

## **THE NATIONAL OLD TRAILS ROAD**

### **Part 2: See America First in 1915**

by

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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

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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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 400<sup>th</sup> 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 identify, [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 63<sup>rd</sup> 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 64<sup>th</sup> 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 leggins 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 Shackelford "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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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

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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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 or 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.”