

# The National Old Trails Road

## Part 1: The Quest for a National Road

by  
**Richard F. Weingroff**

The idea of a transcontinental highway had been around since the 1890's. General Roy Stone, head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Road Inquiry (first ancestor of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)), suggested combining existing roads into a network and recommended that ". . . the most effective lines that could be adopted for this purpose would be an Atlantic and a Pacific Coast line, joined by a continental highway from Washington to San Francisco." The transcontinental route should link highways along the East and West Coasts. The League of American Wheelmen *Bulletin and Good Roads* magazine (November 19, 1907), quoted General Stone as referring to the idea as "The Great Road of America." He knew his idea was too bold to be adopted at the time, but he explained:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Missouri Cross-State Highway**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Woman's Old Trails Road**

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

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



**Miss Elizabeth Gentry**

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

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

She explained the origins of the movement:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The pamphlet estimated the cost of the project:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Old Trails Association of Missouri**

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

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



**Prof. Walter Williams**

Judge Lowe was a member of the Executive Committee.

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

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

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

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

The date was to be filled in later.

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

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

### **A. L. Westgard And The Trail To Sunset**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That was essentially the route of the Trail to Sunset.

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

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

Extensive work had been completed:

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

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

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

### **The First National Old Trails Road Convention**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

. . .

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

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

### **Routing Disputes: The New and Old Santa Fe Trail**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Miller replied:

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

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

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

## Routing Disputes: The Ocean-to-Ocean Highway

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

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

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

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

Colonel Potter also explained how the association was named:

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

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

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



**US map showing proposed location of National Old Trails Road**

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

On another matter, Colonel Potter offered a suggestion:

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

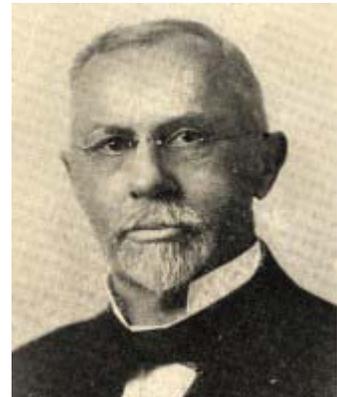
The motion was carried. In addition, the convention resolved:

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

### **Judge J. M. Lowe**

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

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



**Judge J. M. Lowe**

He suggested an alternative:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He concluded:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Professor Williams continued:

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

In accepting the Presidency, Judge Lowe began:

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

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

Judge Lowe then discussed his views on highway development:

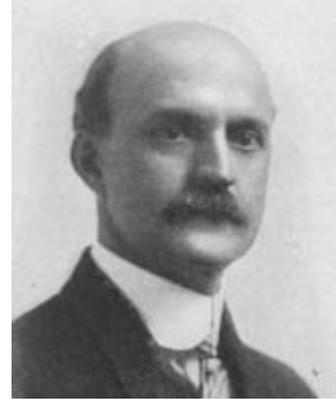
Now, personally, just one word, because a great deal, I suspect, remains to be done, as most all of you know without my telling you, that in selecting me, you have selected a president who is in favor of good roads. (Applause.) I have reached a point where, perhaps, I have not quite as much patience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

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

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

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

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



**Jesse Taylor**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Miss Gentry's Testimony**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **On The Road**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## American Road Congress, 1912

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Buffalo Bill**

William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody had been a member of the Advisory Committee to the Missouri Good Roads Committee, but in October 1912 he took another step in support of the cause. Miss Gentry announced that Buffalo Bill had donated a stagecoach to the Old Trails Road Committee of the D.A.R. According to an account by Miss Gentry in the February 1913 issue of *Better Roads*, the gift came about by accident:



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Judge Lowe, in his speech, explained:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Southwest Rival**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Misconception, 1913**

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

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

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

## **The National Highways Association**

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

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

To read about the National Highways Association, see:  
[www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/davis.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/davis.htm)

## **On Capitol Hill**

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

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

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



**Congressman Dorsey W. Shackleford**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In closing his testimony, Judge Lowe said:

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

The contrast was with the Lincoln Highway Association.

### **The AAA Federal Aid Good Roads Convention**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Second National Convention, 1913**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The association also dropped "Ocean-to-Ocean" from its name. Hereafter, it was known simply as the National Old Trails Road Association. The new slate of vice presidents and state organizers reflected the change as well. California would now be represented by Hutchison (vice president) and Ralph E. Swing (organizer) of San Bernardino. John R. Whiteside (vice president) of Kingman and Father Cypriano Rian Vabre of Flagstaff represented Arizona. The representatives from New Mexico were Harvey M. Shields (vice president) of Dawson and C. C. Manning of Gallup.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Lincoln Highway**

Resolution No. 4 stated:

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

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

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

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

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

### **Additional Resolutions**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Confirming the Route Change

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He concluded with a warning about the Lincoln Highway:

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

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

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

### **Lt. Edward F. Beale's Wagon Road**

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

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

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

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

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

The Epilogue described the point of the booklet:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **On The Cumberland Road**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **American Road Congress in Detroit**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Logan Page told the delegates:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Congressman William Borland**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Before The Good Roads Committee**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **N.O.T. & The PPOO**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Judge Lowe Called A Polecat**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That brought him to his own State.

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

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

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

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

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

The National Old Trails Association,

Kansas City, Mo., February 14, 1914

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_, Mo.

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

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

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

Hoping that this is not asking too much,

Yours truly,

J. M. Lowe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He concluded:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Judge Lowe Responds to the Peacock Lane and Polecat Speech**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **What is a Post Road?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Signposting the National Old Trails Road**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On July 10, the *Eye* reported that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He concluded his exhortation by declaring:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **American Road Congress**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

After summarizing other activities in Missouri, Miss Mitchell concluded:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Resolutions, 1914**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **A New Highway Organization**

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

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

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

END PART 1  
to be continued

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