

LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

THE TRAVELER



EDITOR; Gary Kinst
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SPRING

APRIL 2006

Western Terminus of the LINCOLN HIGHWAY

You are standing at the western terminus of the Lincoln Highway, the first direct coast-to-coast highway from Times Square in New York City to Lincoln Park in San Francisco. It was conceived in 1912 by Carl Fisher (founder of the Indianapolis Speedway and pioneer developer of Miami Beach) who encouraged manufacturers of autos, tires and cement to contribute funds to establish a direct motor-vehicle route, traversing some 3300 miles through twelve states, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Thus, the Lincoln Highway Association was founded in 1913 with headquarters in Detroit, Michigan. Its first president was Henry Joy, president of the Packard Motor Car Company. In July-September 1919, a two-mile-long U.S. Army Transcontinental Convoy of 56 military vehicles and 209 men "conquered" the Lincoln Highway after a journey of 62 days. Accompanying the convoy was then Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower who perceived the need for improved highways for both military and commercial purposes. Thirty-seven years later, President Eisenhower signed the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, giving birth to the Interstate Highway system which serves our nation so well today. Interstate 80 follows much of the old Lincoln Highway.

Donated by the California Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association September 2005

Abraham Lincoln
16th US President

Carl G. Fisher
Visionary *

Henry B. Joy
1st President, Lincoln Highway Association *

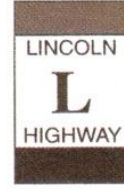
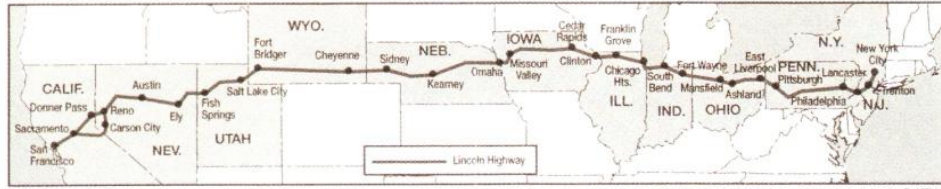
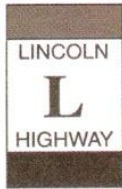
Dwight D. Eisenhower
34th US President *

THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY
A Coast-to-Coast Motor Vehicle Highway
1912-1919

* The Modern Collection, Lincoln Highway Association
* Dwight D. Eisenhower Library
* Area Director of Transportation
* Special Collections, University of Michigan Library

On September 1, 1928, a San Francisco Boy Scout Troop positioned the original concrete marker just a few feet from this site which read, "Western Terminus Of The Lincoln Highway." On June 14, 2002, Boy Scout Troop 17 of San Francisco positioned this replica marker in remembrance of the Lincoln Highway, once the Main Street of the Nation.

San Francisco Recreation & Parks



A CONTINUOUS CONNECTING IMPROVED HIGHWAY FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC

Robert Dieterich, President
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March 9, 2006

A Letter from your President to California Chapter Members:

Next Chapter Meeting: Noon, April 1, 2006, Folsom

As we discussed at our last meeting, we will hold our next chapter meeting, which is scheduled for the first Saturday in April, in Folsom. This is on the south (Pioneer) branch of the Lincoln Highway. I have made arrangements with Yager's Tap House and Grille for a separate area in the restaurant and we will order lunch off the menu at noon. A business meeting will follow at approximately 1:00 p.m. Included will be discussions regarding the status of the Summit Garage and the blockage of the Lincoln Highway just west of Donner Lake.

Yager's address is 727 Trader Lane. Trader Lane is really nothing more than a parking lot on the south side of Leidesdorff St which parallels the American River. It is one block to the north of, and one floor below Sutter St. which is the main street through Folsom's historic district. Yager's is actually half under Sutter St. and is entered from the parking lot. If you are curious, they have a web site at www.yeagers.com. If you have any questions, please call. We will be within one block of the Folsom History Museum and the Folsom Roundhouse.

Terminus Marker Interpretive Plaque

Finally, on Saturday morning, February 11, 2006, we installed an interpretive plaque at the terminus marker in Lincoln Park in San Francisco. (See separate article.) George Clark has given untold hours of effort and considerable out of pocket expenses for this project. He also "advanced" the chapter over \$600 to fund this project. We still owe this money to George and I must ask once again for donations. If you can spare \$25 (or whatever seems appropriate to you) please write a check to the LHA California Chapter and mail it to our PO Box shown above. Remember, all donations are tax deductible.

2006 Tours

Paul Gilger has created a new reservation form for the 2006 tours. It is included in this newsletter and can be used to make reservations. And, please pass this form on to anyone you know who might be interested.

