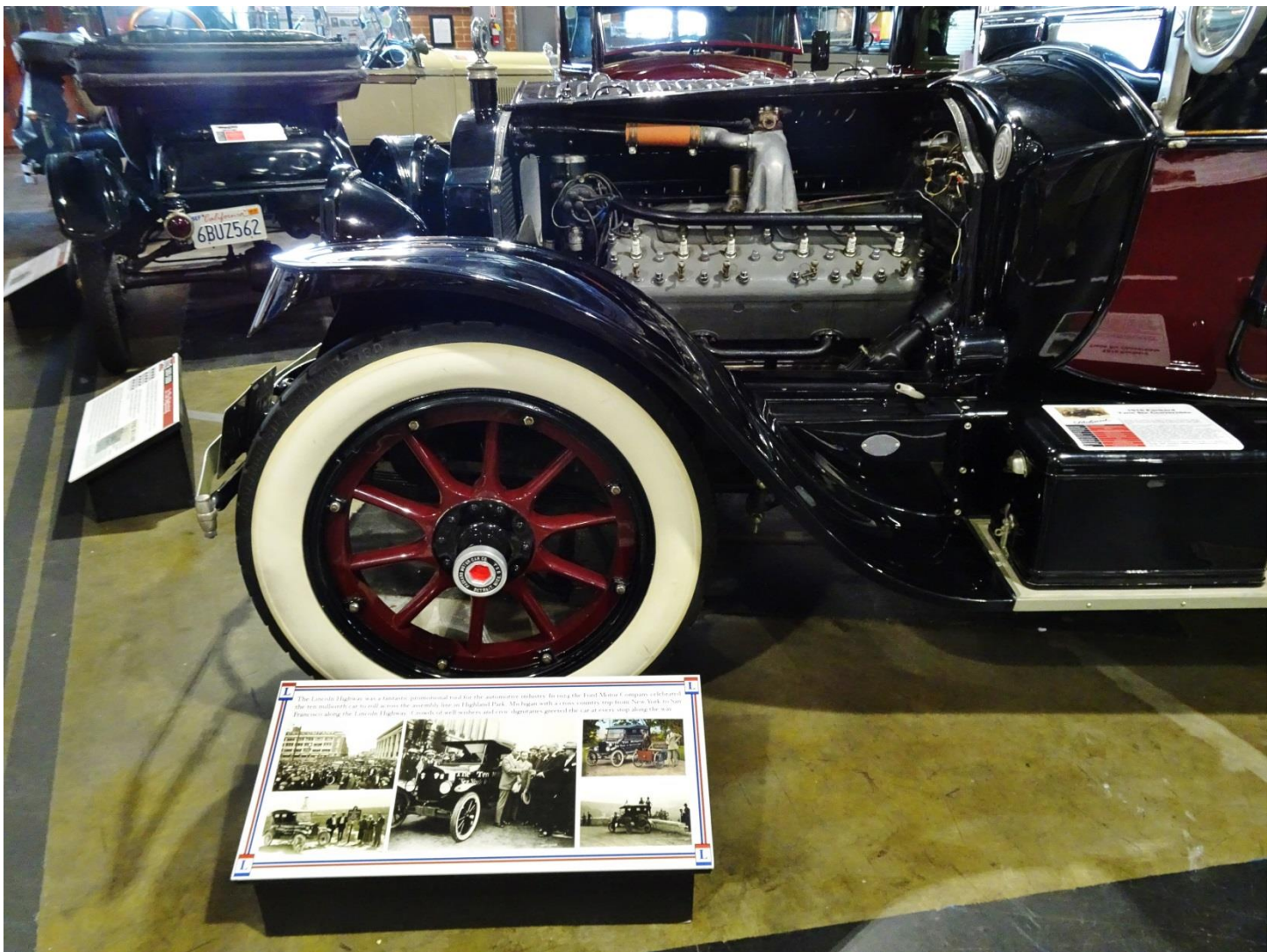




Here are some images of the Lincoln Highway signage at the Automobile Driving Museum in El Segundo, California.

Check out their website: <https://www.automobiledrivingmuseum.org/>

Great collection of working vehicles. On Sunday they will take you on rides in selected cars.



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The Lincoln Highway was a fantastic promotional tool for the automotive industry. In 1924 the Ford Motor Company celebrated the ten millionth car to roll across the assembly line in Highland Park, Michigan with a cross-country trip from New York to San Francisco along the Lincoln Highway. Crowds of well-wishers and civic dignitaries greeted the car at every stop along the way.

