16,000 had been collected and spent in eight months, leaving a debt of \$1338 in spite of a membership of 7789. The report also showed a cancellation of membership by 155 people. At the end of 1929, the financial report showed receipts and expenditures of about \$11,500. The good news was that they were out of debt with a balance of \$11.99 to carry forward. The previous year they had a balance of \$18 to carry forward. The organization never expected to see a profit, but the annual fight for solvency must have been wearing.

The end came in March 1930 when, as Meeks wrote, Cooley informed the association's president, A. J. Dahlman of Lemmon, South Dakota, that, "On Saturday, March 15 (1930) I am going to close the office of the Yellowstone Trail Association, permanently," signaling the end

of the old organization founded with such high hopes in 1912. Cooley explained:

It is March 15th, the state meetings have not been held, and there is no money to hold them. There is no basis for making plans for 1930. The total indebtedness of the Association is \$6176.45 Most of this has been carried for several years, but I cannot carry it any longer I have no idea what I am going to do, but I will have to do something to earn my living I have carried on as long as I could, and see no possible hope to carry on any further.

The Yellowstone Trail managed to last over two years longer than the Lincoln Highway, but the outcome was inevitable, a bitter end to be sure. [Meeks, Harold A., *On the Road to Yellowstone: The Yellowstone Trail and American Highways 1900-1930*, Pictorial History Publishing Company, 2000, page 175; Ridge, Alice A., and Ridge, John Wm.,

Introducing The Yellowstone Trail: A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound,
Yellowstone Trail Publishers, 2000, pages 64-65]

Unlike the Lincoln Highway, the National Old Trails Road Association did not announce its end or stage a well-planned final publicity stunt. However, dedication of the Madonna of the Trail monuments in the route's 12 States served that unstated purpose. It created a transcontinental monument that, unlike the Lincoln Highway's posts, remains in place today.

Some remnants of the National Old Trail Road remain around the country, and its history is sometimes mentioned in accounts of the southwestern end that became part of U.S. 66.

Perhaps the National Old Trails Road should best be remembered today as part of the life of Harry S. Truman. Truman biographers mention his presidency of the National Old Trails Road Association, but usually as a minor detail that was not worth researching. For example, David McCullough's masterful 992-page biography mentions Truman's role on two pages. The first reference narrates how Truman earned a living after losing his reelection bid as a Jackson County judge:

In the intervening time, he became something of a man of affairs in Kansas City. From an office in the Board of Trade Building, he began selling memberships in the Kansas City Automobile Club, working on commission, which, after expenses, came to approximately five dollars for every new member he recruited. In a year he had sold more than a thousand memberships and cleared \$5,000, which, with a family to support and debts to pay, he greatly needed. Roads, highways, the new age of the automobile had become his specialty. He was named president of the National Old Trails Association, a nonprofit group dedicated to building highways along the country's historic trails and to spreading the concept of history as a tourist attraction. (Writing from Kansas during one of many trips in behalf of the group, he told Bess, "This is almost like campaigning for President, except that the people are making promises to me instead of the other way around.")

In September 1933, Truman participated in the dedication of the county courthouse he had built, one of his many accomplishments as Presiding Judge. In the second reference, McCullough quoted the *Jackson County Examiner* newspaper coverage of the opening in 1933 that cited Truman's work, including:

During these years of strenuous service to Jackson County he has found time to serve as president of the National Old Trails Association, an office he still holds. [McCullough, David, *Truman*, Simon and Schuster, 1992, pages 171, 202; the quote is from the *Examiner* of September 7, 1933]

Like McCullough, other authors saw little need to explore Truman's activities on behalf of the National Old Trails Road Association. Even his daughter Margaret seemed to have little interest in the subject. Her biography of her father mentioned his role after citing his success with the Automobile Club of Kansas City:

He became president of the National Old Trails Association, a perfect job for Solomon Young's grandson. He traveled extensively around Missouri and many other states, marking famous roads and urging local governments to see the value of their history as a tourist attraction.

She added:

I was never very conscious of him as a politician, during these early years, but I did know he was a highway builder. He often took me with him on inspection tours of the new roads, and sometimes on longer trips, when he dedicated or inspected an historic road, as part of his still continuing presidency of the National Old Trails Association. [Truman, Margaret, *Harry S. Truman*, William Morrow and Company, 1973, pages 68, 77]

If she accompanied him to dedication ceremonies for Madonna of the Trail monuments, she does not say.

