

Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

The Lincoln Highway	Nevada
Name of Multiple Property Listing	State

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Statement of Historic Contexts

1. Introduction

This section provides a state-level historic context that identifies the historic themes, National Register of Historic Places (National Register) areas of significance, and chronological period associated with the Lincoln Highway/U.S. Highway 50 (US 50) in Nevada. The historic context informs the registration requirements in the next section to identify and evaluate property types associated with the Lincoln Highway/US 50. It is to be used for completing determinations of eligibility for the associated property types for listing in the National Register and to complete individual National Register Nominations.

This section provides the historic context statement of the overall history and physical development of the Lincoln Highway as an early named transcontinental named highway and its designation as a numbered U.S. Highway. The historic context discusses how roadbed segments that carried the Lincoln Highway in Nevada fit within the development of early vehicular roadways in Nevada and later state and federal transportation policy and design as a U.S. Highway. The Lincoln Highway was the first east-west transcontinental transportation corridor crossing Nevada in the early twentieth century for automobile travel; however, at the state level after the Victory Highway/US 40 emerged it was increasingly relegated to a secondary position after 1926 and into the early 1930s.

Its history as the Lincoln Highway is associated with important national and state trends in early-twentieth-century transportation development under National Register *Criterion A* in the area of Transportation and for exhibiting important roadway design and construction under *Criterion C* in the area of Engineering.¹ The Lincoln Highway was one of the first cross-country automobile routes associated with the Good Roads Movement that was widely promoted by private interests and extended from New York City to San Francisco. The Lincoln Highway Association and local boosters saw the economic potential and benefit of improved roads and established the route in 1913 largely on an existing system of unimproved roads in Nevada that roughly paralleled the earlier Central Overland Route. The Lincoln Highway represents among the earliest successful campaigns to develop and promote a transcontinental route in Nevada resulting from the Good Roads Movement. After the designation of the Victory Highway in 1921 and that highways' designation as a U.S. Highway in 1927, the Lincoln Highway's importance at the state level diminished and it developed as a secondary route providing interstate connection to Utah to the east and California to the west. The Nevada Department of Highways (NDH) improved and maintained the Lincoln Highway as US 50 and

¹ National Park Service, *Lincoln Highway: Special Resource Study, Environmental Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2004).

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played an increasingly important role in its development. Additionally, state road advocates and local boosters increasingly promoted the route as a U.S. Highway, and decreased its promotion as the Lincoln Highway. By 1937, the LHA of Nevada had been replaced by an organization that promoted the route as US 50, which signaled the end of its active promotion as the Lincoln Highway. Two years later, the Lincoln Highway/US 50 became part of the national strategic network of roads as an alternate secondary route leading up to World War II. As a result, distinct chronological periods related to the LHA and NDH stewardship emerged for the Lincoln Highway/US 50. The chronological periods are summarized at the end of the historic context.

Following the National Park Service guidelines for multiple property submissions, “the time period covered by the historic context is based on the period of time when the events significant to the historic context are known to have occurred.”² This MPDF provides a chronological period related to its role and use as a named transcontinental highway in Section E, *Statement of Historic Contexts*; however, the section also includes a discussion of the development of this highway after 1937 to address its history and physical development as a U.S. Highway, US 50. This period is provided to understand its development after its role as a named transcontinental highway and to assist in identifying and evaluating associated property types in Section F. This MPDF does not address the significance of U.S. Highways in Nevada and properties that fall outside the chronological period identified for the Lincoln Highway, 1913-1937. Associated properties prior to this period or after this period may possess historical importance for themes not addressed in this MPDF, such as its role as an early U.S. Highway, and may need to be evaluated for National Register eligibility for other themes and areas of significance separately.

As a linear transportation structure, the areas of Transportation and Engineering are the primary areas of significance for the Lincoln Highway/US 50; however, during the chronological periods, properties associated with Lincoln Highway/US 50 in Nevada may represent other important themes. Associated property types may gain significance from the additional National Register areas of significance described below.

The Lincoln Highway/US 50 in Nevada facilitated commercial development in communities and stops along the route. Businesses catering to travelers and tourists developed along portions of the highway to provide needed goods and services in addition to serving local residents. The presence of the highway led to substantial numbers of automobile-related businesses such as restaurants,

² National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, 6.

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motels, service garages, and gas stations in direct response to through traffic along the route. Auto-related commercial development in close proximity to the Lincoln Highway/US 50 serving the through-traveler represent an important trend in commercial development under *Criterion A: Commerce*.

Noted for its scenic landscape and outdoor recreation, tourism became one of Nevada's major industries beginning in the 1910s. Legislation passed in 1931 legalized gambling and enacted the most relaxed divorce laws in the country. In general, travel along the Lincoln Highway/US 50 to a variety of tourist destinations in Nevada was actively promoted by auto clubs; chambers of commerce; local booster groups; the hotel, motel, and gaming industries; and the LHA. As such, the Lincoln Highway/US 50 in Nevada served as an important tourist route. The highway provided direct access to recreational attractions and destinations. Tourist attractions in close proximity to the Lincoln Highway/US 50 promoted to the through-traveler represent an important trend under *Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation*.

Depression-era federal work-relief programs enacted in the 1930s as part of New Deal legislation of the Roosevelt administration provided funding for road and bridge building and improvements that employed thousands of unemployed persons in Nevada. Numerous projects completed under New Deal funding or labor were completed in the state during the 1930s. Projects that improved the Lincoln Highway/US 50 represent federal work-relief programs and are associated with important efforts to alleviate unemployment and improve transportation infrastructure under *Criterion A: Government/Politics*.

Portions of the Lincoln Highway east of Fernley through Reno to the California border were co-signed with the Victory Highway, another early named transcontinental highway that crossed northern Nevada. The portion of the Lincoln Highway co-signed with the Victory Highway may gain significance for the themes and areas of significance associated identified in the MPDF, *Victory Highway in Nevada, 1921-1939*.

The historic context and themes that follow provide an overview of the development of roads in northern Nevada and the establishment and evolution of the Lincoln Highway and its development as a U.S. Highway in northern Nevada. As the highway was improved and realigned over time, it was cosigned with other roads and portions were designated as other State or U.S. Highways. These changes are generally addressed in the historic context and more detailed information on the State and U.S. Highways is provided in Section G. References to individual properties and projects in the historic context are provided as representative examples only and are not meant to serve as

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comprehensive list or to suggest that they meet the registration requirements; each property must be evaluated under this MPDF on a case-by-case basis.

2. Establishing Transportation Corridors Across Northern Nevada, 1840s-1880

The Nevada landscape is represented by arid sandy deserts, grassy valleys, forested mountain slopes, and rugged mountains. Situated almost entirely within the Great Basin, a desert area that reaches into six states, Nevada can be divided into three main land regions from east to west: the Columbia Plateau, Basin and Range, and Sierra Nevada regions. The Columbia Plateau region encompasses land in the northeastern corner of the state, which consists of areas of lava bedrock cut by rivers into deep canyons, and open prairie near the Idaho border. Salt flats in Utah and a series of passes define the eastern edge of the Basin and Range region. The vast central Basin and Range region includes numerous north-south mountain ranges separated by broad valleys with streams.³ Overall, the Great Basin includes the east-west Humboldt River, historically an important water source for those living and travelling through northern Nevada, and paralleled by many of the early trails and overland routes, including present-day Interstate Highway 80 (I-80). The high rugged mountains of the Sierra Nevada define the western edge of the Great Basin along the California border. Collectively, these land features posed challenges to early travel across northern Nevada.⁴

(a) Early trails and overland routes

In the mid-nineteenth century travel corridors across many western states consisted of Native American trails and the wagon roads and paths forged by emigrant settlers and traders. Overland emigrants first traveled through northern Nevada in the 1840s on their way to California. Others followed, and by 1844 the various paths coalesced into a continuous wagon road between Missouri and California known as the California Trail. The main California Trail (see Figure 1) entered the northeastern corner of Nevada from Fort Hall, Idaho, and continued southwest to Humboldt Wells (present-day town of Wells), located at the headwaters of the Humboldt River and a popular stopping point. From there it continued west along the north side of the Humboldt River to Carlin Canyon, just past Elko, where it crossed over to the south side of the river and continued west to the Sierra Nevada mountain range. As outlined here, the California Trail was a precursor to a portion of the Lincoln Highway from Fernley through Reno to the California state line. The Victory Highway, a later transcontinental auto route, followed the California Trail from Wells to the California border and was cosigned with the Lincoln Highway west of Fernley. The remainder of the route followed portions of

³ "The Geography of Nevada," *Nevada*, June 18, 2018, http://www.netstate.com/states/geography/nv_geography.htm.

⁴ National Park Service, National Trails Intermountain Region, *National Historic Trails Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guide - Across Nevada* (National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2012), 4.

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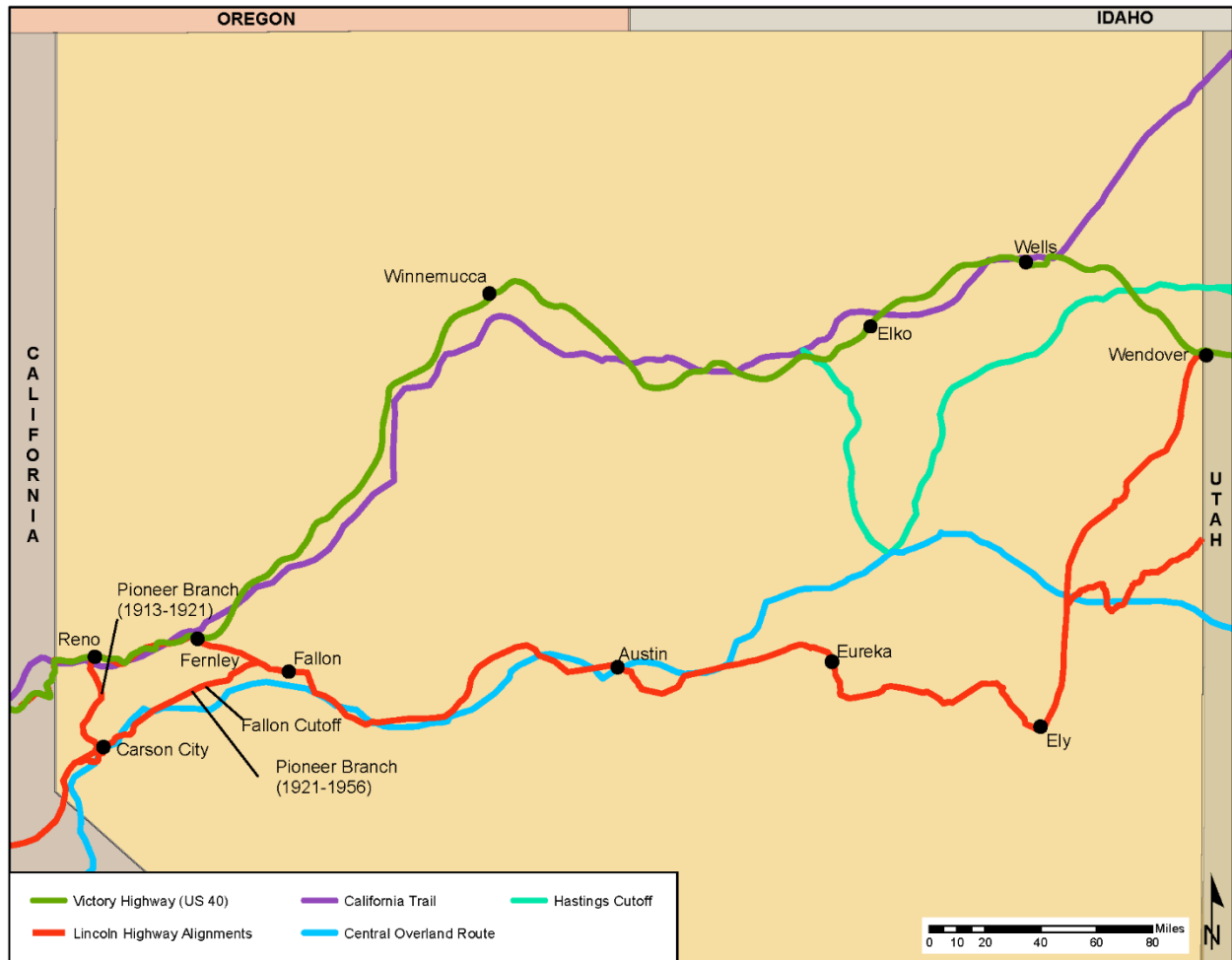
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the Central Overland Route, a subsequent trail established after the gold rush of the mid-to-late 1840s, discussed below.



*Figure 1. Early transportation corridors across northern Nevada.*⁵

The discovery of gold at Coloma, California, in 1848 sparked a westward rush to California. For a brief time between approximately 1846 and 1850, an alternate route to the California Trail, known as

⁵ Map created by Mead & Hunt based on the following sources: "California Trail System," Snowy Range Reflections, Journal of Sierra Nevada History & Biography, Sierra College: Fall 2009, vol.2, no. 2, available online at <https://www.sierracollege.edu/ejournals/jsnhb/v2n2/trails.html>; "Official Map of the Lincoln Highway," Lincoln Highway Association, available online at <https://www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org/map/>. This map illustrates the general location of the main transportation corridors across northern Nevada during the early twentieth century. A detailed map of the Lincoln Highway is provided as additional information to this MPDF which reflects changes to its alignment over time.

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Hasting's Cutoff, provided a shortcut along the south side of the Great Salt Lake around the Ruby Mountains before looping back to the north where it rejoined the California Trail west of Elko along the route that later served as the alignment of the Victory Highway. Hasting's Cutoff did not end up saving any time and was eventually abandoned.⁶

In 1859 the U.S. Army's Corp of Topographic Engineers sent Captain James H. Simpson on an expedition across central Utah and Nevada to find a more direct wagon route for crossing the Great Basin between Salt Lake City and California. The existing California Trail skirted the north end of the Great Salt Lake; however, finding a route around the southern end would save travelers time and approximately 200 miles. Simpson kept a daily journal and detailed account of the route and environs and prepared a report within a few years of completing the expedition. This expedition is credited with opening a travel corridor through northern Nevada known as the Central Overland Route (see Figure 1 above). The Central Overland Route extended south from Salt Lake City to U.S. Army Camp Floyd, near Fairfield, Utah. From there the route continued generally west, through Stillwater and the Forty Mile Desert, along the Carson River into Eagle Valley, on to Carson City, Nevada, and into California. The Pony Express, a short-lived horseback mail service between St. Joseph, Missouri, and San Francisco, California, operated between April 1860 and October 1861 and followed the Central Overland Route, as did other mail and stagecoach lines. California mining had begun to decline by the time of Simpson's expedition, but the discovery in 1859 of placer gold near present-day Dayton and a rich silver ore near Virginia City fueled a resurgence of westward traffic along the Central Overland Route as prospectors rushed to find their fortunes in the Comstock area of western Nevada.⁷ Nearly a half-century later the earliest iterations of the Lincoln Highway in Nevada and subsequent US 50 generally followed the wagon roads already in use and cleared along the Central Overland Route and the California Trail.⁸

⁶ National Park Service, National Trails Intermountain Region, *National Historic Trails Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guide - Across Nevada*, 11–14.