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## We Need Roads to Make the Car a Useful Device

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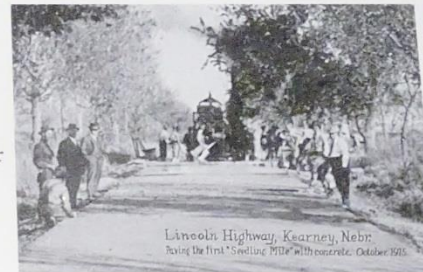
The story of the Lincoln Highway starts with a man named Carl Graham Fisher who made his fortune developing acetylene lights for cars with his Prest-O-Lite company. He had a vision for cars being able to drive long distances and becoming everyman's transportation. Before the cross country highway was conceived, automobiles were seen mainly as farm implements, or expensive toys for the wealthy.



Carl G. Fisher  
Creator of the Lincoln Highway

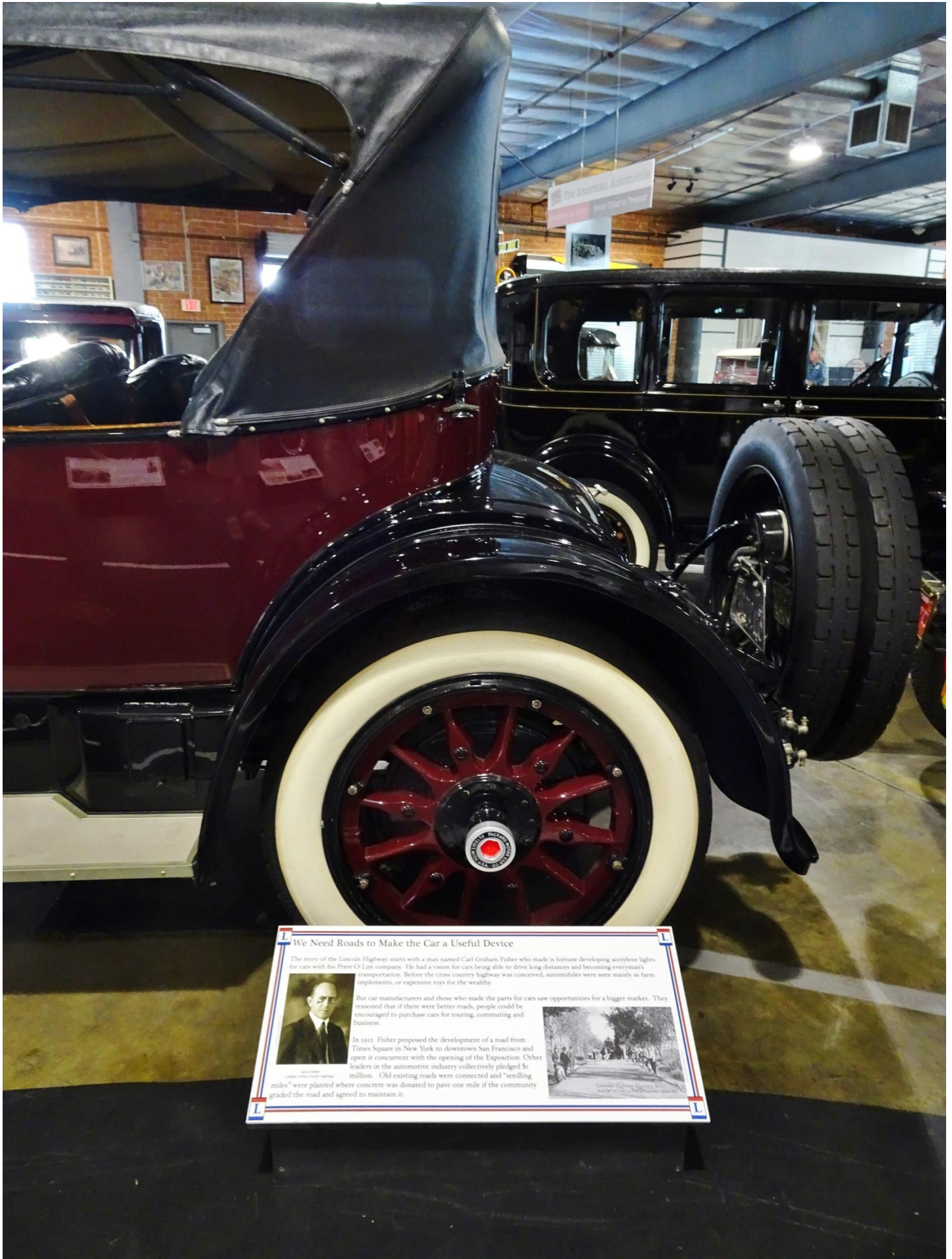
But car manufacturers and those who made the parts for cars saw opportunities for a bigger market. They reasoned that if there were better roads, people could be encouraged to purchase cars for touring, commuting and business.

In 1912 Fisher proposed the development of a road from Times Square in New York to downtown San Francisco and open it concurrent with the opening of the Exposition. Other leaders in the automotive industry collectively pledged \$1 million. Old existing roads were connected and "seedling miles" were planted where concrete was donated to pave one mile if the community graded the road and agreed to maintain it.