She gave two pages to the subject in her biography of her mother, mostly to illustrate that Bess resented her husband's travels for the "National Old Trails Association." She wrote, "Its goal was to encourage auto travel by persuading local officials to set up historic markers and build tourist facilities." As noted earlier, she quoted some of his letters from the road, such as his letter describing Mayor Ham Bell of South Dodge to illustrate Bess's disinterest. "Bess did not find such pieces of living history as interesting as her husband did. More to the point, he was enjoying himself too much – while he was several hundreds [sic] miles away from her." [Bess Truman, pages 102-103]

Neither author seemed to understand what the National Old Trails Road was, its history, or Truman's activities as president of its association – or its full name.

The association had only two presidents in its active years, and their roles were very different. Judge J. M. Lowe had devoted his last years, from 1912 until his death in 1926, to securing a hard surfaced road from coast to coast. He did not accept payment for his services, and at times, used his own funds to support the association. His advocacy included speeches, intervention in county and road district votes, publication of bulletins and books, and testimony before Congress and other bodies, always in support of the National Old Trails Road and improvement of the main roads around the country.

In 1925 he found that even his home State, Missouri, did not respect his hard work in laying out a cross-State highway by leaving part of it off the new State road scheduled for improvement. In 1926, by the time of his death, he could see that the National Old Trails Road was about to be broken up by the new U.S. numbered highway system. His work had not been in vain, but he would be forgotten by the highway community as it began in the 1920s to build an interstate highway system of two-lane paved highways under the Federal-aid highway program that he had initially opposed.

Unlike Judge Lowe, the second president, Truman, could not devote all his time and resources to the National Old Trails Road Association. He had a family to support and a job – a paying job – as one of Jackson County’s presiding judge.

Truman traveled the road to maintain support for the association’s work and to secure a stable financial future for it. He may not have realized it, but the 12 Madonna of the Trail monuments he helped Mrs. Moss to install and dedicate were the final statement of the National Old Trails Road Association. The National Old Trails Road may be forgotten, but the monuments remain today as reminders of the first presidency of Harry S. Truman.

Senator Harry S. Truman

In the November 1934 mid-term elections, President Roosevelt’s already large Democratic majorities grew in the House and Senate. Among the increases was Harry S. Truman, who secured 59 percent of the vote to defeat incumbent Roscoe C. Peterson.

A few days later, *The Washington Post* began a series on “New Faces in the Senate.” The third installment was about Senator-elect Truman. The profile began:

After a lapse of 16 years, the once dominant “rebel democracy” of Missouri is to be in complete control of the State representation in the United States Senate. The election last Tuesday of Harry S. Truman, of Independence, a suburb of Kansas City, gives the Democrats the two Senate seats. The other one has been held the last two years by Bennett Champ Clark, son of the former Speaker of the House [Champ Clark (1911-1919)]

Now comes another Democratic Senator from the rural part of the State, Harry S. Truman, to reunite the broken line of Democratic Senators. He hails from rural Jackson County, one of the bloodiest spots in the border warfare between Missouri and Kansas just before and during the Civil War.

The article recalled his early years on the family farm before coming into prominence during the World War. As a member of the 35th Division, he “helped to organize Battery B, 129th Field Artillery, a volunteer outfit” and made an enviable record in the Battle of Argonne. He had been commissioned as a first lieutenant, but during the war “was promoted to captain, and came out of the war a major.”

As for his Senate run, the *Post* recalled:

Clark induced Representative Jacob L. Milligan, a former captain in the Thirty-fifth Division and war buddy, to become a Democratic candidate for the senatorship. Truman was thrown on the opposite side of this [primary] contest by a force of circumstances, which resulted in the luckiest break of his life.

Thomas J. Pendergast, Democratic boss of Kansas City, who two years ago extended his political control over much of the State, is responsible today more than any one else for Truman's elevation to the Senate. The new Senator-elect had engaged for a time in the retail business in Kansas City. Ten years ago Pendergast was looking around for a candidate for county court judge from the rural Jackson County district. He was attracted to Truman by the fact of his good war record, and his ability to make friends.