⁷ Joseph V. Tingley, Robert C. Horton, and Francis C. Lincoln, *Outline of Nevada Mining History*, Special Publication 15 (Reno, Nev.: Mackay School of Mines, University of Nevada, 1993), 12; J.F. Bogardus, "The Great Basin," *Economic Geography* 6, no. 4 (October 1930): 328; National Park Service, National Trails Intermountain Region, *National Historic Trails Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guide - Across Nevada*, 20; Charles Zeier, Ron Reno, and Mary Parrish, *An Archaeological Inventory of the Kings Canyon Road, Carson City, Nevada* (prepared for Carson City Planning Division and Parks and Open Space, February 2014), 26–27.

⁸ Jesse G. Petersen, *A Route for the Overland Stage: James H. Simpson's 1859 Trail Across the Great Basin* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2008), 2–6; National Park Service, National Trails Intermountain Region, *National Historic Trails Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guide - Across Nevada*, 44–45; "Pony Express Territory," *Pony Express Territory, Nevada*, 2016, <http://ponyexpressnevada.com/>; Brian Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2005), 228; Jennifer E. Riddle and Elizabeth Dickey, *Building Nevada's Highways*, Images of America (Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 66–73.

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(b) The Central Pacific Railroad

A portion of the Lincoln Highway from Fernley through Reno, comprising a cosigned portion of the route with the Victory Highway, also followed the general route of the Central Pacific Railroad from north of Fernley on to Reno to the California state line. The Central Pacific Railroad had its beginnings in 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Pacific Railroad Act that provided federal aid for constructing a transcontinental railroad. The bill stipulated that the Union Pacific Railroad would build east to west and the Central Pacific would build eastward from California. Initial plans anticipated that the two railroads would meet somewhere between the Utah Territory and the border of Nevada and California. In 1863 the Central Pacific began laying tracks east from downtown Sacramento, California. Nevada achieved statehood in 1864, and by 1867 the railroad had reached the edge of the new state near the summit of Donner Pass in the Sierra Nevada. Once they reached Nevada, crews extended the railroad across the northern part of the state toward Utah. The route of the Central Pacific Railroad in northern Nevada generally followed the Humboldt River. Several towns were established along its path, including Reno in 1868. The two railroads met in 1869 at Promontory Point, Utah, signaling completion of the first transcontinental railroad. The railroad and others that followed became the preferred method of transportation across Nevada.⁹

3. Early Roads in Nevada, 1880s-1920

Nationally, rail was the preferred method of transportation prior to the twentieth century, while the country's road system consisted of existing trails and wagon routes to serve routine local travel. During this period the more than 1.5 million miles of rural roads in the United States were, with only a few exceptions, largely unimproved, remaining unpaved with limited grading. Until the early 1900s funding for local roads came from right-of-way donations, local taxes, and statute labor. In states that retained the statute labor system, able-bodied male citizens living along a road were required to work on upkeep and road repair a certain number of days per year or pay the equivalent in cash.¹⁰ Dense population, trade, and industry in cities provided a strong base to fund thousands of miles of improved streets, and other improvements such as sewers and street lights. Although taxes and right-of-way donations amounted to a large investment at the time, the funds were spread so thinly in rural areas that few residents enjoyed adequate road service (see Figure 2).¹¹

⁹ "Central Pacific Railroad," *American Rails*, 2018, <https://www.american-rails.com/cpr.html>; "History," Nevada DOT, n.d., <https://www.nevadadot.com/mobility/rail-planning/history>.

¹⁰ Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, *America's Highways, 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program*, 43.

¹¹ Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, *America's Highways, 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program* (Federal Highway Administration, 1976), 37.

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Figure 2. Image illustrating poor condition of many early-twentieth-century roads.¹²

Nevada generally followed the national trends, and early roads developed slowly. New road systems serving local traffic developed along the earlier California Trail route to the north and a network of local roads and toll roads for freight traffic had been established between towns and mining camps along the Central Overland Route. Early toll roads were owned and constructed by private companies under franchises issued by counties. During this era the construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges was supervised by county commissioners, and as toll road franchises lapsed, the roads gradually reverted to county ownership. Public roads were financed through taxes levied on residents, and the sparse populations of Nevada's counties were often unable to adequately support these initiatives.¹³ Improving and maintaining early roads was a continual challenge, as Nevada was the least populated state in the nation prior to 1900 and lacked resources to support large-scale road building.¹⁴

¹² Richard Weingroff, "Federal Aid Road Act of 1916: Building The Foundation," *U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration*, August 16, 2018, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/96summer/p96su2.cfm>.

¹³ Summit EnviroSolutions, Inc., *A Transect Across the Great Basin: Reno, Nevada to Spanish Fork, Utah, A Class III Cultural Resources Inventory* (prepared for ENSR, February 2001), 4–5.

¹⁴ Compiled and edited by Richard Forstall, *Population of States and Counties of the United States: 1790-1990* (Department of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of Census, n.d.), 105.

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(a) Good Roads Movement

The "Good Roads Movement" emerged in the late nineteenth century in response to the poor general condition of the nation's road system.¹⁵ Transporting goods to market was difficult over bad roads, which placed financial strain on farmers. As the disparity between urban and rural roads grew, residents and civic leaders who recognized the economic impacts of bad roads were among the first to advocate for improvements. Some states enacted "good road laws" in the 1880s to support road development; however, the Good Roads Movement really gained momentum when organized bicyclists joined the cause.¹⁶ A group of cyclists organized as the League of American Wheelman in 1880, the first of many organizations to promote road improvements as part of the Good Roads movement.¹⁷ Automobile enthusiasts joined the cause beginning in the 1890s and helped to bolster public awareness of the need for adequate road networks. With the motto "lifting our people out of the mud," Good Roads advocates pressured the federal government to reevaluate its role in the development, financing, and maintenance of roads. They also lobbied for state and local involvement and financial resources in road building and maintenance activities.¹⁸

After 1901 mass production made automobiles more affordable to a large portion of the population. Consequently, the number of vehicles in use in the United States skyrocketed from around 55,000 vehicles in 1904 to almost one-half million in 1910.¹⁹ Between 1910 to 1916 the country continued to experience a rapid increase in the number of motor vehicles, yet the overall mileage of improved roads increased slowly.²⁰

Numerous national, state, and local groups were involved in road promotion through the National Good Roads Association, established by chapters in numerous locations across the country, including Nevada. For example, the American Automobile Association (AAA) was founded by motorists in 1902, and in 1908 AAA launched the *American Motorist*, a periodical that frequently featured articles in support of good roads. Between 1910 and 1915 the movement received regular coverage by League of American Wheelman magazine *Good Roads*, and other national publications

¹⁵ Paul Daniel Marriott, "The Preservation Office Guide to Historic Roads," June 2010, 36, <http://www.historicroads.org/documents/GUIDE.pdf>.

¹⁶ Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, *America's Highways, 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program*, 42.

¹⁷ Melissa Keane and Simon Bruder, *Good Roads Everywhere: A History of Road Building in Arizona* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Arizona Department of Transportation, March 2004), 25.

¹⁸ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska," Statewide, Nebraska, Section E, Page 2.

¹⁹ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska," Section E, Page 2.

²⁰ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Third Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, 1921-1922* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1923), 18.

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such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Harper's Magazine*.²¹ Local chapters of the Good Roads Association organized in Nevada, and by 1914 a statewide Nevada Automobile Association had been established, and local chapters such as the Carson Good Roads Association formed to accomplish road improvements at a regional level.²² Efforts of these groups were a precursor to the development of private groups that designated and promoted early named transcontinental automobile routes.

(b) Early federal and state involvement in road building

Federal involvement in road development began in the late nineteenth century and laid the groundwork for the improvement of existing local roads, and the formation of interstate road networks designed as named transcontinental routes. In 1893 the U.S. Department of Agriculture formed the Office of Road Inquiry, which was charged with examining the system of road management throughout the nation, investigating the best road building practices, and assisting with dissemination of the information.²³ The entity evolved into a resource of technical information regarding roads, and regularly released bulletins and circulars addressing road construction and administration issues.²⁴ Established in 1896, the Rural Free Delivery Service (postal delivery) broadened support for an adequate road system as local delivery could be denied due to poor road conditions.²⁵ The Office of Public Roads replaced the Office of Road Inquiry in 1905 with the passage of the Agriculture Appropriations Act. The new federal road agency continued testing, issued typical material specifications and testing procedures, and provided roadbed construction guidelines in 1911, and bridge specifications shortly thereafter.²⁶ Highway standards were also developed by professional trade organizations and a few individual states during this period.

The State of Nevada did not actively participate in road improvements until 1911, when the legislative session gave the State Engineer general supervision of road work carried out by convict labor.²⁷ With an appropriation of \$20,000, some initial road work was completed in Ormsby County (present-day Carson City); however, once the funds were exhausted, work ceased. In 1912 the state legislature established a Nevada State Highway that would run from the border east of Ely west through Eureka,

²¹ Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, *America's Highways, 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program*, 76.

²² "Modern Highways Are 100 Years Old," *Cruise-In, Celebrating Indiana Car Culture*, November 4, 2015, <http://cruise-in.com/tag/good-roads-movement/>; "Wyoming History, The Politics of Road Construction," *Western Wyoming Community College*, 2008, http://www.wycc.wy.edu/wyo_hist/lincolnhighway3.htm.

²³ Marriott, "The Preservation Office Guide to Historic Roads," 37.

²⁴ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska," Section E, Page 1.

²⁵ Keane and Bruder, *Good Roads Everywhere: A History of Road Building in Arizona*, 25-26.

²⁶ Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, *America's Highways, 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program* (Federal Highway Administration, 1976), 46-47, 52.

²⁷ Nevada Department of Transportation, "1.2 Nevada Department of Transportation," *Nevada Department of Transportation*, 2017, ftp://ftp.nevadadot.com/DesignManual/2005_3_1/PDDM/Body/1_2.htm.

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Austin, Fallon, Reno, Carson City, and into California (roughly the Lincoln Highway/US 50 route). Lack of state funding prevented the construction of the road, and subsequent legislation allowing counties along the route to sell bonds to pay for construction also failed to raise sufficient funds. Thus, the Nevada State Highway was not completed by the state.²⁸

(c) Named transcontinental highways

Demand for better roads continued to increase, and when federal and state support for good roads lagged behind public demand, private groups took initiative to keep the cause moving forward. To fill the gaps between local funding sources required to meet state matching funds and meet the increased need for improved roadways, these private groups took on the task of designation and construction of transcontinental automobile routes along networks of existing local roadways. As a result, in the 1910s the primary impetus for road construction was through private auto trail associations, which determined a route, gave it a name such as the "Overland Trail," and promoted the road.

One method for promoting and securing support for a particular route was to give it a name. Named highway associations lobbied local governments for road improvements and secured sponsorship from automobile related industries, such as gas stations and automotive products and services. Each route was marked with its own symbol, which may have been painted along the roadside on telephone poles or other available surfaces (see Figure 3).²⁹ Guidebooks promoted the highways by offering route directions and identifying locations of automobile-related services and sites of interest for travelers. In addition, gasoline, oil, and tire companies often published state maps identifying early named highways and included the location of the sponsoring company's service stations.³⁰

²⁸ *First Report of the Board of Directors Department of Highways, 1917-1918, State of Nevada* (Carson City, Nevada: Nevada Department of Highways, 1918), 9; Steven F. Mehls, *Report of the Historic Mitigation Work at the Big Springs Ranch Land Exchange, Elko County, Nevada* (Elko, Nev.: Bureau of Land Management, Elko Field Office and BSR Associates, July 25, 1999), 3.

²⁹ Richard Weingroff, "From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System," *Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation*, November 18, 2015, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/numbers.cfm>.

³⁰ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska," Section E, Page 4.

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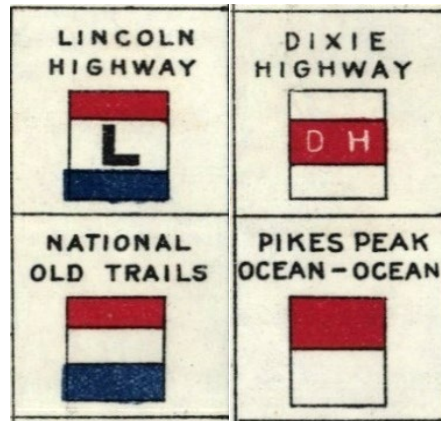


Figure 3. Sample of auto trail symbols.³¹

Plans for named transcontinental routes began to emerge in the 1910s. One of the earliest associations formed was the National Old Trails Road Association, which formed in 1912 with the aim of connecting New York to Los Angeles. Other activities in 1912 included the American Automobile Association (AAA) announcing plans to survey and map three proposed transcontinental routes: the Midland Trail, Northwest Trail, and the Overland Trail, two of which crossed through Nevada (see Figure 4). The Midland Trail extended from New York through Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, where it passed through Ely and Goldfield before reaching Big Pine, California. The Overland Trail extended from New York to San Francisco, passing through Illinois, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada, where it passed through Ely, then largely followed the general corridor of the Central Overland Route through Eureka, Austin, Reno, and Carson City before crossing into California. The Northwest Trail extended from New York to Seattle passing through Minnesota, North Dakota, and Idaho, but did not pass through Nevada.

³¹ "General Map of Transcontinental Routes with Principal Connections" (American Automobile Association, 1918), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.

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Figure 4. Map showing three additional transcontinental routes surveyed by the AAA in 1912, two of which crossed through Nevada.³²

Many of the nation's transcontinental routes remained in planning stages into 1913, when a group of private investors and good roads advocates formed the Lincoln Highway Association (LHA) and initiated a successful plan to establish this transcontinental highway from New York to San Francisco, passing through Nevada.³³ The early success of the Lincoln Highway set the stage for a number of subsequent named transcontinental highways that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s, including the Victory Highway and the Arrowhead Trail, both of which passed through Nevada.