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### We Need Roads to Make the Car a Useful Device

The story of the Lincoln Highway starts with a man named Carl Graham Fisher who made his fortune developing acetylene lights for cars with his Prest-O-Lite company. He had a vision for cars being able to drive long distances and becoming everyday transportation. Before the cross country highway was conceived, automobiles were seen mainly as farm implements, or expensive toys for the wealthy.



Carl Graham Fisher  
founder of the Lincoln Highway

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Col. Eisenhower with Harvey Firestone Jr. (center) at a rest stop at the Firestone mansion in Ohio. The Firestone Tire Co. supported the convoy with spare tires and was part of the industrial team promoting the Lincoln Highway.



One of the Lincoln Highway's greatest contributions to future highway development occurred in 1919, when the U.S. Army undertook its first transcontinental motor convoy. The highly publicized truck train, promoted by the Lincoln Highway Association, was intended, in part, to dramatize the need for better main highways and continued Federal aid. The expedition was led by Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower and traversed from Washington D.C. to Oakland, California in 63 days.

The convoy made its way west via the Lincoln Highway (now U.S. 30), passing through some 350 towns. Half of the distance traveled was over dirt roads, wheel paths, desert sands, and mountain trails. Eisenhower later said the roads they encountered "varied from average to non-existent."

The experience, which Eisenhower later described as "a genuine adventure" left a lifelong impression on him. Thirty-seven years later, as President of the United States, Eisenhower signed into law the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, funding the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways which established more than 41,000 miles of superhighway.





Col. Eisenhower with Harvey Firestone (center) at a rest stop at the Firestone mansion in Ohio. The Firestone Tire Co. supported the convoy with spare tires and was part of the industrial team promoting the Lincoln Highway.



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Transition to the Lincoln Highway exposed a wide variety of eating establishments, often called "road cafes," "road diners," and "road houses." Many of these structures were built with minimal and novel designs such as the famous Tepee diner.

During the 1930s, full-scale restaurant units were mass-produced in factories and shipped to cities. These were called "Shoney cars," or "Shoney's," for short, to link them to the public's mind with elegant railroad dining.

Expanded menus, better service and indoor bathrooms helped attract new customers to diners—including women and the growing number of automobile tourists. They were no longer just the last food or culture we knew today.

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Travellers on the Lincoln Highway enjoyed a wide variety of eating establishments, often family run cafes, fried chicken shacks, and waffle houses. Many of them attracted motorists with unusual and novel designs such as the famous Teapot diner.

During the 1920s, full-scale restaurant units were mass produced in factories and shipped to order. These were called "dining cars," or "diners" for short, to link them in the public's mind with elegant railroad dining.

Expanded menus, booth service and indoor bathrooms helped attract new customers to diners—including women and the growing number of automobile tourists. They were to precursor to the fast food car culture we know today.



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As more and more people drove across America on the Lincoln Highway there was an increasing demand for a good place to lay your head. Early travellers on the highway were "roughing it", camping in the countryside, along the road, or in free municipal campgrounds, often in city parks. "Tourist camps" soon popped up offering amenities such as hot showers and kitchens. By the 1940s and 50s tourist courts offered the conveniences we associate with hotels and motels, including telephones and swimming pools. The development of the interstate highway system brought the era of the "mom and pop" tourist court to an end as corporate franchised hotels took emerged.



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As part of the promotion of the highway, the Lincoln Highway Association commissioned several statues of President Lincoln to place in key locations along the route.

Among the industry backers of the Lincoln Highway Project, none was more enthusiastic than Henry B. Joy, president of the Packard Motor Car Company who served as the first president of the Lincoln Highway Association. He proposed the highway serve as a national memorial to Abraham Lincoln and he guided the selection of the route of the highway. His charisma and persuasive oratory were instrumental in recruiting municipal and state participation.

The Packard Motor Co. donated \$150,000 (the equivalent of 3 Million of today's dollars), and the Packard advertising department was drafted to promote the highway. Joy himself drove the highway several times and would later say "The Lincoln Highway is the greatest thing I ever did."

The Lincoln Highway provided the first marked auto route from coast to coast and the number of transcontinental auto trips did increase after its completion. Prior to 1912, there had been less than 12 transcontinental auto trips. In 1913, the first year of the Lincoln Highway, there were approximately 150. However, by 1915 there were between 5,000 and 10,000, and by 1923 motorists had taken 25,000 coast to coast auto trips!



Mid-continent on the Lincoln Highway in 1915! President Joy at the wheel of the official Packard Twin-Six negotiating the gumbo mud near La Mouille, Iowa, enroute to the Panama-Pacific Exposition. (Photo taken by A. F. Bement and H. B. Joy in 1915)

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