Pendergast was under attack from politicians across the State in St. Louis who had made the "boss" a target in the 1932 gubernatorial race, although Pendergast's candidate, Guy B. Park, won:

The direct challenge to Pendergast's political control of Missouri came without warning. The St. Louis Democratic organization brought out Representative John J. Cochran. The leaders boasted that if he were put over for Senator, the way would be cleared for St. Louis to grab the governorship and political domination of the State in 1936.

Then Pendergast, hard pressed for a senatorial candidate to meet the St. Louis challenger, turned to his county judge, Harry S. Truman, who was popular at home, but little known in the rest of the State. A battle royal between the Kansas City and St. Louis organizations ensued. Truman won the nomination easily, as a result of a record-breaking primary vote in Kansas City and Jackson County.

The Senator-elect would arrive in Washington "with little more than a local background." The profile discussed his accomplishments:

As a member of the county court he was largely responsible for carrying out a \$10,000,000 county road program. Probably his next greatest achievement on the county court was the building of the new \$4,500,000 courthouse in Kansas City. Truman is a former president of the National Old Trails Association, and a good roads booster for many years.

His education was "limited to that which is acquired in the public schools, supplemented by reading later in life":

He is not considered brilliant, either as an orator or as a scholar, but has great personal charm and is a tireless worker. He has never had time to develop hobbies.

During the campaign, Truman pledged 100-percent cooperation with President Roosevelt, and defended the New Deal:

However, like the party organization of the State, Truman is a conservative and has little in common with the new school of socialistic theorists who have risen to prominent places the last two years. Yet in his campaign he favored old age pension legislation and unemployment insurance, a part of the new Roosevelt program. Truman also pledged

himself for immediate payment of the soldier bonus. In his campaign he defended the processing tax and the AAA program of farm relief.

The profile, accompanied by a caricature of Truman in a grim, even sad and tired, look that contrasted with his personality, ended:

Truman is married and has one child, Margaret, 10 years old. [Alford, Theodore C., “New Faces in the Senate – Harry Truman of Missouri,” *The Washington Post*, November 12, 1934, page 9]

Truman had campaigned by car, traveling Missouri’s back roads. He told reporters he felt as if he were on a vacation. “Fact is, I like roads. I like to move. ...”

Originally regarded as a lightweight sent to Washington by “Boss” Pendergast, Truman made his reputation as a determined investigator of financial finagling by the railroads. After the United States entered World War II in December 1941, he applied his dogged, common sense investigative skills to military procurement. The investigation began unofficially when he left Washington in his Dodge and drove to Florida, then to the Midwest, and finally to Michigan, stopping at Army installations and defense plants – and finding waste and fraud along the way. Based on the abuses he found during his tour, the Senate established the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, commonly called the Truman Committee after its chairman.

In this new and highly visible position, Truman gained national stature. Although many still thought of him as the lightweight political hack he had appeared to be when he arrived in Washington in 1935, his success gave him the opportunity to be considered for the position of Vice President in 1944.

(Senator-elect Truman may have received a lucky break, as the *Post* put it, because of the cross-State political rivalries in the 1934 mid-term election, but of course no one could have predicted that the luckiest break of his life would come 10 years later during the 1944 presidential election when he was selected unexpectedly as the Vice Presidential nominee for President Roosevelt’s fourth term in the White House.)

Historians may have little interest in learning about the National Old Trails Road Association, but Truman never forgot his time traveling the road despite the many more urgent matters he would consider as a Senator, Vice President, and President. But after becoming a United States Senator, he and his family drove the old road, now mostly U.S. 40, between Independence and Washington many times – seeing places and people he knew from his days as president of the National Old Trails Road Association.

That his memory of those days was strong became evident during his famous whistle stop election campaign event in 1948. No one, except President Truman, thought he could beat Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York in the November election. That summer, President Truman, Bess, Margaret, and their entourage embarked on a nationwide railroad tour of the

country, delivering speeches from the back platform of the train to large crowds in many towns, as well as major speeches in the big cities. He had planned to deliver written speeches from the train platforms, but he found that speaking extemporaneously was more effective, even though one of his aides had to record his words in shorthand for history.

In June 1948, his railroad tour passed through several of the National Old Trails Road cities. In mid-June, after a big speech in Los Angeles, he was on his way home to Independence. He gave brief speeches in Winslow, Arizona, and Gallup, New Mexico. In Albuquerque, he recalled:

I was here once as the President of the National Old Trails and Roads Association, and we set up a monument to the Pioneer Mother here in Albuquerque. Had a great time on that trip, and I met a lot of people in New Mexico. It looks as if they are all here today.