4. The Lincoln Highway, 1913-1926

(a) Establishment of the Lincoln Highway

(1) The Lincoln Highway Association

The Lincoln Highway emerged during the early twentieth century as an early transcontinental highway and was actively promoted through partnerships between the auto products industry and good roads associations. In 1911 entrepreneur Carl Graham Fisher, owner of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and founder of the Prest-O-Lite Company, maker of car batteries and practical headlights lit by compressed gas, received national attention when he paved the speedway with brick and inaugurated the Indianapolis 500 automobile race. In the fall of 1912 Fisher shared his vision for a

³² "Westgard Starts on Long Service Trip," *The Horseless Age*, June 19, 1912.

³³ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 15; John C. Wetmore, "Motor Trails Across the States," *Outdoor World & Recreation*, August 1913.

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transcontinental highway that was toll-free and paved, which he called the "Coast-to-Coast Rock Highway." To realize his vision, Fisher proposed that automobile manufacturers, dealers, and parts-makers pledge one-third of one percent of their company's gross receipts for three years, which he projected would raise at least \$10 million for purchasing road materials and to contract with states and counties to build the highway.³⁴ Auto-related industries provided funding for the development of the Lincoln Highway, particularly in sparsely populated Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming; however, it is unknown whether the projected \$10 million ever materialized.

Leaders in business and most automobile manufacturing sectors praised the plan and began offering assistance at the request of Fisher. One exception was the Ford Motor Company, which chose to focus on selling more cars at low prices in hopes that increased traffic would lead to demands on the government to build better roads rather than private investors taking up the cause. However, other companies embraced the idea with enthusiasm. The Hudson Motor Company pledged \$100,000; Frank Seiberling of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company pledged \$300,000; the Lehigh Portland Cement Company offered 1.5 million barrels or more of cement; and Henry Joy, president of the Packard Motor Company, pledged \$150,000 for the proposed transcontinental highway. In addition to funding from corporations, the LHA sought funding from everyday beneficiaries of the new highway in the form of individual memberships at levels from \$5 to \$100. Fisher, along with other highway supporters, businessmen, and industry leaders, officially organized the LHA on July 1, 1913. The LHA was headquartered in Detroit and led by Henry Joy, the organization's president.³⁵

(2) Determining the national route of the Lincoln Highway

Initial tasks of the LHA included promotion of the highway and finding a suitable route, and the organization's leaders set to work immediately. On the same day as the LHA's formation, Fisher joined a caravan of 17 cars and two supply trucks on a highly publicized tour led by the Indiana Automobile Manufacturers Association (IAMA) and the Hoosier Motor Club from Indianapolis to the Pacific. Although under the auspices of the IAMA Hoosier Motor Club, the trip provided an opportunity to promote the proposed route of the Lincoln Highway. The group sent letters to city boosters along the route to secure accommodations and announce the purpose of the caravan: to determine a tentative route and encourage public interest in the new Lincoln Highway.³⁶ A great deal of excitement was generated in cities and towns along the route across the country. City boosters

³⁴ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway* (Detroit: The Lincoln Highway Association, 1916), 18; Kristina Crawford, "Evolution of Automobile Roads in Nevada," *In-Situ: Newsletter of the Nevada Archaeological Association* 20, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 2; National Park Service, *Lincoln Highway: Special Resource Study, Environmental Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2004), 3.

³⁵ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 16–19.

³⁶ "To Choose Auto Road in Nevada," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, May 21, 1913.

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sent telegrams and delegations to Indianapolis to request inclusion in the itinerary.³⁷ Although the trip generated much interest in the transcontinental highway, Fisher and the LHA claimed that the interests of towns and cities along the corridor would not influence the actual path of the highway, insisting that only practical factors such as the needs of travelers and roadbuilders would be considered.³⁸

In the summer of 1913 the LHA worked out its plans for the entire Lincoln Highway. At the national planning level, the LHA stated several factors were to be used in determining the overall route. Factors included utilizing easy to traverse terrain; following existing roads, trails, or natural pathways; passing through scenic areas; and avoiding the congestion of large urban centers. The most important factor espoused by the LHA, however, was establishing the most direct path across the country.³⁹ In August 1913 Fisher, Joy, and other LHA officials developed a map of the proposed route and presented it to the Conference of Governors in Colorado Springs, Colorado.⁴⁰ The highway started in New York's Times Square and traveled west through 14 states across 3,389 miles to its endpoint in San Francisco's Lincoln Park. Passing through New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the route continued across the Midwest through Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. From there, it turned southwest to cross the Missouri River and into Nebraska, then passing through Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada before reaching California and the Pacific.⁴¹

(3) Promoting the Lincoln Highway

On September 13, 1913, an official Lincoln Highway Proclamation was released in Detroit that outlined the goals and route of the Lincoln Highway and solicited support from states, counties, cities, and private citizens through membership in the LHA. On October 8, 1913, Central City, Nebraska, became the first city in the country to ratify the Lincoln Highway Proclamation. A few weeks later the LHA called on state and local leaders to declare October 31 a day of celebration for the Lincoln Highway. Fireworks, factory whistles, bonfires, sirens, dances, and parades in cities across the nation marked the occasion with fanfare, and governors in Nebraska, Wyoming, and Nevada

³⁷ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1935), 30–31.

³⁸ Steven F. Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28," 1999, 4–5, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov>; National Park Service, *Lincoln Highway: Special Resource Study, Environmental Assessment*, 2004, 4.

³⁹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*, 48–49.

⁴⁰ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 17–19.

⁴¹ Mead & Hunt, Inc. and Heritage Research, Ltd., *Nebraska Historic Highway Survey* (Prepared for the Nebraska State Historical Society and Nebraska Department of Roads, August 2002), 49; National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska," E-18.

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proclaimed it Lincoln Highway Day. That same month, the first road guide to the Lincoln Highway entitled *Lincoln Highway Route Road Conditions and Directions* was released to the public.⁴²

Although communities along the route were celebrating, some towns and counties that were bypassed withdrew pledges of financial support. As a result, the LHA obtained fewer funds than needed to pave the entire route. To retain public enthusiasm, the LHA chose to quietly postpone plans to improve the Lincoln Highway route and instead focused on promoting the highway.⁴³ In 1914 the LHA began promoting the construction of “seedling miles” to stimulate interest in the Lincoln Highway in areas where roads were nonexistent or in especially poor condition.⁴⁴ The LHA offered to provide cement for a mile-long, 16-foot-wide road if local communities agreed to pay for the labor and materials for the subgrade and drainage and maintain the road for a reasonable period. The LHA hoped these small segments of improved roadways would inspire communities to advocate for good roads and ultimately improve their local roads, including the route of the Lincoln Highway. The first seedling mile was constructed near DeKalb, Illinois, in late 1914. The LHA promoted and publicized use of the highway in other ways, including the installation of wayfinding signs and painted route markers on trees and poles, publishing guidebooks and tourist information pamphlets, painting ads on gas pumps, and a number of consumer products, including Lincoln Highway pins, cigars, board games, and children’s toys.⁴⁵

(b) The Lincoln Highway in Nevada, 1913-1925

(1) Determining the route of the Lincoln Highway in Nevada

Nevada politicians and businesses strongly supported the LHA’s proposal to designate a transcontinental highway and many attempted to influence its path. The Lincoln Highway promised to bring increased tourism and commerce to the state, and failed attempts to construct the Nevada State Highway in 1912 demonstrated the limitations of state and county funding for major road projects. When the IAMA and Hoosier Motor Club announced their plans to travel through the state in the summer of 1913, boosters in several Nevada cities attempted to influence the route of the caravan in hopes that they could convince the LHA to build the transcontinental highway through their community. Boosters in Tonopah, Nevada, for example, attempted to persuade the IAMA and the

⁴² Mead & Hunt, Inc. and Heritage Research, Ltd, *Nebraska Historic Highway Survey* (Prepared for the Nebraska State Historical Society and Nebraska Department of Roads, August 2002), 50; Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America’s First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 19.

⁴³ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska,” E-19.

⁴⁴ Neither research nor the Nevada Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association indicated that any seedling miles were constructed in Nevada.

⁴⁵ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America’s First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 18, 20–21.

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Hoosier Motor Club to follow the route of the Midland Trail, which in Nevada went southwest from Utah to Los Angeles via Ely. Meanwhile boosters in Reno worked to bring the tour to the northern portion of the state. Both cities promised to host grand events for the auto tour including banquets and the presence of prominent guests.⁴⁶ Ultimately, the caravan set out to chart a path to Reno but diverted to the southwestern route through Tonopah after hearing that heavy rains had made portions of the route between Ely and Fallon nearly impassable.⁴⁷

Despite the attempts of boosters to influence the highway's route, the LHA insisted that practical factors such as terrain characteristics, availability of existing roads or trails, scenic qualities, traffic, and most importantly, finding the most direct path, would govern route decisions. One of the major factors that influenced the route of the Lincoln Highway in Nevada was the geography of the state and its neighboring Utah.⁴⁸ Vast stretches of desert and mountain passes between Salt Lake City and Reno posed obvious challenges to early auto travelers moving west, and few knew these challenges better than Henry B. Joy. Joy's interest in good roads predated his ascendance to the LHA presidency by several years; by 1913 Joy had completed several western road survey expeditions with engineers and had first-hand experience battling with desert road conditions.⁴⁹

In determining the route of the Lincoln Highway, the Great Salt Lake Desert between Salt Lake City and the Utah-Nevada border posed one of the more challenging obstacles. The area was remote, hot, filled with alkali dust, and travelers were likely to find both mud flats and dry sandy washes treacherous for early automobiles. The LHA considered three routes from Salt Lake City to Reno. The first and most direct option would have followed the southern edge of the Great Salt Lake, crossing the Great Salt Lake Desert and entering Nevada at Wendover to follow the Humboldt River Valley through Elko, Winnemucca, and Lovelock then the Truckee River from Wadsworth to Reno. Another option also followed the Humboldt and Truckee Rivers, but passed along the northern edge of the lake to avoid the Great Salt Lake Desert entirely. The third route went south from Salt Lake City on a winding path around the desert's southern edge leading to Ibapah, Utah. From there it went southwest crossing the state line to Ely then generally followed the established corridor of the Central Overland Route through Nevada. Although it was not the most direct option, the LHA selected the

⁴⁶ "Tonopah to Be on Route Known Midland Trail," *Tonopah Daily Bonanza*, October 12, 1912; "Hoosier State Auto Tour Now Includes Visits to Tonopah Goldfield and Through Inyo," *Tonopah Daily Bonanza*, May 27, 1913; "Plan Reception for Autoists," *Nevada State Journal*, June 20, 1913.

⁴⁷ "Tourists Strike Rough Roadway," *The Indianapolis Star*, July 12, 1913.

⁴⁸ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*, 48–49.

⁴⁹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*, 48–49.

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third route as the highway's corridor because it avoided the treacherous salt flats of Utah and provided intermittent stops for water.⁵⁰

Announced in September 1913, the Lincoln Highway became the first named transcontinental automobile route to form a continuous connection across northern Nevada between Salt Lake City and Reno. The highway crossed the Utah-Nevada state line 4 miles west of Ibapah, Utah, and incorporated portions of the Central Overland Route and primitive wagon roads between isolated ranches and northern Nevada mining boom towns established in the nineteenth century, including Ely, Eureka, and Austin. The route traversed five mountain ranges in Nevada, some over 7,000 feet and including grades as steep as 18 percent. West from Austin the highway passed several stagecoach stations that had been established to serve freighters along the Central Overland Route, including Eastgate, Middlegate, and Frenchman's Station. As the highway approached Fallon, it extended over a wide alkali flat known as the Fallon Sink and continued west to Reno, where it split into two branches. One branch continued west from Reno, across the California state line and north of Lake Tahoe, before continuing on to Sacramento, California; the other, known as the Pioneer Branch, turned south in Reno and continued to Carson City, then went west on a scenic alignment around Lake Tahoe's southeastern shore before crossing the California state line and reuniting with the main branch of the Lincoln Highway in Sacramento.⁵¹

The Pioneer Branch of the Lincoln Highway was unique in that across the country, the LHA typically promoted the most direct route without diversions. While the exact reason for creating an alternative route is unknown, the breathtaking scenic beauty and burgeoning tourist industry at Lake Tahoe was likely a factor. Lake Tahoe was considered one of the most scenic areas within the Sierra Nevada, and by the 1910s the lake had become a major destination.⁵² Once established, boosters touted the aesthetic qualities of the Pioneer Branch in its promotion over other routes.⁵³ For more detailed historic information on the Pioneer Branch and its various alignments, see the National Register MPDF, *Lincoln Highway – Pioneer Branch, Carson City to Stateline, Nevada*.

⁵⁰ Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 62–63; "Westgard Starts on Long Service Trip," 1059; Wetmore, "Motor Trails Across the States."

⁵¹ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 228–33; Zeier & Associates, LLC and Susan Lindstrom Consulting Archaeologist, *Archaeological Inventory Report, State Route 207, Kingsbury Grade, Erosion Control-Storm Water Management Master Plan, Douglas County, Nevada* (prepared for Nevada Department of Transportation, September 2006), 19; National Park Service, *Lincoln Highway: Special Resource Study, Environmental Assessment*, 2004, 21.

⁵² Michael J. Makley, *A Short History of Lake Tahoe* (Reno, Nev.: University of Nevada Press, 2011), 45–46, 54.

⁵³ "Lincoln Highway 1920 & Now Carson City - Fallon, NV," *American Road*, May 5, 2007, <https://www.americanroadmagazine.com/forum/topic/386-lincoln-highway-1920-now-carson-city-fallon-nv/>.

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(2) Early road conditions and the role of the LHA

Initially, the Lincoln Highway in Nevada consisted largely of existing roads that were part of the Central Overland Route or constructed to serve local traffic or the mining industries. These roads usually consisted of unimproved earth and were sometimes rutted.⁵⁴ A year after the Lincoln Highway's designation, Nevada had 12,182 miles of roads but only 262 miles were "surfaced" with oil or gravel.⁵⁵ The 1916 LHA guidebook described a few segments with "hard road" and some with "fair" or "good" gravel, and other segments were noted to have "rough spots" or "chuck holes" (see Figure 5).⁵⁶ In Nevada, the Lincoln Highway extended through long stretches of very isolated areas of the Great Basin and mountainous passes, further complicating roadbuilding through the state.