Sincerely,
Bob Dieterich

From The Editor

Thank You

The California Chapter would like to thank those groups and individuals who sent congratulations regarding the Interpretative Plaque ceremony on February 11th. Special Thanks to Greg Franzwa, Jan Shupert-Arick of the Indiana Chapter, Sue Jacobson of the Illinois Chapter, John Harmon of the Ohio Chapter and President Bob Lichty of the Ohio Chapter.

E-Mail

We are currently up-dating our e-mail address book so that we can contact members in the event of changes to scheduled meetings and to keep you abreast of current affairs. There are times when we would like to contact members without having to rely on the Traveler. If you would please take a moment and e-mail Bob Dieterich at BobD@iname.com it would be most appreciated.

Summit Garage

It has come to the Chapter's attention that there is talk of demolishing the historic Summit Garage in the Altamont Pass, between Tracy and Livermore, California. If you have ever traveled this section of the Lincoln, you will know that this is the last remaining structure. All over-crossings and structures in the area have either been destroyed or removed. We are not sure at this time of the reasoning behind this move. Mike Kaelin and I spoke with the lessee, on the way home from the plaque dedication, and he commented that it is unclear to him whether the property has been sold or just what the landlord's intentions are, although he has been notified to vacate the premises. Mike Kaelin contacted Mr. Tom Egan, whose family has owned the Altamont property for decades. At first Mr. Egan was very defensive, until he realized that the LHA was interested only in the historical significance of the building and not trying to persuade him one way or the other as to selling. The building is currently being used as an automotive training facility for local youths who repair and sell donated vehicles. The property across from the garage is a storage yard, for the donated vehicles, and borders on being an eyesore. Mike and I felt that this condition might be what prompted Mr. Egan to serve an eviction notice. Mike plans to approach the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to see what can be done. The lessee has offered to have the Garage open for us on Driving Tour #1 in 2006.

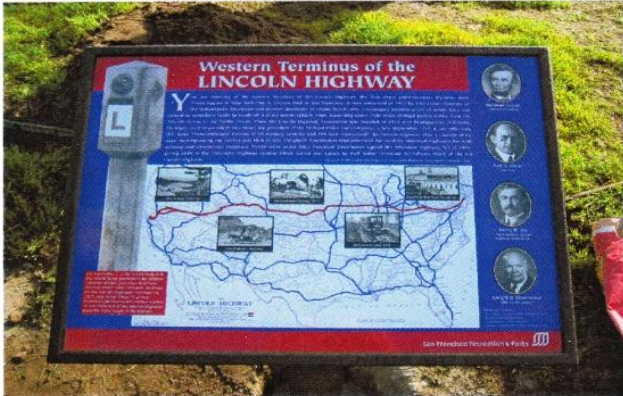
Gary Kinst

SUPER SATURDAY

Saturday February 11, 2006 was a banner day for George Clark; the California Chapters San Francisco based Lincoln Highway Historian. We began the day at 10:00am with the unveiling of George's Interpretative Plaque at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco's Lincoln Park.



The plaque is a work of art and will be cherished by all those who are fortunate to visit the Lincoln Highway's Western Terminus.



George and Norm Root clasp hands celebrating their achievements. George for the Interpretative Plaque, and Norm for his replica Western Terminus Marker. Both of these gentlemen are Great assets to the Lincoln Highway Association, and would make Carl Fisher proud.



The unveiling by Candi Mattson; Park Section Supervisor San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, George Clark; noted historian, and Zachary Salem; Lincoln Park Municipal Golf Course grounds keeper.



Members of the California Chapter pose for group photo after unveiling. George with, paperwork in-hand, anxiously awaits part two of this historic day

SUPER SATURDAY

CONTINUED

With the completion of the Interpretative Plaque dedication, those present followed George Clark from Lincoln Park to the Presidio Bowling Center where we were to have our Chapter meeting and lunch. George's day wasn't over yet. Arriving early, allowed George to lead us on a walking tour of the missing 1913-1921 link of the Lincoln Highway into the Presidio. Up to this time this route was speculated but unconfirmed. Armed with an Official 1921 Presidio Map, George guided us to an abandoned section of road between Presidio Blvd. and Arguello Blvd. part of which lie under Barnard Ave.



Intersection of Presidio and Barnard



Walking up Barnard Ave.



Portion of old roadway between Barnard and Arguello (now a hiking path)



Presidio Map and 1921 Road Guide Map

During the Chapter meeting George compared a 1921 map of the Presidio with a map from the 1921 Lincoln Highway Road Guide, confirming that the 1913 -1921 route followed Barnard Ave. The route was re-aligned in 1922 and followed Post St. to Geary and into Lincoln Park.

That Elusive Terminus Marker

By Norman Root

Early in 1996 I was casting around for projects for the Caltrans History Preservation Committee to get involved with. Esther Oyster (now Queneau) who was then National President of the Lincoln Highway Association, suggested that the terminus marker needed to be replaced.