The trip continued through Las Vegas and Raton, New Mexico, then paralleled the National Old Trails Road. On June 16, in Dodge City, Kansas, he began his remarks:

It looks as if Dodge City really wanted to see what their President looked like. I used to come over here to Dodge City on road matters for the National Old Trails Association. I was the director of that organization, and I have been through here on numerous occasions on work for that organization. Those were the days when we didn't have the roads we have now, and when it used to take the Santa Fe Railroad a little longer to go from Kansas City than it does now.

The tour continued through Hutchinson and Newton, Kansas. In Emporia, Kansas, he recalled:

I see one of my very old friends here in the audience, Bill Young. He used to be Mayor of Council Grove, Kansas, and a member of the National Old Trails Association. I have been from one end of Kansas to the other with Bill Young, and other members of the Association.

The campaign train continued through the States of the National Old Trails Road on June 17, including Terre Haute, Indiana, where he said:

I am certainly glad to see you, and happy to see so many of you out here today. I have been through this city and stopped here on numerous occasions. When I was in the Senate, and I was there for 10 years, I used to drive back and forth from Independence, Missouri, to Washington by way of highway number 40 – usually always stayed on that highway in Terre Haute going one way or another, so I am very well familiar with your city and its environs.

On the other side of Indiana, in Richmond, he said:

I am happy to be here this morning, and I want to assure you that this is not my first visit to Richmond. I came here once as President of the National Old Trails Road Association

and helped the Daughters of the American Revolution to set up a monument in one of your parks to the pioneer mother.

The text for the Richmond speech is from the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum. The American Presidency Project had a different version of the text:

It certainly is a pleasure to see all these smiling faces in Richmond. You know, I have through here at least a hundred times, and nobody paid any attention to me. When I was in the Senate, and even before that, I always used to drive through Richmond, and sometimes stayed at the Richmond-Leland Motel. I ought to get something for that plug, don't you think? [Laughter]

Of course, he won the 1948 election and served until January 1953.

His name remained on the letterhead of the National Old Trails Road Association into the late 1940s.

In June 1941, Senator Truman received a letter dated June 15, 1941, from William L. Young, president of the Kansas Highway 50 and National Old Trails Association. The letter began:

Dear Senator Harry:

We read of you often and think of you considerable [sic] more and which makes us feel the old world is not so big after all, congratulations and our best wishes as you continue onward up the ladder of fame

He added, "Regardless we have the road and only road that can be depended upon at all times, you continue and will always by our President and I presume I still carry on as Executive Chairman, you will also notice some time ago we reorganized the state association at Lyons Kans with myself as state chairman."

Young pointed out that as a result of recent flooding in the Midwest, he had written to Governor Payne Ratner and Highway Director D. J. Fair about the resulting road problems. The letters were enclosed. Young continued in disjointed manner:

Senator Harry note that part from a military standpoint, for illustration would'nt we be in a pickle in such an emergency, the following is a correct list of the east and west roads that were out, No 36, 24, 40 50 South, 54, 160 that leaves the road you are piloting No 50 North the N.O.T. the only east and west road open across the state, even R I and UP trains detouring from Herington through Council Grove to Kansas City, and these above mentioned roads were out several days.

He got to the point:

I am so in hopes you are in position to stick in the right kind of plug, more especially while the water is muddy for I am very well satisfied our Governor would like to move towards such an improvement if he was bolstered or touched up by the proper source, Missouri and Kansas papers filled with flood conditions as you will have noticed.

My personal thanks to you for what you do and best wishes to yourself, wife, and the girl.

Young appears to have been seeking Truman's help in having the National Old Trails Road declared part of a strategic highway network that was under consideration as Congress debated what became the Defense Highway Act of 1941.

Truman replied on June 19:

Dear Bill,

It was certainly a pleasure to get a good letter from you dated June Fifteenth, and of course I am just as interested in the National Old Trails as I ever was. I am also interested in this military highway business.

I believe there is a good chance of our road being designated. You did the right thing in taking it up with the Governor of Kansas and the Kansas Highway Commission, because in the long run their decision will have a lot to do with what the Federal Government does.