Figure 5. The Lincoln Highway east of Ely illustrating unimproved earth roadbed, 1915.⁵⁷

Compounding the challenges of the terrain, the population of Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming remained small compared to California and states further to the east through which the Lincoln Highway passed. Most rural counties in Nevada were almost entirely federally owned land, and thus exempt from property tax. As a result, raising the needed taxes to improve roads in sparsely populated areas proved difficult. The State of Nevada had already attempted to build a highway across the state before the Lincoln Highway's designation, and even attempted to use prison labor to save costs. However, despite these efforts, the state struggled to secure adequate funding to improve its roads

⁵⁴ Crawford, "Evolution of Automobile Roads in Nevada," 2.

⁵⁵ Riddle and Dickey, *Building Nevada's Highways*, 66–73.

⁵⁶ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 135–42.

⁵⁷ *East of Ely Nevada*, Photograph, 1915, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/linchigh/x-lhc0691/lhc0691>.

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for automobile travel. Therefore, the Lincoln Highway in Nevada would have to rely on private donations, which it distributed to states and counties for improvements.⁵⁸

The LHA implemented marketing campaigns that emphasized Nevada's significant need for funding to solicit donations from the automobile and auto-parts industries, and from business interests along the route outside the state. Slow improvement of the highway in sparsely populated western states such as Nevada affected the flow of traffic to other areas along the route. Soon business interests at the Lincoln Highway's western terminus in northern California began to become concerned about westbound tourists departing from the highway to take other established routes, such as the Midland Trail, which led to Los Angeles instead of San Francisco. The LHA and San Francisco-area businessmen played on these concerns to motivate northern California residents and businesses to make donations to help improve the Lincoln Highway in Nevada. In 1915, ending his fourth transcontinental tour in San Francisco, Henry Joy extolled the vast improvements that had been made along the highway, but warned that Californians needed to "take action" to improve the road in Nevada. In reference to one of the Lincoln Highway's poorly maintained portions, the Fallon Sink, Joy claimed, "This short stretch makes it nearly impossible for tourists to come over the Lincoln Highway direct to San Francisco."⁵⁹

A few improvements were made to the highway in Nevada during its first few years, including the realignment of a portion between Eastgate and Fallon from the Fallon Sink to the Stillwater Cutoff (for more on realignments, see Section E.4(b)(10), *Overview of the Lincoln Highway in Nevada*). However, despite the efforts of the LHA, Nevada was slow to make major improvements to the Lincoln Highway until the 1920s.

(3) Marking the Lincoln Highway in Nevada

Following the Lincoln Highway's designation, it was important for the LHA to mark the highway to avoid confusion for tourists and attempts by local interests to divert the route from its official alignment. Initially, the LHA's local officials took on the responsibility of marking the highway in their own territories. Teams of volunteers set out on the route to paint simple red, white, and blue bands on any convenient object, including poles and rocks. In Nevada, LHA local official Gael Hoag fabricated markers from worn-out boiler tubes from a nearby smelter, which he had placed along the route from Ely to Eureka. Eventually, the LHA developed and distributed stencils of its official

⁵⁸ National Park Service, *Lincoln Highway: Special Resource Study, Environmental Assessment*, 2004, 22.

⁵⁹ "Henry B. Joy Urges Work on Highway," *The San Francisco Examiner*, June 20, 1915.

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insignia, which consisted of a large "L" between the words "Lincoln" and "Highway" within a red, white, and blue rectangle (see Figure 3 above).⁶⁰

By 1916 authorities in each state and a number of utilities companies permitted the LHA to paint the official logo on utility poles along the route. This effort began in Jersey City in 1916 and moved westward, but ended at the Wyoming-Nebraska border due to weather conditions. By that time the California State Automobile Association (CSAA), based in San Francisco, had already completed marking the Lincoln Highway within California and several years later took the initiative to mark the route from the California-Nevada state line to Ely. From Ely to Salt Lake City, the Lincoln Highway was marked by the Automobile Club of Southern California in its efforts to also place signage along the Midland Trail (see Figure 6), which followed the Lincoln Highway route from Ely to Salt Lake City. With the effort of these two California automobile clubs, the entire Lincoln Highway in Nevada was marked with enameled steel signs.⁶¹



Figure 6. Crew of the Automobile Club of Southern California placing signs on the Midland Trail near Ely. Note signage indicating directions to the Lincoln Highway.⁶²

⁶⁰ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*, 210–14.

⁶¹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*, 210–14.

⁶² *Marking Crew from the Automobile Club of Southern California, on the Midland Trail*, Photograph, n.d., University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/linchigh/x-lhc0243/lhc0243>.

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(4) Early auto tourism and commercial development along the Lincoln Highway

In the first years after the designation of the Lincoln Highway, traffic along the route included residents and individuals traveling across the country. Automobile travel had become a popular mode of transportation by the early 1910s, and enthusiasm for long-distance auto tourism was on the rise. Travelogues of auto tourists such as Effie Gladding, Emily Post, and Thomas J.H. O' Shaughnessy, who traveled the Lincoln Highway, became popular literature. Following World War I, the automobile became affordable, and as road conditions improved the Lincoln Highway not only served the tourist, but also served as a route for local residents traveling from rural areas to towns, and as an interstate and regional connection.⁶³

Entrepreneurs across the country realized the potential of the auto tourism industry and began offering services and amenities to aid travelers in their journey from coast to coast. By the early twentieth century many towns along the Lincoln Highway route in Nevada such as Ely, Eureka, Austin, Reno, and Carson City had established commercial districts, and between these towns were a number of travel stops such as Eastgate, Middlegate, and Frenchman's Station that emerged to offer services to teamsters moving freight between mining camps. Following the establishment of the Lincoln Highway and subsequent influx of auto tourists, many existing businesses along the route adjusted to meet the needs of a new type of traveler. For example, the International Hotel at 59 Main Street in Austin, Nevada, was established in the mid-nineteenth century during the town's silver mining boom. An advertisement in the second edition LHA road guidebook indicates that the hotel had adopted a dual role to cater to auto tourists, offering complimentary garage services in addition to hotel accommodations (see Figure 7).⁶⁴

⁶³ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska," E-25-E-26; Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America*, 31–32; Effie Price Gladding, *Across the Continent by the Lincoln Highway* (New York: Blentano's, 1915); Thomas J. H. O'Shaughnessy, *Rambles on Overland Trails* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1915).

⁶⁴ "Austin's Commercial Interests and Businesses," *Nevada State Journal*, April 10, 1911; Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 139.

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Figure 7. Advertisement for the International Hotel and Garage on the Lincoln Highway in Austin, Nevada, 1916.⁶⁵

Business owners also sought to take advantage of the Lincoln Highway's promotion and popularity by naming their businesses to be associated with the road. One such example was the Lincoln Highway Garage Company at the corner of 2nd Street and Aultman Street in Ely. Advertisements for the Lincoln Highway Garage Company promised free road logs and "touring information" for transcontinental travelers (see Figure 8).⁶⁶



Figure 8. Advertisement for the Lincoln Highway Garage Company in Ely, Nevada, 1923.⁶⁷

The LHA road guides were an important promotional tool for both the highway and businesses along the route. The guides gave state-by-state descriptions for route navigation and offered tourists helpful notes and suggestions on road conditions, points of scenic and historic interest, places to find

⁶⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 139.

⁶⁶ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 235; Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 137; *Official Automobile Blue Book*, vol. 4, Western and Transcontinental (Automobile Blue Books, Incorporated, 1923), 574.

⁶⁷ *Official Automobile Blue Book*, 4:574.

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more information, and accommodations such as food, water, and lodging. By the 1920s road guides included photographs and detailed maps of the route through major cities, as well as advertisements for services such as tourist camps, hotels, filling stations, and garages. In Nevada the LHA guidebooks show that points of interest for auto tourists included a wide variety of places. For example, tourists were encouraged to stop at industrial plants and irrigation dams to gain a sense of economies and landscapes of the state. One example was in Hazen, which only offered one hotel and one garage for tourists, but the 1916 LHA guidebook encouraged travelers to stop at the Western Ore Purchasing Company to watch ore smelting operations. Other examples of industrial sites promoted as points of interest included copper mines between Ely and Eureka and irrigation dams near Fallon and Wadsworth.⁶⁸ These stops reflected the influence of local businessmen associated with the earlier mining boom era who now advocated for the Lincoln Highway to pass through these mining areas.

(5) Early state and federal involvement in road building, 1916-1920

i. The Federal Aid Road Act of 1916

As citizens across the country grew more interested in improved roads, so did the demand for government investment in highways. In 1916 the U.S. Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act, which was the first formal federal highway policy with a regular funding appropriation distributed to the states. By this time the number of automobile registrations in the country had reached 2.3 million, and the auto industry and motorists were heavily lobbying for government programs and funds to improve roads.⁶⁹ This funding had been a long-time goal of organizations associated with the Good Roads Movement, which were influential in the passage of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. Managed by the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, funding for road construction and maintenance was allocated to states based on a formula incorporating a state's population, land area, and road mileage. Under the act, the federal government would finance up to 50 percent of the cost of construction, not to exceed \$10,000 per mile. The act also required the formation of a department to oversee road construction and maintenance and required the department to provide matching funds and to meet exacting federal standards of construction in order to qualify for available aid.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 137–42.

⁶⁹ Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia: Penn.: Temple University Press, 1987), 24–25.

⁷⁰ Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers*, 43.

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ii. The Nevada Department of Highways and early road-building standards

The Nevada Department of Highways (NDH) was established during the state legislative session of 1917. State-led efforts in road improvement or maintenance were limited prior to this time, and this legislation commenced an extensive highway building program in Nevada and the establishment of the State Highway System. Proposed project plans for a new road network were first submitted for approval to the district BPR in Salt Lake City by the NDH and then to the national office in Washington D.C. for final approval. Numerous highway interest groups lobbied the governor to appoint members to the new highway commission. The Lincoln Highway was designated as part of the new highway system; between Ely and Reno the Lincoln Highway was designated Route 2, and between Reno and State line part of Route 3.⁷¹

Further road and bridge work by the NDH was delayed by World War I, largely due to steel shortages, but resumed again after the war's conclusion in 1918. In general, the state and federal programs were designed to infuse road and bridge construction with money and engineering expertise to the state.⁷² Initially, highways in Nevada were designed with a narrow, elevated embankment. Borrow ditches were created to build up the embankment, which consisted of fill and culverts, that formed a base for the graded travel surface (see Figure 9). In the early 1920s standard plans were designed for roads and many related features such as pipe and box culverts and bridges less than 20 feet long. Due to the varied conditions encountered statewide, the NDH did not advocate the use of standard plans as an economical approach for longer bridges, and they were designed on a case-by-case basis.⁷³

⁷¹ Zeier & Associates, LLC and Susan Lindstrom Consulting Archaeologist, *Archaeological Inventory Report, State Route 207, Kingsbury Grade, Erosion Control-Storm Water Management Master Plan, Douglas County, Nevada*, 19.

⁷² Joseph King, *Spans of Time* (Prepared for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, 1993), 17; Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 47; First Report of the Board of Directors Department of Highways, 1917-1918, State of Nevada (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1918), 9..

⁷³ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Second Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1919-1920* (Carson City, Nevada: Nevada Department of Highways, 1921), 14.

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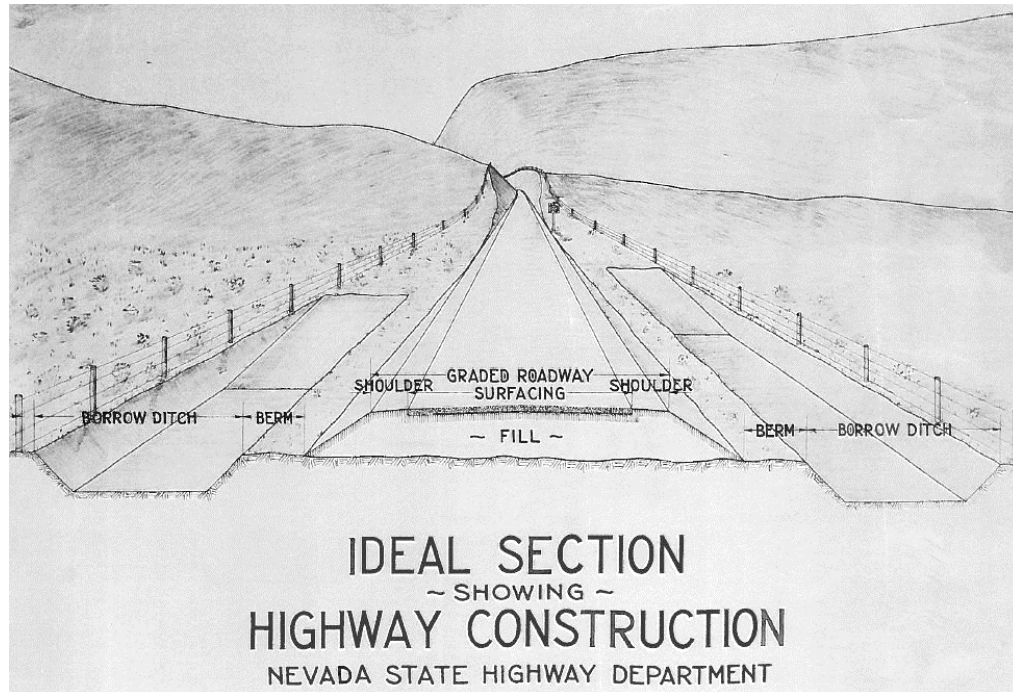


Figure 9. Undated image of an ideal section showing typical highway construction by NDH.⁷⁴

Early highway design by the NDH was influenced by the existing conditions, available materials, labor, equipment and funds rather than strict application of engineering standards of the day. Before the 1920s roads were generally not hard-surfaced outside of Nevada's major population centers, and improved rural roads were those with a graded or graveled travel surface. Severely hampered by a limited budget, the NDH located roads where the least amount of earthwork would be encountered due to the high cost of excavation for cuts and fill. Consequently, few early roads were straight or smooth and instead had numerous vertical curves and variation in grades.⁷⁵

The conditions in Nevada lead to challenges in strictly following BPR standards and conflict as the NDH submitted projects to the BPR for approval, over issues such as roadway location and widths. In particular, the NDH argued that the BPR standard of 24-foot width for primary routes was not practical in rural Nevada. The disagreement on widths came to a head in 1920, when the national BPR office would not approve highway projects for primary routes with a roadway width less than 24 feet. For example, the NDH submitted plans to improve an

⁷⁴ Image courtesy of the Nevada Department of Transportation.