On September 1, 1928, Boy Scouts had placed a unique Lincoln Highway concrete marker post at the end of the trail, in Lincoln Park, San Francisco. It had since disappeared!

Pictured at left is Eagle Scout Charles Blum in 1928, placing the final shovelful of earth around the marker post.

Photo courtesy of Craig Harmon

Replacing the terminus marker seemed like a worthy project, so I went forward with the idea to the Caltrans History Preservation Committee. But I needed two important things; permission to erect a monument and to find the original, or figure out how to get a replica.

A few years earlier, Lyn Protteau, thinking that the marker post must be in storage at the Palace of the Legion of Honor had tried to gain access. And when assured that they don't have it, demanded that she be shown into their storage vault to see for herself. She was quickly asked to leave the premises. A few years later, Craig Harmon with his smooth talking genre was invited into the vault to see what artifacts were in storage there. The "Three Shades" sculpture by Rodan is there.

I conferred with Richard Taylor in Ohio, thinking he would make a replica for us, but we argued over where the wording should be placed. I said on both sides, but he only wanted to do one side, besides how would we be able to transport a 300 pound marker to California. Oh well, I'll have to figure out how to build a replica myself. I obtained a plan sheet with all of the dimensions. I contacted Richard Taylor again by telephone and mail to learn how he makes his replica posts. Even though others had given up trying to figure out how to cut the various angles and irregular intersecting corners for the wooden form work, I finally carved the little pieces by hand to build the form. In the mean time, Mary Salazar, the California Chapter President, chased around the country trying to locate bronze castings of the Lincoln medallion. I tried, but never did learn how to cast my own. I wasted a whole bottle of oxygen and one of acetylene just trying to melt one small crucible of brass. The most difficult part of the project for me was trying to make the colored concrete for the Lincoln Highway logo. Several cement masons advised me, but none of their ideas worked to my satisfaction. I just kept experimenting.

For permission, I first approached the Palace of the Legion of Honor museum, in whose front yard the marker will be placed. Sorry, their jurisdiction does not cover the grounds. I'll have to go to the City Parks Department for that. As it turns out, the City of San Francisco Parks Department doesn't have jurisdiction over monuments, they'll have to take it to the Arts Commission for that. Well, requests going to the Arts Commission get lost in a deep black abyss and it takes ages before it ever sees the light of day again. But time was starting to run out. The 70th anniversary of placing the original markers was coming up on September 1, 1998. By mid 1998 I hadn't heard back from anyone, and thinking that a minimum of three months would be required to plan a ceremony and get appropriate publicity out, I abandoned the project for that year. Then just three days before September 1st, the City Parks Department called and said that the project was approved, for the bus stop site, just in time for the September 1st ceremony.

But let me back up a few months. I had gone to Lincoln Park to get a lay of the land. I was looking for the "Three Shades" Sculpture by Rodan. The original marker was placed at the foot of that statuary. But, it was no longer there! It has been several years since I've been here.

Pictured at right is Bernie Queneau and the Boy Scout advance party in front of the "Three Shades" pedestal in 1928

Photo courtesy of Bernie Queneau



So I scoped out three alternate locations nearby that may be appropriate. I had given the Parks Department these three alternate locations in the permit application. In the mean time, Esther Oyster had told me that I'd better coordinate my project with Craig Harmon since he is planning the same thing. I contacted Craig and received an elaborate binder entitled "Trip of a Lifetime", describing his Boy Scout reenactment project for 1998. As my mid 1998 drop dead date neared I hadn't heard from Craig Harmon either. When I finally got hold of him, he was already on the road, but without any scouts. He had waited until the last minute thinking the National Boy Scout Council was going to provide him with scouts for the reenactment. Things don't work that way Craig.

About a week after September 1st, a columnist wrote an article in the paper complaining about school starting earlier this year and one of his points was that since school was already open there weren't any scouts available to help with the reenactment ceremony on September 1st. WHAT! Did Craig Harmon put on a ceremony, and without contacting me? I found out Craig was in Wyoming. That son-of-gun had come and conducted a ceremony and was already on his way back home, and without even contacting me. I was mad! I jumped into my car and raced

towards San Francisco to see what had gone on. There was no new terminus marker in Lincoln Park. What had that columnist been talking about? No one at the newspaper could identify the columnist nor knew what I was talking about. When I finally got hold of Craig, he didn't know what I was talking about either, he was still headed west (several days late).

Now fast forward to the year 2000. We're planning for the California National Lincoln Highway Conference to be held in 2002. Why not set a replica terminus marker as part of the festivities? Out with the Caltrans History Preservation Committee, and in with the Lincoln Highway Association.