You can rest assured that if there is an opportunity for me to put in a good word for our road I will be glad to do it. [Correspondence courtesy of the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum]

Senator Truman's Crash

Senator Truman was driving to Washington on U.S. 40, the former National Old Trails Road, on Sunday, March 27, 1938, with Bess and 14-year old Margaret. In Hagerstown, Maryland, Truman's car crashed into a car driven by Robert Potts of Hagerstown, then struck a telephone pole. Margaret described the incident in her biography of her father:

Our trips to and from Independence were quite an ordeal On this semiannual commute, we always went by car. My father did most of the driving, and this always made for interesting family discussions. My mother was convinced that he drove too fast, and she was absolutely right. I don't think Mother ever really saw any of the scenery between Missouri and the District of Columbia. She always had at least one eye on the speedometer.

Our route usually took us through Hagerstown, Maryland, and over the mountains to Cumberland. In 1938 we came to grief in Hagerstown, and another chapter in the history of Dad's unbreakable, unlosable glasses was written. It was a Sunday morning, and a

stop sign at a key intersection was obscured by a parked car. A man in another car plowed into us as we went through the intersection. Our car was completely wrecked. It was almost a miracle that we escaped alive. Dad had a cut on his forehead, and Mother had a badly wrenched neck. Sitting in the back, I escaped with nothing more than a bad fright.

As I was pulled out of the car window, I saw Dad's glasses on the floor, surrounded by upended suitcases – intact. He had flung them over his shoulder at the moment of impact.

First the police were inclined to give the Trumans a very hard time for missing the stop sign. But Dad pointed out that the stop sign was obscured by the parked car Dad called his secretary, Vic Messall, and he got dressed in record time and drove down to pick us up. We never did go back for the car. I guess it was towed to the nearest junk heap. [Harry S. Truman, pages 97-98]

The Washington Post reported:

The Senator received minor bruises when his head struck the windshield. Mrs. Truman and the daughter suffered severe shock.

According to police, Senator Truman's car passed through a boulevard stop sign and the other auto, driven by J. Robert Potts, of Hagerstown, skidded 40 feet before coming to a halt. No charges were placed against either driver although police obtained a writ of foreign attachment for \$90 on the Senator's car, pending further investigation. ["Truman Hurt In Auto Wreck At Hagerstown," *The Washington Post*, March 28, 1938, page X9]

According to *The Evening Star*, Truman's car was "virtually demolished" in the crash. At the application of Potts, Magistrate John Dunn "issued a foreign attachment for \$90 against the Senator's automobile." In other words, Truman paid Dobbs \$90 for the crash. ["Three Crashes Are Fatal to Two; Three Badly Hurt," *The Evening Star*, March 28, 1938; page 17]

The Last Road Trip

Shortly after President Eisenhower took office in January 1953, citizen Harry S. Truman went to Union Station for the train ride home to Independence, Missouri. He shook hands with his Secret Service escort and said goodbye – in those days, former Presidents did not have government protection.

Back home, he bought a two-tone green Dodge coupe for himself and a four-door black Chrysler for Bess. In May 1953, he received an invitation to address the Reserve Officers Association in Philadelphia on June 26. As a former reserve officer, Truman decided to accept the invitation – and drive to the meeting to give the Chrysler "a real workout." He and Bess would visit friends in Washington before driving to Philadelphia; after the speech, they would drive to New York City, where Margaret lived, before driving home to Independence.

Not having driven the road for 8 years, he planned the trip carefully. “I took out the road map and figured the distance – exactly 1,050 miles from my garage door to the door of the Senate garage. I decided on the best places to stop over on the way, as I always used to do.” From Independence, they would take U.S. 24 to Hannibal, Missouri, on the Mississippi River. They switched to U.S. 36 to Indianapolis, where they visited friends. From Indianapolis, they took U.S. 40, the former National Old Trails Road to Washington.

As Matthew Algeo put it in his book on the trip:

He couldn’t have been happier. “I like to take trips – any kind of trip,” he wrote. “They are about the only recreation I have besides reading.” [Algeo, page 35]

To convince Bess to go, Truman had to convince her they could travel without being recognized – and promise that he would obey the speed limits.