⁷⁵ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Second Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1919-1920*, 12-13; State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Seventh Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1929-1930* (Carson City, Nevada: Nevada Department of Highways, 1930), 61.

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existing 15-foot roadway to 20 feet (Project No. 32, Humboldt County); it was the maximum width finances allowed and NDH did not feel the amount of current and projected traffic warranted the extra width. In other rural areas where the existing single-lane roads were 6-7 feet wide, the NDH proposed a roadway width of 9-10 feet while the BPR would not approve less than 12 feet wide.⁷⁶ As result, the BPR rejected many of roadway improvement plans from NDH.

This impasse become so troublesome for the NDH that James Leonard, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NDH, with support of Governor Emmet Boyle, wrote a letter to the bureau outlining the issues, which cited the examples above and stated that allowances that addressed the particular challenges Nevada faced was needed. The letter stressed the NDH did not believe in cutting construction quality, but that it was absolutely necessary to carefully monitor finances and build nothing at a higher quality than necessary. In closing, Leonard invited members from the Washington office to come see for themselves the financial and physical challenges faced in Nevada.

As a result, a conference was held in Reno in July 1920, attended by the NDH, the district BPR engineer, and the U.S. General Inspector for the Western U.S. An agreement was reached that for roads in outlying areas or where traffic did not require a wider roadway, the BPR would approve roadways with an overall embankment width of 18 feet or more and a travel surface width of 10 feet or more.⁷⁷ This was the first of many exceptions the BPR granted the NDH in the transformation of existing rural, single-lane, earthen trail into improved highways of the day.

(6) *The Goodyear Controversy and competition for federal funding, 1918-1923*

In 1918 the LHA began negotiating a contract with Utah to build a new alignment between Salt Lake City and Ely, Nevada. The new route, called the Goodyear Cutoff due to the generous support of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, would shorten the highway by 50 miles by eliminating the segment wrapping around the southern edge of the Great Salt Lake Desert to Ibapah, and routing it over a new road that would cut directly across the desert south of Salt Lake City.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Second Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1919-1920*, 11-13.

⁷⁷ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Second Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1919-1920*, 12-14.

⁷⁸ Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28," 10.

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While negotiations were taking place for the Goodyear Cutoff, Salt Lake City businessmen and northern California interests proposed a shorter and more direct highway route across northern Nevada. Northern California business interests feared that tourist traffic along the Lincoln Highway was being diverted south at Ely to Los Angeles along the Midland Trail to avoid the treacherous Fallon Sink.⁷⁹ Northern California and Salt Lake City businessmen proposed a new highway route that would extend west from Salt Lake City to Wendover, where it would cross the state line and follow the Humboldt and Truckee Rivers to Reno following an alignment previously promoted by another named highway organization, the Overland Trail Association. Utah interests favored the Wendover route, which they felt kept tourists in their state. Historically, Ely, Nevada, had close commercial ties to Salt Lake City, and thus strongly supported completion of the Goodyear Cutoff.⁸⁰

Despite the developing opposition, the State of Utah honored its contract with the LHA and continued to work on the road. However, by July 1, 1919, the target completion date for the cutoff, the road was still incomplete. The LHA continued funding for the Goodyear Cutoff but an inspection by local LHA officials in August 1919 showed that work had ceased, and construction equipment had been moved to Salt Lake City. The State of Utah stopped construction and reported to the LHA that it had run out of funds and equipment was needed elsewhere. Later that year the State of Utah refused to fulfill its contract to complete the Goodyear Cutoff.⁸¹ Utah's decision led to a period of controversy between the LHA, the State of Utah, and business interests along both the Lincoln Highway and the proposed northern route. After Utah's decision to abandon the Goodyear Cutoff, Ely businessmen and the Nevada Consolidated Copper Company within the Robinson Mining District called for a boycott of all Salt Lake City businesses. Utah and the interests of the LHA and Ely were unable to find a resolution.⁸²

(7) Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1921

By the end of the 1910s advocates for good roads around the country were calling upon the federal government to play a greater role in funding highway improvements. One event that helped solidify support for federal funding for roads occurred in 1919, when the federal government sent a military convoy across the Lincoln Highway between Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. The convoy set out with several objectives in mind: field test the motorized equipment used for transporting troops around the country; demonstrate the practicality of long-distance commercial transportation by truck;

⁷⁹ "Active Work on Road From Ocean to Ocean," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 20, 1915; "Henry B. Joy Urges Work on Highway"; "California Money to Be Spent on Nevada Highways," *Yerington Times*, August 12, 1916.

⁸⁰ Mehls, *Report of the Historic Mitigation Work at the Big Springs Ranch Land Exchange, Elko County, Nevada*, 8–11.

⁸¹ Mehls, *Report of the Historic Mitigation Work at the Big Springs Ranch Land Exchange, Elko County, Nevada*, 8–11; "Victory Highway, Designated Primary Route, to See Early Construction Work in Nevada," *Sacramento Union*, January 22, 1922.

⁸² Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28," 12–15.

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display for the public the development of military-related vehicles; and, as a *Reno Evening Gazette* article from June 26, 1919, put it, demonstrate the U.S. War Department's contribution to the Good Roads Movement. This helped foster support for increased federal highway funding in the 1920s.⁸³

With the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1921, federal funding allocated to states for road building increased substantially. The 1921 act galvanized the country's commitment to better roads, improvements to existing roads, and state-sponsored highway building programs across the country, including Nevada.⁸⁴ The State of Nevada received 87 percent of its funding for highway building from the federal government after the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1921. The State was only responsible for covering the other 13 percent, but even this was a difficult task for the sparsely populated state.⁸⁵ One important provision in the act called for states to designate primary and secondary highway systems. The primary systems were to connect with primary highways in adjacent states in order to create an interstate system of highways, and secondary routes were defined as inter-county and primarily served local needs.⁸⁶ After their designation, primary routes became eligible for a larger portion of federal funding for construction and improvements.

The increase in federal funding for road building diminished the need for private organizations such as the LHA, to promote and maintain the nation's named highways. The NDH praised the LHA for the \$107,500 in donations made available for the completion of four segments of the Lincoln Highway in Churchill and Eureka Counties in its 1921-1922 biennial report.⁸⁷ However, not all of the funds were utilized and unused donations were eventually refunded to the LHA.⁸⁸ The fact that funds were returned to the LHA indicates that making road improvements on the Lincoln Highway was either not needed, not possible, or not a priority for the NDH.

(8) Competition for federal funds

While the LHA struggled to secure funding to complete the highway in Utah, a new highway association emerged that would eventually draw support away from the Lincoln Highway to a different transcontinental route. Formed in 1921, the new organization was the Victory Highway Association (VHA). The VHA's proposed highway had the same termini as the Lincoln Highway, New York to San

⁸³ Pete Davies, *American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), 41–42; 191–92.

⁸⁴ Weingroff, "From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System."

⁸⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Fifth Edition* (Detroit, Mich.: Lincoln Highway Association, 1924), 465.

⁸⁶ "Make Lincoln Highway Primary Route, Consul Asks," *The Daily Appeal*, January 5, 1922.

⁸⁷ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Third Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, 1921-1922*, 38–39.

⁸⁸ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Tenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1934, to June 30, 1936, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1936), 112.

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Francisco, but followed a different route. From Salt Lake City, the Victory Highway followed the proposed northern route via Wendover, then through the Humboldt River valley passing through the towns of Silver Zone, Wells, Deeth, Elko, Carlin, Battle Mountain, Winnemucca, Lovelock, and Fernley, where it converged with the Lincoln Highway and continued into Sparks, Reno, and Verdi and on to the California state line.⁸⁹ With the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1921, the VHA lobbied the states of Utah and Nevada to choose the northern route as the states' primary recipient of federal funding.

By 1921 it was clear that Utah had chosen to abandon the Goodyear Cutoff portion of the Lincoln Highway and instead chose to construct the Wendover Road to the north from Salt Lake City across the Great Salt Lake Desert to Wendover. This decision provided the Victory Highway route with the connection needed across the two states to satisfy the Federal Aid Highway Act's stipulation that primary routes must be interstate in nature. Following Utah's decision, the State of Nevada followed suit and selected the Victory Highway as its primary federal-aid road, thus securing the majority of state and federal aid for the northern route.⁹⁰ The Lincoln Highway, however, was left to decline between Salt Lake City and the Utah-Nevada state line via Ibapah.

(9) *The LHA challenges the decisions of Utah and Nevada*

While many celebrated the Victory Highway's selection as Utah and Nevada's primary federal highway, the LHA and central Nevada business interests strongly objected and took action to challenge the decision. In 1923 the LHA secured a hearing with the Secretary of Agriculture, Henry C. Wallace, who oversaw the BPR. On May 14 the LHA, represented by Ely businessman and LHA Field Secretary Gael Hoag, presented their case, which they supported with a detailed report entitled *A Brief for the Lincoln Highway in Utah and Nevada*. Opposing the LHA was the VHA, represented by Governor Charles Maybey of Utah and employees of the Utah Highway Commission.

Secretary Wallace delayed the decision until June 6, 1923, when he gave his endorsement for support of the Victory Highway. This decision solidified the Lincoln Highway's secondary position in Nevada and to near abandonment in Utah. After the decision by Wallace, the majority of Utah's federal aid went to complete construction of the Wendover Cutoff and the Victory Highway. The LHA struggled to maintain the route from Salt Lake City to Ely via Ibapah, but it continued to fall into disrepair.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28," 12–15.

⁹⁰ Steven F. Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Victory Highway HAER-NV-41," 2006, 9, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov>.

⁹¹ Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28," 15–17.

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After the Wallace decision, the Lincoln Highway was still left with a long unimproved gap in the highway. The LHA fought hard to secure its status as the most prominent transcontinental highway, but the loss of federal funding and its allocation to the Victory Highway would prove detrimental to its status. With few options remaining in 1923, the most vocal supporter of the Lincoln Highway in Nevada, Gael Hoag, suggested a dire solution: to completely re-route the Lincoln Highway from west of Ely away from the former Central Overland Route and onto the route of the Midland Trail to Los Angeles via Tonopah and Goldfield. At a conference in San Francisco on September 30, 1923, Hoag expressed that due to the loss of both federal support and contributions from San Francisco, attempts by the LHA to complete the original route would be “useless.”⁹² Despite these calls to relocate the Lincoln Highway, the route maintained the same general corridor connecting Ely, Eureka, Austin, Fallon, and Reno into the 1920s.

Although the Victory Highway was selected as the state’s primary federal highway, the NDH continued to maintain and improve the Lincoln Highway utilizing state and federal funds in the early 1920s.⁹³ A number of highway improvement projects were underway on the Lincoln Highway by early 1923, including paving through the city of Fallon, construction of a grade separation over the Southern Pacific Railroad at Shoshone Point in Eureka County, the completion of a section between Keystone and Ely, paving through the city of Ely, construction of a new alignment over Carroll Summit, and surfacing a segment over Antelope Summit to Illipah.⁹⁴

(10) Overview of the Lincoln Highway route across Nevada, east to west

This section provides a segment-by-segment, east-to-west snapshot of the original route and major realignments of the Lincoln Highway during its heyday as a named highway, between 1913 and 1925. The descriptions that follow are derived from a variety of sources, including three historic guidebooks, the second (1916), third (1918), and fifth (1924) editions of the LHA’s *Complete and Official Road Guide to the Lincoln Highway*, newspaper accounts from the period, the LHA’s interactive online map, *The WPA Guide to Nevada*, *The Silver State* published in 1940, and several secondary sources with information on the historic setting of the route. It is not comprehensive and only provides a representative description of the early route and its realigned portions during the Lincoln Highway’s heyday of use as a named highway, 1913-1925. The route description is divided into geographic sections for organizational purposes and provides a brief history of notable towns, physical features of the road, and its development, including major realignments.

⁹² Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America’s First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 19; “Los Angeles Works to Win Lincoln Highway,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 30, 1923.

⁹³ Mehls, “Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28,” 12–15.

⁹⁴ “Program for Road Building Is Made Public,” *Mason Valley News*, February 10, 1923.

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i. Utah state line to Ely

The easternmost portion of the Lincoln Highway entered Nevada from the east, 4 miles west of Ibapah, Utah, on present-day State Highway 2. The graded roadbed was graveled with two lanes, no shoulders, and “some rough stretches” (Figure 10).⁹⁵ West of the Utah state line, the route passed through several small settlements and ranches, including Tippet’s Ranch, Anderson’s Ranch, Schellbourne Station, and Magnuson’s Ranch. These stops offered travel accommodations and places for meals and auto-related services such as radiator water, gas, and oil. Leaving Magnuson’s Ranch, travelers entered the town of McGill. Established to house workers of a nearby copper smelter plant, McGill offered boarding houses, stores, a bank, and telephone service.⁹⁶ Just south of McGill, the route entered East Ely at present-day Avenue C and continued several blocks before turning south on 11th Street. The route turned west onto East Aultman Street as it continued through Ely toward the western edge of town.⁹⁷ With approximately 3,500 residents by 1916, Ely was the most populated settlement along the Lincoln Highway between Salt Lake City and Reno, and road guides note that Ely featured “extensive road improvements” and “100 general business places.”⁹⁸ Six hotels and one garage served tourists and travelers passing through the town. The Lincoln Highway Garage Company, which provided regular auto garage services and sold cars for Ford, Reo, and Franklin, advertised regularly in the LHA guides, proclaiming “special attention given to Transcontinental Tourists.”⁹⁹ In Ely, the Lincoln Highway intersected with the Midland Trail, another transcontinental route established in the 1910s that diverted to the south from Ely passing through Tonopah, Goldfield, Big Pine, and through the Mojave on its way to Los Angeles.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Third Edition* (Detroit: The Lincoln Highway Association, 1918), 235.

⁹⁶ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 136–37.

⁹⁷ Lincoln Highway Association, “The Official Map of the Lincoln Highway,” *The Lincoln Highway Association*, 2017, <https://www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org/map/>.

⁹⁸ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 137.

⁹⁹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 137; Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Third Edition*, 237.

¹⁰⁰ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America’s First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 236.