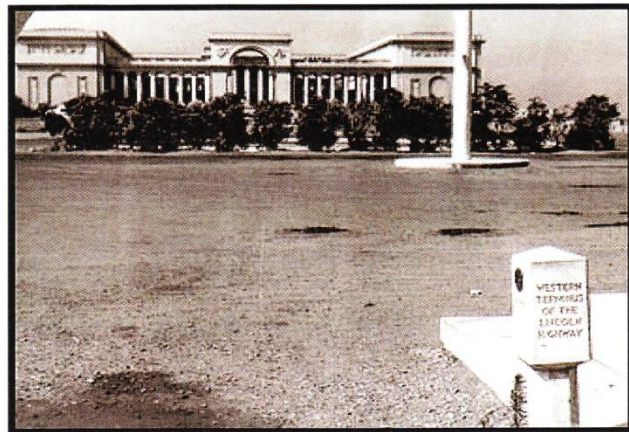
At the 2001 National Conference, Richard Taylor and myself had talked about ways of putting the lettering on the terminus marker. One of his ideas was to have it engraved by a cemetery monument maker. So when I cast the marker I made sure that the head was cast out of mortar only, with no rock aggregate that would have made engraving difficult and irregular.

Just as I was getting ready to pour concrete, George Clark called and said there are two medallions in the terminus marker. Stop the pour! I again raced to San Francisco to see what proof he had. He had discovered a photo in the March 1936 issue of "National Geographic" showing another side of the marker that we had never seen before. And sure enough there is a medallion on both sides. But we still don't know what's on the front face. We argued over

whether it is blank or has wording similar to the back panel.



Photo on left from National Geographic Society



Widely distributed view of the terminus marker that most were familiar with.

When I got the concrete post cast, I took it to the local monument maker to get the lettering engraved. But he refused to work with concrete, he'll only work on high grade granite. Now I have to figure out how do the lettering too. I bought several diamond tip grinding tools of various shapes. I selected a font on my computer that looked pretty close, then adjusted the print size to fit the face of the monument. Using carbon paper I traced the wording onto the concrete. I selected a promising looking diamond tip tool to begin the long laborious task. Wow, the diamond tip cut that concrete like butter. The whole job took about 20 minutes. The toughest

part of the job was trying to find a piece of carbon paper. You know, they don't hardly make that stuff anymore.

Well, after the marker was all finished George Clark called again. There is a post card on e-bay that no one has ever seen before that shows the front side of the marker. Squint your eye and you can barely detect yet another medallion on the front face. So I had to get a circle saw and masonry grinding wheel out to make a hole to set another medallion in.

When planning for the marker setting event we asked the Parks Department if they could pre-drill the post hole for us. Sorry, it's too close to the bus stop, that area is under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Transit Authority. No wonder the Parks Department was able to by-pass the Arts Commission and grant permission just in time for the original date, it wasn't on their property. The original application may still be languishing at the Arts Commission. Anyway, George Clark slipped the head grounds keeper a fifty dollar note and sure enough the post hole was already dug when we arrived with three bus loads of conventioners to replace the long missing marker.

We purposely placed the marker backwards so that the lettering would face traffic. Between three photos in this paper, all four sides of the marker are clearly visible.



Whew, it took six years but we finally got a replica marker set in Lincoln Park on June 14, 2002.

At left Bernie Queneau presents a California flag to Troop 17, just as one was presented to him by the Native Sons of the Golden West back in 1928.

After it was all over, George Clark said we need an interpretive plaque here to explain what the Lincoln Highway is. George was

right, of course, but I wasn't going to go through all of that again, so George did.



George started a campaign to get an interpretive plaque erected at this site. He is more skillful than I, it only took him four years to fight his way through the labyrinth of Arts Commission road blocks. Actually I think the Parks Department by-passed the Arts Commission again. But that story will have to be told by George at a later date.

At left, early visitors enjoy the new interpretive plaque placed on February 11, 2006.

MARK YOUR 2006 CALENDAR

Saturday April 1 12:00 noon	State Chapter Meeting Yager's Tap House and Grille 727 Trader Lane, Folsom, CA.
Saturday April 29	Tour #1 Sacramento to San Francisco via Altamont Pass
June 13 - June 16	14 th National Conference Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Saturday June 24	Tour #2 Sacramento to South Tahoe via Echo Summit
Saturday July 1 12:00 noon	State Chapter Meeting Location to be announced
Saturday August 26	Tour #3 Sacramento to Verdi Nevada Via Donner Pass
Saturday October 7 12:00 noon	State Chapter Meeting Location to be announced
Saturday October 28	Tour #4 Sacramento to San Francisco Via Yolo Causeway / Carquinez Bridge

NOTE: All tours depart the Holiday Inn Sacramento Northeast, Madison @ I 80
at 9:00 am.



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**THE
TRAVELER**

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