They left Independence on June 19, with 11 suitcases in the trunk and the back seat of the New Yorker:

As Independence faded in his rearview mirror, Harry Truman might have been the happiest man in Missouri, if not all forty-eight states. He loved to drive. Back when he was a county judge, he’d driven thousands of miles touring country courthouses from Colorado to New York before the construction of the new courthouse in Independence. When he ran for the Senate in 1934, he campaigned by car, crisscrossing the Show Me State in his shiny new Plymouth. He enjoyed it so much, he said he felt like he was on vacation. As a Senator, he drove thousands of miles investigating fraud and waste on military bases throughout the South and Midwest and, of course, he regularly drove between Independence and Washington. He always preferred the freedom of the road to the plush confines of a Pullman car. Even when he was president, he would occasionally take the wheel of his limo, much to the consternation of his Secret Service agents.

Driving not only satisfied his need to keep moving; it also helped him gauge the country’s mood. “You have to get around and listen to what people are saying,” he said.

He fancied himself an excellent driver, naturally, but in reality, riding shotgun with Harry Truman could be a hair-raising adventure. As his longtime friend Mize Peter once told an interviewer, rather diplomatically, “I have driven with him when I was a little uneasy.”

By far his biggest vice was speed. Bess was right: Harry drove too fast. [Algeo, pages 40-41]

Margaret Truman, in her biography of her father, told about the start of the trip:

They weren't on the road more than an hour, when Mother asked, "What does the speedometer say?"

"Fifty-Five."

"Do you think I'm losing my eyesight? Slow down."

As they slowed down, other motorists passed them and quickly began recognizing the ex-President:

Soon they heard people shouting, "Hi, Harry – Hey, wasn't that Harry Truman? Where are you going, Harry?"

"Well," Dad said, "there goes our incognito – and I don't mean a part of the car."

Everywhere they stopped along their route, Dad was instantly recognized by motel owners or filling station attendants. Local reporters were notified, and police chiefs rushed to escort or guard them. The trip became almost as well publicized as a whistle-stop campaign.

Truman, on November 29, 1953, replied to a letter from an Army friend, Vic Housholder, by describing his trip:

Mrs. T and I thought we'd solved the problem when I bought a Chrysler car and we started for Washington. When we'd crossed the Missouri River at Waverly on highway 24 on our way to Hannibal, the "boss" said to me, "Isn't it good to be on our own again, doing as we please as we did in the old Senate days?" I said that I thought it was grand and that I hope we'd do as we pleased from that time on.

We stopped at Hannibal, Mo. for lunch at the junction of highways 61 & 36. Everything went well until a couple of old time County Judges, came in and saw me. They said, "Why there's Judge Truman" and then every waitress and all the customers had to shake hands and have autographs. We went on to Decatur, Ill and stopped for gas at a Shell station where I used to stop when I was a Senator. The old man kept looking at me as he filled up the gas tank and finally he asked me if I was Senator Truman. I admitted the charge and asked him if he could direct me to the good Motel in the town. We'd never stayed at one and we wanted to try it out and see if we liked it. Well he directed us but he told everybody in town about it. The Chief of Police got worried about us and sent two plain clothes men and four uniformed police to look after us.

They took us to dinner and escorted us out of town with a sigh of relief.

At Greenfield, Indiana, the State police had set up a roadblock to give traffic safety brochures to passing motorists, as Algeo explained:

The Trumans had passed through the roadblock unnoticed, but as they were pulling away, a state trooper named R. H. Reeves recognized them. Harry was done in by his fastidiousness. "It" – his car – "was so clean that my attention was attracted to it," Reeves said.

Reeves shouted for Truman to pull over. He did, and got out of the car. “What’re you selling here?” he asked the trooper. Reeves explained the traffic-safety program and asked the former president to pose for a picture to promote it.

“I’m running about two hours late, but I’ll take time for that,” Harry said. “I certainly endorse your program.”

As President, Truman had launched a major highway safety initiative, so it was an issue he fully endorsed. (For information on President Truman’s safety program, see “President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Federal Role in Highway Safety” and “A Moment in Time: President Harry S. Truman’s Highway Safety Crusade” in the General section of the Highway History page on this Website.)