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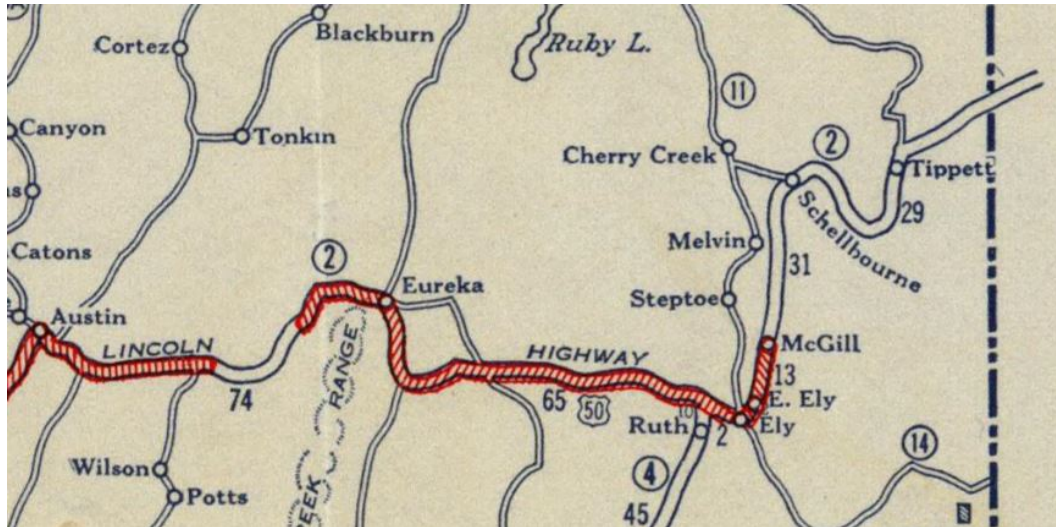


Figure 10. Map illustrating the Lincoln Highway route from the Utah state line to Ely, 1926.¹⁰¹

ii. Ely to Eureka

West from Ely, the 1916 LHA guidebook noted the Lincoln Highway was marked and passed through the town of Lane and into Copper Flat, which was the location of a large mine that guidebooks suggested “tourists should visit.” Just a few miles west, travelers could stop in Reipetown and Kimberly, which offered meals, lodging, radiator water, camp sites, and telephone services. Between Kimberly and White Pine Summit, the road surface shifted from gravel to dirt (Figure 11). According to the 1916 LHA guidebook, White Pine Summit provided a “beautiful view.” This section of the Lincoln Highway included a loop road that extended south to the mining town of Hamilton. About 10 miles from Coyle’s Ranch, the route reached Pancake Summit then passed through several stops and turned north before reaching the town of Eureka.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Rand McNally and Company, “California, Nevada,” 3,000,000 (California, Nevada: Rand McNally and Company, 1926), David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~214296~5501628:California-Nevada,-City-of-Santa-Ana?sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No&qvq=w4s:/when%2F1926;q:short_title%3D%22California.%2BNevada.%22;sort:Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No;lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=2&trs=3.

¹⁰² According to Franzwa and Peterson, both the original route and 1923 route following the current alignment of US 50 crossed two different Pancake Summits over the Pancake Mountains. Gael Hoag referred to the summit on new alignment as “Little Pancake Summit.” Gregory Franzwa and Jesse G. Petersen, *The Lincoln Highway in Nevada*, vol. 5 (Tucson, Arizona: The Patrice Press, 2004), 77.

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Figure 11. West of Ely, 1915 ¹⁰³

Founded in the mid-nineteenth century following the discovery of silver deposits in the area, Eureka expanded quickly, but like many Nevada mining towns, as output from the mines declined in the 1880s, many residents began to leave. By 1914 the town had been largely deserted but still had improved roads, two hotels, 30 general businesses, and a garage.¹⁰⁴ The Lincoln Highway was marked through town and followed N. Main Street until it reached present-day Reno Avenue, where it diverted northeast and followed present-day County Road 101 out of town.¹⁰⁵ A 1916 guidebook advertisement for the Hotel Zadow, established before the Lincoln Highway's designation, demonstrates how hotels often directed advertising to automobile tourists along the Lincoln Highway. The advertisement offered free overnight automobile storage and advised tourists to "See Zadow for road information. He knows and will be glad to tell you" (see Figure 12).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ *Lincoln Highway, West of Ely, Nevada*, Photograph, 1915, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/linchigh>.

¹⁰⁴ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 137–38; Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Third Edition*, 236–37; Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 238.

¹⁰⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, "The Official Map of the Lincoln Highway."

¹⁰⁶ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 139; Advertisements for Hotel Zadow in Eureka appeared in Reno newspapers as early as 1907. "Hotel Zadow (Advertisement)," *Nevada State Journal*, March 21, 1907.

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Figure 12. Hotel Zadow advertisement, 1916.¹⁰⁷

Realignments over Robinson Summit and Pancake Summit

In the early 1920s the NDH utilized state and federal funds for improvements along the Lincoln Highway between Ely and Eureka. A new route (near the current US 50 alignment) eliminated several dangerous railroad crossings west of Ely (see Figure 13) and turned northwest as it bypassed Ruth and the Consolidated Copper Mine before reaching Robinson Summit at 7,706 feet. West of the summit, the route shifted back to the southwest toward Illipah, where it met with the original Lincoln Highway route.¹⁰⁸ Eventually as the copper mines consolidated and expanded, the old Lincoln Highway route was obliterated and the towns of Copper Flat, Kimberly, and Reipetown were physically destroyed.¹⁰⁹ In 1923 and 1924 the NDH and White Pine County constructed a new alignment west of Illipah to Pancake Summit that reduced the road's elevation by 250 feet.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 139.

¹⁰⁸ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 236–37; Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Fifth Edition*, 468.

¹⁰⁹ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 237.

¹¹⁰ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Fifth Edition*, 469.

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Figure 13. Four miles west of Ely toward Robinson's Canyon, 1924.¹¹¹

iii. Eureka to Austin

West of Eureka, the Lincoln Highway crossed into Lander County and passed over the Toiyabe Mountain range to Austin. Highway conditions between Eureka and Austin varied, including "some hard road, some gravel, a number of washes, some rough spots and some mountain grades."¹¹² Early LHA guidebooks listed no stops within this portion of the route but estimated five hours for the 69-mile drive.¹¹³ By 1924 travelers along the route were directed to several ranch stops, including Hay Ranch, "The Willows" Ranch, and Floyd Grimes Ranch, which offered meals, water, and lodging.¹¹⁴ The original route entered Austin from the southeast and followed Main Street, which had a number of hotels, garages, and other establishments, including the International Hotel and Garage that catered specifically to automobile travelers with complimentary garages.¹¹⁵ The 1924 guidebook also pointed tourists to Stokes Castle, a three-story stone tower located just west of Austin. Built in 1897 by silver mine developer and railroad magnate Anson Phelps Stokes as a home, the castle was built of native granite and modeled after a roman villa. After only a few years, Stokes sold his

¹¹¹ *Four Miles West of Ely, Looking West up Robinson Canyon, Nevada*, Photograph, 1924, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/linchigh/x-lhc0878/lhc0878>.

¹¹² Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 139.

¹¹³ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 139; Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 238–39.

¹¹⁴ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Fifth Edition*, 473.

¹¹⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 139–41.

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mine and his property in Austin; the abandoned tower became a tourist attraction by the early twentieth century.¹¹⁶

Realignment over Hickison Summit and Austin Summit

The Lincoln Highway between Eureka and Austin underwent several improvements and realignments in the early 1920s. Just east of Austin, the U.S. Forest Service completed construction of a new road through the Toiyabe Forest Reserve over Austin Summit in 1920 (see Figure 14). The new route was graded and graveled and it had a maximum grade of six percent compared to the old route's 12 percent. This new portion of the Lincoln Highway featured winding switchbacks as the road approached the Austin Summit, then descended into the town of Austin. At this location the LHA guidebook warned motorists to fill their radiators as the ascent to the summit featured "some stiff hills." Construction of a new segment between Eureka and Hay Ranch began in 1922 costing a total of \$95,000, to which the LHA contributed \$3,750. In 1923 the U.S. Forest Service began an extension of the new road east toward Hay Ranch passing over Hickison Summit at 6,564 feet. The new route eliminated the "The Willows" and Grimes Ranch stops.¹¹⁷



Figure 14. Toiyabe Forest Road showing old (at left) and new (at right) alignments, 1920.¹¹⁸

iv. Austin to Fallon

Between Austin and Fallon, the 1916 LHA guidebook described the route as "many miles of hard road, some good and some fair gravel."¹¹⁹ Portions of the route passed through washes and alkali flats, posing challenges for both road builders and travelers. This segment had long

¹¹⁶ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Fifth Edition*, 474; Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 240; "Stokes Castle," *Travel Nevada*, accessed October 8, 2018, <https://travelnevada.com/discover/31032/stokes-castle>.

¹¹⁷ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Fifth Edition*, 472-473.

¹¹⁸ *A View of the New Federal Road in Austin, Nevada through the Toiyabe National Forest. Note Old Trail down in Wash; Old Trail Grades 10-12%, Maximum on New Road 6% (October 1, 1920)*, Photograph, 1920, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/linchigh/x-lhc0747/lhc0747>.

¹¹⁹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 140.

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been a busy route for freight traffic between Austin, Fallon, and nearby mining camps. The route was dotted with stage stops that predate the Lincoln Highway and freight traffic continued through this segment in the early years of the Lincoln Highway such that by 1916 the road was in desperate need of repair.¹²⁰ Fourteen miles west of Austin, the highway turned to the northwest and reached New Pass Summit at 6,348 feet before descending southwest through Alpine Ranch to Eastgate.¹²¹ Eastgate had been a popular stop for travelers along the Central Overland Route since the late nineteenth century. State Senator George B. Williams purchased the property in 1876 and constructed a small house of tufa limestone several years later and in 1908 Williams completed a second larger tufa building. LHA road guides note that Eastgate offered meals, lodging, gas, oil, water, and a camp site.¹²² West of Eastgate were Middlegate (not listed in LHA guidebooks) and Westgate. Middlegate was established in the 1850s by James Simpson and used as both a freight and a Pony Express stop for a short period.¹²³ Westgate was a smaller settlement that by 1916 offered motorists meals, gas, oil, water, and camping; the site diminished considerably by 1924 and only provided radiator water.¹²⁴ About 12 miles west of Westgate, travelers could stop at Frenchman's Station (also known as Bermond's), another former stage stop originally established to serve freight traffic. This stop was noted in early travelogues for the hospitality offered by the station's proprietor, a French entrepreneur named Aime Bermond.¹²⁵

Approaching Fallon to the northwest, the original Lincoln Highway route entered the Fallon Sink, a wide alkali flat in the northwest portion of the Carson Desert that posed a significant challenge to roadbuilders since the earliest iterations of the highway. Several stops dotted the route through the Fallon Sink, including Sand Springs, Salt Wells, and Grimes Ranch. The 1916 LHA guidebook advised westbound tourists to stop at Sand Springs near the edge of the Fallon Sink to "inquire the best road to take."¹²⁶ As it extended northwest to Fallon, the route zig-zagged around various farm properties through an area presently occupied by the Naval

¹²⁰ Franzwa and Petersen, *The Lincoln Highway in Nevada*, 5:32; Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 140.

¹²¹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 140.

¹²² Nevada Writer's Project of the Work Projects Administration, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Nevada* (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 262–63; Franzwa and Petersen, *The Lincoln Highway in Nevada*, 5:30–31; Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 241; Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 140.

¹²³ Nevada Writer's Project of the Work Projects Administration, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Nevada*, 263; Franzwa and Petersen, *The Lincoln Highway in Nevada*, 5:31.

¹²⁴ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 140.

¹²⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 140; Franzwa and Petersen, *The Lincoln Highway in Nevada*, 5:32–33.

¹²⁶ U.S. Geological Survey, "Carson Sink, NV," 1:250000 (Washington DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, 1910 ed 1908); Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 140.

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Air Station Fallon before entering the southeast end of Fallon along present-day Harrigan Road.¹²⁷ The highway turned west at E. Stillwater Road and continued west into Fallon for several blocks before turning north on S. East Street to connect to E. Center Street, then continued west for several blocks before turning north on Main Street to connect to the present-day route of US 50.¹²⁸ Fallon's beginnings can be traced back to a small general store and a post office established on the ranch of Michael Fallon in the 1890s. In 1901 State Senator Warren Williams purchased the ranch and subdivided town lots. Fallon grew quickly after the passage of the Reclamation Act in 1902, which enabled the Truckee-Carson Irrigation Project along with several other large reclamation projects in the American West. By 1903 Churchill county had made Fallon its seat of government and by 1905 the town boasted six restaurants, five saloons, two hotels, and many other businesses. As it was completed, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation Project enabled intensive agriculture and spurred additional settlement in the region.¹²⁹ By 1916 Fallon had a population of 1,200 and offered travelers along the highway a range of services and accommodations. Businesses that advertised in LHA guidebooks included the Overland Hotel and the Fallon Garage on E. Center Street.¹³⁰ From the center of town, the Lincoln Highway continued west along a segment now designated as Auction Road before continuing northwest to Hazen (see Figure 15).¹³¹

¹²⁷ Lincoln Highway Association, "The Official Map of the Lincoln Highway." Portions of this route have been obliterated for the base development since the 1940s.

¹²⁸ Lincoln Highway Association, "The Official Map of the Lincoln Highway."

¹²⁹ ZoAnn Campana, *Downtown Fallon Commercial Corridor, Architectural Survey Report* (Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, December 9, 2015), 9–11.

¹³⁰ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 141.

¹³¹ Lincoln Highway Association, "The Official Map of the Lincoln Highway."

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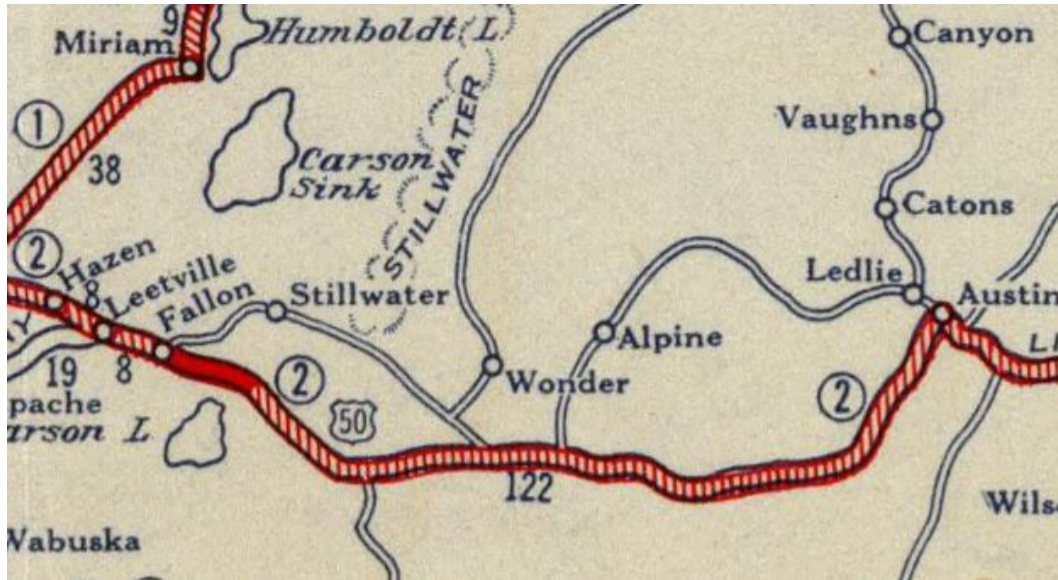


Figure 15. Map illustrating the Lincoln Highway route from Austin to Fallon, 1926.¹³²

Realignment over Carroll Summit

Following a survey of possible routes between Eastgate and Austin, in 1921 the LHA proposed construction of a new alignment of the Lincoln Highway that would extend over Carroll Summit southwest of Austin (see Figures 16-18).¹³³ LHA officials cited several factors for favoring the Carroll Summit route: it would be cheaper to construct and maintain than improving the existing alignment; it would serve a larger population; and it would provide tourists with scenery that compared "favorably with that in the western part of the state."¹³⁴ Construction of the segment began in the spring of 1924 and was completed in several phases through 1925.¹³⁵ Curving west around the edge of a large dry lake bed and extending into a forested and mountainous area, the Carroll Summit segment contained notable aesthetic qualities, including smooth grades and several hairpin turns.

¹³² Rand McNally and Company, "California, Nevada."

¹³³ "\$44,500 Available for Lincoln Highway," *The Daily Appeal*, September 9, 1920, 5; "Lincoln Highway Survey," *The Daily Appeal*, July 26, 1921.

¹³⁴ "Lincoln Highway Survey."

¹³⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Fifth Edition*, 476; National Park Service, *Lincoln Highway: Special Resource Study, Environmental Assessment*, 2004, 22.

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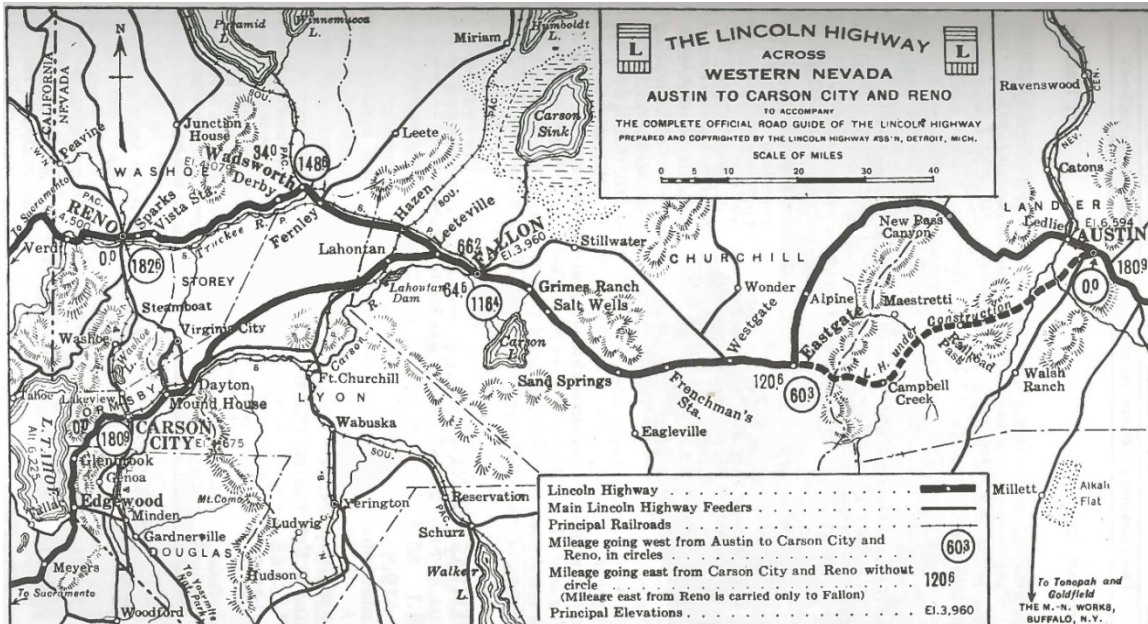


Figure 16. Map showing Carroll Summit under construction, 1924.¹³⁶



Figure 17. Two miles west of Carroll Summit, 1925.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway*, Fifth Edition, 475.

¹³⁷ *West Side of Carroll Pass, about 2 Miles from the Summit, Nevada* (1925), Photograph, 1925, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/linhigh/x-lhc0906/lhc0906>.

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Figure 18. *Between Carroll Summit and Eastgate, 1926.*¹³⁸

Realignment via Stillwater Cutoff and the Fallon Sink

The Fallon Sink portion of the Lincoln Highway, east of Fallon between Sand Springs and Salt Wells, became notorious within the Lincoln Highway's first few years of existence. The sink was a vestige of Lake Lahonton, which with Lake Bonneville once occupied much of the intermountain plateau region. What remained of the lakes in 1919 was a saline bed with light spongy soil that turned to mud with rain.¹³⁹ Early road guides warned travelers to take caution through the area as it was not uncommon to sink into the sand or mud flats (see Figure 19).¹⁴⁰ In his 1915 travelogue, *Rambles on Overland Trails*, Thomas J.H. O'Shaughnessy described an unfortunate experience on the Lincoln Highway in the Fallon Sink: "Five hours of honest toil were spent, extricating the car from the mud."¹⁴¹ Due to its loose sandy soil and drainage issues, a reliable road across the sink would require the construction of a high embankment with adequate drainage. Further complicating matters, road-building materials were not

¹³⁸ *Between Carroll Summit and Eastgate, Churchill County, Nevada*, Photograph, 1926, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu//linchigh>.

¹³⁹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Second Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1919-1920*, 76.

¹⁴⁰ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 140; Franzwa and Petersen, *The Lincoln Highway in Nevada*, 5:79.

¹⁴¹ O'Shaughnessy, *Rambles on Overland Trails*, 97.

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available nearby, requiring the shipment of large amounts of gravel from other parts of the state.¹⁴²



*Figure 19. Fallon Sink between Frenchman and Fallon, no date.*¹⁴³

Understanding that raising sufficient funds within Nevada alone for such a costly project would prove difficult, the LHA began to work with boosters and officials in northern California to raise funds in 1915.¹⁴⁴ Northern Californians feared that poor road conditions in the Fallon Sink area were motivating westbound tourists to divert onto the Midland Trail in Ely and continue southwest to Los Angeles. Fearing huge losses in tourist traffic, boosters in San Francisco and Oakland joined with the LHA calling upon Northern California residents and businesses to raise funds for the improvement of Nevada's section of the Lincoln Highway through the Fallon Sink.¹⁴⁵ By the following year the California Automobile Association, the San Francisco branch of the LHA, and Alameda County had each pledged to raise funds to contribute to the cause.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, the Willys-Overland Automobile Company contributed \$50,000 to the

¹⁴² State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Second Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1919-1920*, 76.

¹⁴³ *Fallon Sink between Fallon and Frenchman's Station, Churchill County, Nevada*, Photograph, n.d., University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/linchigh/x-lhc0724/lhc0724>.

¹⁴⁴ "Henry B. Joy Urges Work on Highway."

¹⁴⁵ "Active Work on Road From Ocean to Ocean"; "Henry B. Joy Urges Work on Highway"; "California Money to Be Spent on Nevada Highways."

¹⁴⁶ "Hard-Surface Road Across Sink of Carson," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, June 6, 1916.

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State of Nevada to assist in the construction of a new portion of the Lincoln Highway through the Fallon Sink.¹⁴⁷

In 1916 the LHA announced plans for a cutoff that would turn northwest near Westgate to follow an existing road over the Stillwater Mountains and through Stillwater before turning west toward Fallon.¹⁴⁸ Adding several miles to the Lincoln Highway, the Stillwater route was a slight diversion from the LHA's goal of directness. However, the 1918 LHA guidebook noted this was justified as it saved "much possible trouble."¹⁴⁹ Although the Stillwater Cutoff appeared to solve the Fallon Sink problem, opinions varied as to whether it was the best option for overcoming the obstacle. Travelers observed that while providing a better road surface and avoiding the sink, the new route contained ditches and washes and required a significant climb over the Stillwater Mountains (see Figure 20).¹⁵⁰

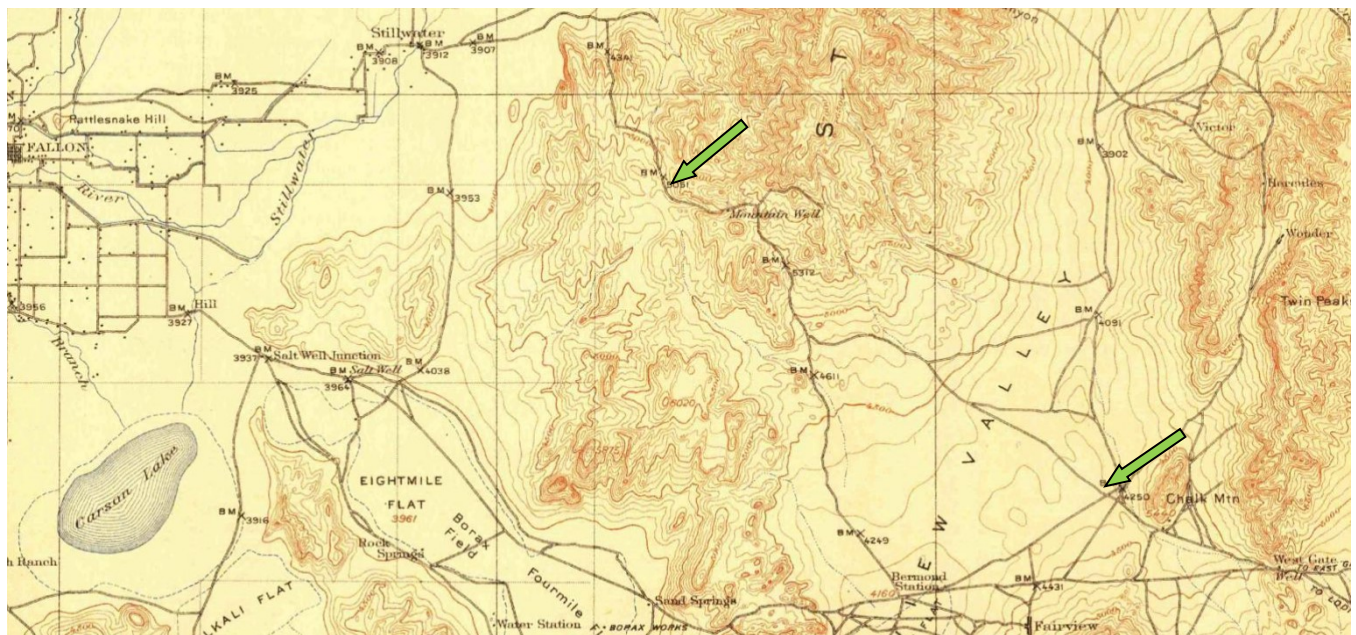


Figure 20. 1910 USGS Map showing existing roads between Westgate (bottom right corner of image) and Fallon (top left). The green arrows point to the existing road largely followed by the Stillwater Cutoff between Westgate and Stillwater.

¹⁴⁷ "Willys Agrees to Build Road," *The San Francisco Examiner*, February 27, 1916.

¹⁴⁸ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Third Edition*, 240–41; U.S. Geological Survey, "Carson Sink, NV"; "Route of the Lincoln Highway Changed Near Fallon," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, October 17, 1916. Lincoln Highway Association, "The Official Map of the Lincoln Highway"; Franzwa and Petersen, *The Lincoln Highway in Nevada*, 5:78–79.

¹⁴⁹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Third Edition*, 240.

¹⁵⁰ "Method of Building Highway Near Fallon Sink Proposed," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, November 25, 1916.

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The Stillwater Cutoff only provided a temporary solution as the highway was again relocated when funding was secured for a new road across the Fallon Sink. Finances prohibited the NDH from making improvements to the Fallon Sink in its first two years, but in 1919 General Motors contributed \$100,000 to the LHA for improvements to the highway, including the Fallon Sink segment.¹⁵¹ In 1919 the LHA donated \$45,000 for the improvement of the 17.3-mile segment between Grimes Ranch and Sand Springs. The remainder of the construction costs would come from state and federal funds. The NDH awarded a contract to grade and construct the concrete structures for a 10-mile portion between Salt Wells and Sand Springs to W.J. Schmidt of Berkeley, California, and work began in April 1920 and was completed that September. The 20-foot-wide grade was built up on an embankment of 3.5 feet above the sink with reinforced-concrete drainage structures (see Figure 21). The road also included 18-foot turn outs every 2,000 feet.¹⁵²



*Figure 21. Built-up Fallon Sink grade and culvert, 1920.*¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ "\$100,000 for Bridge Over Fallon Sink," *Oakland Tribune*, April 4, 1919, 00.

¹⁵² State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Second Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1919-1920*, 77.

¹⁵³ *Fallon Flats Grade Showing Surface (Not yet Graveled) of New Grade across Fallon Sink between Sand Springs and Salt Wells, Nevada (Oct. 4, 1920)*, Photograph, 1920, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/linchigh/x-lhc0756/lhc0756>.

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v. *Fallon to Reno and the California state line via Verdi*

Leaving Fallon, the original Lincoln Highway followed the present-day route of US 50-Alt northwest toward Hazen (see Figure 22). Between Fallon and Hazen, LHA guidebooks encouraged tourists to make detours to visit the Lahontan Dam, off present-day US 50 about 10 miles east of Silver Springs, and the Derby Dam, off present-day I-80 between Fernley and Reno.¹⁵⁴ These dams were part of the Truckee-Carson Irrigation Project, a U.S. Reclamation Service (later Bureau of Reclamation) project that diverted waters from the snow-fed Truckee and Carson Rivers to irrigate lands and enable intensive agriculture surrounding Fallon, Hazen, Wadsworth, and Fernley.¹⁵⁵ Although there were no accommodations for tourists at the dams themselves, the 1916 LHA guidebook noted that travelers would find services in the nearby towns and cities of Hazen, Fallon, Wadsworth, and Reno.¹⁵⁶ Hazen offered only one hotel and one garage, but tourists were encouraged to stop and observe ore smelting operations at the nearby Western Ore Purchasing Company.¹⁵⁷ From Hazen, the original Lincoln Highway continued northwest along the present-day route of US 50-Alt but turned west at present-day State Route (SR) 828 (Farm District Road) and made its way into Fernley.¹⁵⁸ Established in 1904, Fernley was a relatively new agricultural community at the western end of the Truckee-Carson Irrigation Project. By the 1910s only 100 people resided in the town and services listed for tourists along the Lincoln Highway in 1916 included only meals and lodging.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 142.