While Bess sat and waited inside the sweltering Chrysler, Harry spent about twenty minutes at the roadblock, standing in his shirtsleeves, chatting and signing autographs. Then they were off again. [Algeo, pages 82-83]

Leaving Wheeling, West Virginia, Truman continued on U.S. 40 across the Allegheny Mountains in southwestern Pennsylvania:

Truman later said he was “impressed with the way the highway over the mountains had been improved from the old blacktop hairpin curves” that he had driven as a senator. [Algeo, page 96]

Driving through Frostburg, Maryland, Truman was flagged down by a passerby, Dr. Martin Rothstein:

Looking for a place to eat, Harry had just turned onto a side street when he saw a man in a suit waving him down. Bemused, he stopped the car

“I’m sorry, Mr. Truman,” Doc said a little sheepishly. “But you’re going the wrong way.”

“What do you mean?” Truman said.

“This is a one-way street,” Doc explained, “and you’re going the wrong way.”

Bess leaned across the front seat to the driver’s side window.

“He never listens to me,” she said to Rothstein. “I thought he was making a wrong turn.”

Truman asked about a place to eat and was directed to The Princess:

Truman was familiar with the Princess. He’d stopped there a couple times when he was a senator making the trip between Independence and Washington Harry and Bess sat in a booth near the front and ordered the Sunday supper special: roast chicken with

stuffing, lima beans, mashed potatoes, coleslaw, rice pudding, and coffee – for seventy cents.

The word was soon out that the former President was in Frostburg:

The Trumans did not enjoy a quiet repast. Children badgered Harry for his autograph. The adults weren't much better behaved, constantly interrupting the couple's lunch to shake hands.

Howard Ward, a reporter for the *Cumberland Evening Times*, observed the Trumans. "Through it all," Ward reported, "they remained gracious and were not annoyed":

"We lunched at Frostburg," Truman later recounted, "at the Princess Restaurant . . . I had been there before, but in those days they didn't make such a fuss over me. I was just a senator then." [Algeo, pages 100-101]

That Sunday, June 21, the Trumans reached the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. at 5:40 p.m. Margaret, who had arrived from New York, greeted them. [Algeo, page 111]

Truman took the train to Philadelphia on Friday, June 26, for his speech. He then took the train to New York City, where he met Bess and Margaret who had driven the Chrysler to the city.

McCullough, who described the trip in his biography of Truman, concluded his account with the following incident:

Heading home for Missouri, "perking along" on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Truman was signaled to pull over by the police. According to what State Trooper Manly Stampler told reporters, "Mr. Truman" had twice cut in front of vehicles trying to pass him. "He was very nice about it and promised to be more careful." But according to Truman, who had never had a traffic violation, the young man had only wanted to shake hands.

It was his last venture with Bess on their own by automobile. Thereafter, they would go by train, plane, or ship. [McCullough, page 935]

They reached Washington, Pennsylvania, where the Trumans turned onto U.S. 40 for the ride home.

On July 7, they were in Richmond, Indiana, as recounted by Algeo:

On the morning of Tuesday, July 7, Ora Wilson, the sheriff of Wayne County, Indiana, got a call from a friend at the Ohio State Highway Patrol. His friend advised Wilson that Harry and Bess Truman were headed his way, and helpfully supplied a description of their vehicle and an ETA

Wilson called his son Lowell, one of his deputies, to help keep the Trumans safe and get a

picture with them while they were at it. With a *Palladium-Item* photographer in the car, the Sheriff and Deputy waited for the Trumans to drive into town:

Around noon, Ora and Lowell Wilson spotted the Trumans' Chrysler heading into Richmond on East Main Street. They pulled it over.

"Sheriff," asked Harry with some exasperation, "what did I do wrong?"

"We just wanted to welcome you to Richmond," said the elder Wilson, who added that it would be awfully nice if Harry and Bess would pose for a picture with him in front of the Madonna of the Trail statue. Harry had come to Richmond to help choose the site for the statue back in 1928, when he was president of the National Old Trails Road Association. He had been scheduled to return to Richmond later that year for the dedication of the statue, but, just a few days before the October 28 ceremony, he sent his regrets, saying he was "very busily engaged in politics" at the moment.

As Vice President, Truman had been scheduled to visit Richmond to address a soil conservation conference in Richmond on May 9, 1945, but his responsibilities after the death of President

Roosevelt on April 12 prevented him from making the trip:

So, by stopping in Richmond (albeit involuntarily), Harry was making good on unfilled obligations. The Wilsons escorted the Trumans to Glen Miller Park, where the *Palladium-Item* photographer snapped a picture of Ora, Harry, and Bess posing in front of the larger-than life Madonna Afterward, the Wilsons escorted the Trumans to the Leland Hotel in downtown Richmond, where Harry and Bess had lunch. [Algeo, pages 193, 197-198]

Harry remained on U.S. 40 through Indianapolis, where the Trumans again stayed with friends, and on to Independence, arriving home to 219 Delaware Street around 9 p.m. on July 8, 1953. They had driven 2,600 miles over the course of 19 days. They were recognized throughout the trip home. "Harry," as Algeo commented, "never took another long car trip." [Algeo, page 217]

Place in History

The National Old Trails Road Association, founded in 1912, was one of the first of the major named trails, providing a template for the 250 or so named trails that came after it. The Lincoln Highway Association, established a year later, was better funded from motor vehicle industry executives and had stronger public relations elements – it was more famous in its day than the National Old Trails Road. Both, however, were among the most popular interstate roads during the named trails era.

The major named trail associations supported a Federal program – generally preferring Federal construction to a Federal-aid program with State construction – to improve the country's roads, and, of course, they thought the money should be spent on their road. In the advocacy by private interests, they helped build the groundswell of support for what became the Federal-aid highway

program in 1916 and the revitalized Federal-aid highway program in 1921.

Judge J. M. Lowe, the first president of the National Old Trails Road Association, was a well-known national leader in the good roads movement, as well as an active fighter for his road in an era where funding had to be secured county-by-county and road-district-by-road district. At the time of his death in 1926, the National Old Trails Road was nearly as well-known as the Lincoln Highway and better known than any other named trail – even as it was about to be replaced by the U.S. numbered highway system. The road's importance is reflected in the fact that large portions of the National Old Trails Road were included in two of the best known of the U.S. numbered highways, namely U.S. 40 and U.S. 66.

Harry S. Truman, the second president of the association, was energized by the National Old Trails Road Association at a low point in his life. It gave him opportunities to enjoy several of the things he most liked to do, namely travel by car, meet people, and get things done. Even as he moved ahead in the political world of Missouri, he continued his work with the association.

Starting in Missouri, the Daughters of the American Revolution helped create the National Old Trails Road and continued to advocate for it well into the 1920s. Although the Madonna of the Trail monuments were not meant to mark the end of the National Old Trails Road, they served that purpose as it turned out. The name would continue to pop up in travel articles for many years, and the occasional restaurant or other facility named after it remained on the map.

But in the end, the National Old Trails Road represented a stage in the country's transportation history that had to pass out of the present and into memory – same as mountain men, covered wagons, stagecoaches, and the pony express – as the country moved on to the next stage that the National Old Trails Road Association had helped generate.

Historians and biographers research every detail of their subject. And yet, as noted earlier, they generally don't feel compelled to find out what the National Old Trails Road Association was or how it affected the country. Even in books about President Harry S. Truman, the topic is usually confined to a sentence or two, in passing, as if it were of little importance in his life, without accurately explaining what the road was or what he did for it.

Historians may not have believed the National Old Trails Road Association deserved much attention, but Harry S. Truman never forgot it, as reflected in his informal speeches during the whistlestop campaign tour. Former President Truman, in interviews with Merle Miller, discussed, briefly, how the National Old Trails Road Association helped him overcome his ill feelings about the battles between Kansas and Missouri stemming from the expansion of slavery in the mid-19th century. Truman told Miller:

But the bad feeling that these things cause dies a very slow death. I had to overcome some of that hatred when I was president of the National Old Trails Association, which has branches from Baltimore to Los Angeles, and I had to go over to Kansas on many occasions and got to know the people over there. And I found out that they didn't have horns and tails. They were the same kind of people as we have over here . . . I've always felt that people were pretty much the same everywhere, but isn't it a pity that we

have to be *taught* that?

Miller, in his 1974 compilation of the interviews, provided this helpful footnote to explain what the National Old Trails Road Association was:

In 1925, after Mr. Truman's defeat in his second race for county judge, he needed a job; he was forty-one years old and, as he has said, "completely broke and without much prospect of being any other way." He first got a job selling memberships in the Kansas City Automobile Club and later became president of the National Old Trails Association, which involved traveling all over the country to promote the idea of building highways over the famous trails that had been so important in the various historical moves West. [Miller, Merle, *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman*, Tess Press, 2004, pages 65-66]

As usual, he didn't bother getting this one detail right.