¹⁵⁵ "Our History," *Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, TCID*, accessed October 3, 2018, <http://www.tcid.org/about/our-history>.

¹⁵⁶ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 142.

¹⁵⁷ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 142.

¹⁵⁸ Lincoln Highway Association, "The Official Map of the Lincoln Highway."

¹⁵⁹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 142.

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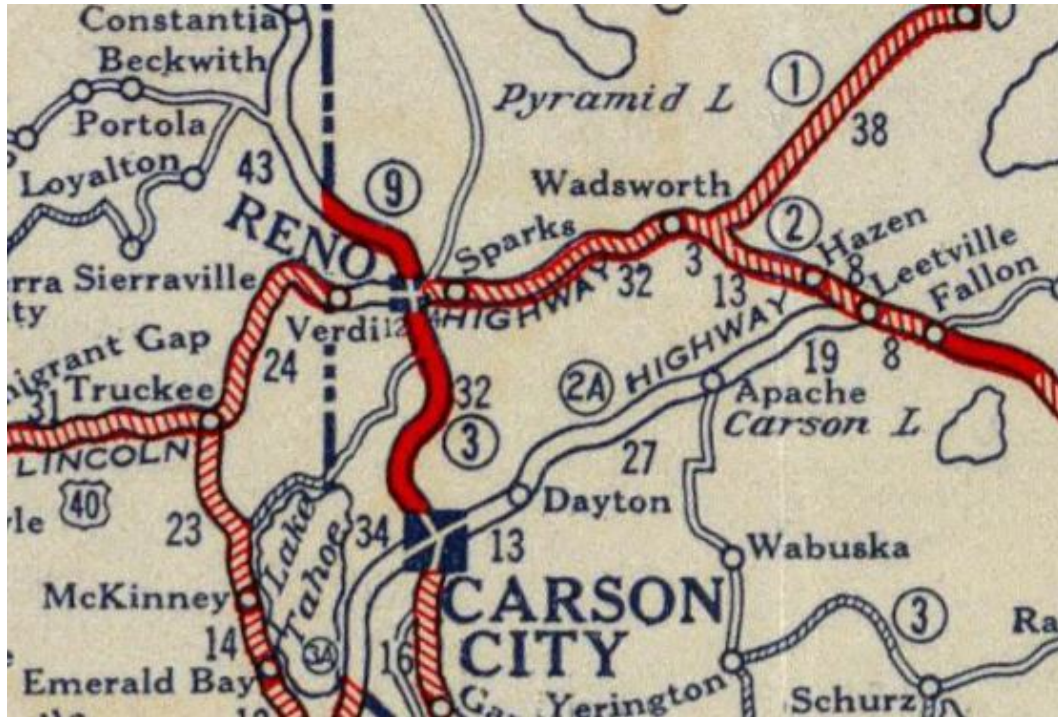


Figure 22. Map illustrating Lincoln Highway route from Fallon to California State line via Reno and the Pioneer Branch, 1926.¹⁶⁰

The route continued northwest to Wadsworth, which by 1916 was the most populated town west of Ely along the highway.¹⁶¹ Wadsworth boasted “extensive road improvement” along with three hotels and four garages.¹⁶² The Lincoln Highway crossed the Truckee River near the center of town and from that point continued southwest along the north side of the Truckee River largely paralleling the Central Pacific Railroad toward Reno. By 1916 this stretch of the highway included “some good roads” and “frequent crossings of railroads.” On the route to Reno, travelers could find a hotel and garage at Derby, and limited services such as water and radiator water at Vista.¹⁶³

East of Sparks, the earliest route of the Lincoln Highway crossed the railroad and bypassed the town following an existing road (now Glendale Avenue) to a curve in the Truckee River. From this point, the route continued north along the river following the “Asylum Road” (present-day Galletti Way) to meet with E. 4th Street, then continued west along E. 4th Street into

¹⁶⁰ Rand McNally and Company, “California, Nevada.”

¹⁶¹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 136–42.

¹⁶² Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 142.

¹⁶³ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 142–43

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downtown Reno.¹⁶⁴ Reno was the largest city along the route west of Salt Lake City and according to guidebooks offered tourists accommodations and services at 17 hotels and five garages. At the center of town, the Lincoln Highway divided into two separate routes; the main branch continued west out of Reno through a curving valley and on to Verdi before crossing the California state line, and an alternative route called the "Pioneer Branch" (discussed in detail below) turned south at N. Virginia Street and continued to Carson City, then crossed over Spooner Summit and followed the edge of Lake Tahoe before crossing the California state line.¹⁶⁵

Realignment in Sparks

By 1915 the LHA rerouted the highway east of Reno to pass through the community of Sparks. Sparks was established in 1904 after the Southern Pacific Railroad (Central Pacific) decided to straighten the railroad alignment and move the roundhouse and machine shops from Wadsworth to a new location east of Reno.¹⁶⁶ An article in the *Nevada State Journal* described the new route: "From Glendale north to the foot of B Street [Victorian Avenue], Sparks, and west on B street to Fifteenth street; then north on Fifteenth street to the county road [Prater Way] and west on the county road to the intersection of East Fourth street, Reno; west on East Fourth street to South Virginia street..."¹⁶⁷ After the reroute, Sparks implemented improvements along the road to ensure the LHA would maintain the route's location through the city.¹⁶⁸ By 1918 the LHA guidebook noted extensive road improvements and listed the road material in Sparks as "macadam," a form of pavement that consisted largely of compacted crushed stone.¹⁶⁹ By 1916 Sparks offered travelers along the route services at several hotels and garage, and by 1919 the city opened a free auto camp at Deer

¹⁶⁴ Franzwa and Petersen, *The Lincoln Highway in Nevada*. Map 148. The Lincoln Highway route followed existing roads near Sparks and Reno. See "Map of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County" (Reno, Nevada: Reno Printing Co., 1907), Nevada in Maps: University of Nevada-Reno, <https://contentdm.library.unr.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/hmaps/id/4784/rec/3>. For reference to the "asylum road" see, "Lincoln Highway Through Sparks Is Repaired," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, June 20, 1916, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/18003596/reno_gazettejournal/; Sanborn Map Company, "Reno, Nevada, 1949" (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1949), 0; "Lincoln Highway Era (1913-1928)," *4th Street Prater Way History Project*, n.d., <http://4thprater.onlinenevada.org/era/lincoln-highway-era>.

¹⁶⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 144.

¹⁶⁶ "Town Building (1868-1912)," *4th Street Prater Way History Project*, n.d., <http://4thprater.onlinenevada.org/era/town-building>.

¹⁶⁷ "Official Routing Changed by Consul," *Nevada State Journal*, August 25, 1915.

¹⁶⁸ "Sparks Council Provides for Curbing," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, September 28, 1915, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/17933646/reno_gazettejournal/; "Contract Placed for Street Work," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, October 27, 1915, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/17933753/reno_gazettejournal/; "What Nevada Papers Are Saying: Makes Bid for Better Roads (From the Sparks Tribune)," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, May 29, 1916, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/17933968/reno_gazettejournal/.

¹⁶⁹ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Third Edition*, 243.

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Park on Prater Way.¹⁷⁰ After 1921 the route into Sparks and through Reno was cosigned with a new transcontinental highway called the Victory Highway.

vi. The Pioneer Branch

Reno to Carson City

The original Lincoln Highway included an alternative route called the Pioneer Branch; the route turned south at N. Virginia Street in Reno and continued south winding along Steamboat Creek through the Washoe Valley, as it passed Steamboat Springs and looped around the west side of Washoe Lake. The route entered Carson City from the north along present-day US 395-Alt (N. Carson Street).¹⁷¹ The route through town and the outer edges were marked, and at the state capitol building the route turned west and extended along present-day W. King Street for approximately 3 miles out of town and into the foothills. West of Carson City, the Pioneer Branch of the Lincoln Highway followed the original Kings Canyon Grade for approximately 11 miles along the narrow and winding route to Spooner Summit.¹⁷² At Spooner Summit, the Pioneer Branch met up with the Clear Creek Toll Road and descended into the community of Glenbrook, located along the eastern shore of Lake Tahoe. Based on guidebooks, Glenbrook was the first place along the Pioneer Branch between Carson City and Lake Tahoe that provided amenities such as a hotel, meals, lodging, gas, oil, telephone, and a camp site.¹⁷³ From Glenbrook the road then turned south and generally followed the eastern shoreline of Lake Tahoe. After entering California, the Pioneer Branch continued west through Placerville toward Sacramento, where it rejoined the main alignment of the Lincoln Highway.¹⁷⁴

Fallon to Carson City (Fallon Cutoff)

On June 4, 1919, boosters from Placerville, Carson City, Fallon, and other areas of Nevada and California met in Carson City to form the Pioneer Trail Association. The group advocated for the construction of a new cutoff for the Lincoln Highway between Fallon and Sacramento through Carson City. The organization discussed their desire to attract traffic, including a

¹⁷⁰ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 143; "Lincoln Highway Era (1913-1928)."

¹⁷¹ Lincoln Highway Association, "The Official Map of the Lincoln Highway."

¹⁷² Zeier, Reno, and Parrish, *An Archaeological Inventory of the Kings Canyon Road, Carson City, Nevada*, 37-38; Haynes, Birk, and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, *Kings Canyon Road: Maintaining Cultural Connectivity in Peripheral Western Nevada*, 1-4; Palmer, "Kings Canyon Road, HAER No. NV-11," 2-12.

¹⁷³ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Second Edition*, 156.

¹⁷⁴ Butko, *Greetings from the Lincoln Highway, America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, 228-33; Zeier & Associates, LLC and Susan Lindstrom Consulting Archaeologist, *Archaeological Inventory Report, State Route 207, Kingsbury Grade, Erosion Control-Storm Water Management Master Plan, Douglas County, Nevada*, 19; Zeier, Reno, and Parrish, *An Archaeological Inventory of the Kings Canyon Road, Carson City, Nevada*, 37; National Register of Historic Places, *De 'ek Wadapush (Cave Rock) Traditional Cultural Property*, 26Do08 (Nevada State Museum); *Do-1 (University of California-Berkeley; 05-19-871 (USFS); CrNV-03-445 (BLM); 49 (TRPA)*, n.d., 4.

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planned cross-country U.S. military convoy, away from Reno's segment of the Lincoln Highway and onto the new proposed cutoff.¹⁷⁵ Shortly following their establishment in 1919, the Pioneer Trail Association petitioned the LHA to add the road segment between Fallon and Carson City to the Lincoln Highway. The new cutoff likely followed an existing route comprised of remnants of road used for the construction of the Lahonton Dam.¹⁷⁶ By 1918 the LHA guidebook described a branch road that turned southwest from Lahonton Dam leading directly to Carson City "on Lincoln Highway to Placerville via Lake Tahoe." The guidebook stated that this route was marked and 31 miles shorter than the Pioneer Branch from Reno to Carson City.¹⁷⁷ The segment was officially added to the Lincoln Highway two years later and was known as the "Fallon Cutoff," and part of the Pioneer Branch. The event received coverage in local newspapers that urged all commercial organizations and citizens of western Nevada to support the campaign. Lake Tahoe was lauded as a "great asset" to Reno, Carson City, and other towns hugging the Sierra Nevada, and was promoted as belonging to both California and Nevada.¹⁷⁸ In 1921 the formerly gravel Fallon Cutoff opened for regular travel. As a result, the route of the Pioneer Branch between Reno and Carson City was relocated to follow the Fallon Cutoff from near Fallon to Carson City, removing the Reno-Carson City section of the Pioneer Branch. The Fallon Cutoff made the Pioneer Branch approximately 15 miles shorter than the main Lincoln Highway route through Reno and the shortest westbound route to Sacramento from Fallon.

5. Lincoln Highway/US 50 and National Numbered Highway System, 1927-1937

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921 allocated government funding for road building, which diminished the need for private organizations to promote and maintain the nation's named highways. By 1925 road associations had named over 250 routes, including regional and transcontinental routes.¹⁷⁹ Even with maps and guidebooks, the abundance of named highways and lack of regulations on signage often made navigating the state's roads challenging, especially when the routes intersected. As a result, in 1926 the Association of American State Highway Officials (AASHO), along with a joint board of federal and state highway officials (Joint Board), developed a national highway numbering system for interstate roads (U.S. Highways) to provide uniform routing and signage across the nation.¹⁸⁰ In 1926 segments of the Lincoln Highway across the country were

¹⁷⁵ "Pioneer Trail Association Finishes Organization: Greatest Enthusiasm Pervades Convention," *The Daily Appeal*, June 5, 1919; Davies, *American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age*, 193.

¹⁷⁶ Davies, *American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age*, 192.

¹⁷⁷ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, Third Edition*, 242.

¹⁷⁸ "Carson Convention Lays Plans for Pioneer Trail," *Reno Evening Gazette*, June 6, 1919, 7; "'See Tahoe' Movement," *Nevada State Journal*, July 9, 1919, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Weingroff, "From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System."

¹⁸⁰ Weingroff, "From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System."

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incorporated into the new numbered U.S. Highway System, including US 1 between New York and Philadelphia; US 30 between Philadelphia and Evanston, Wyoming; US 530 from Evanston to Salt Lake City; and US 50 and US 40 through Nevada and California.

(a) Continued promotion as the Lincoln Highway

The LHA accepted the U.S. Highway numbering system and stated in a February 1926 editorial in the *Lincoln Highway Forum*, “this is unimportant as the routes selected to be U.S. Highways gain no advantage whatsoever from such selection” and the Lincoln Highway “is too firmly established upon the map of the United States and in the minds and hearts of the people.”¹⁸¹ In December 1927 LHA directors decided that, in light of having met their objective of “fully educating the American people on the value of Good Roads,” and trusting the Lincoln Highway would be completed by its supporters, the role of the organization should change. The need for constant national LHA support and heavy funding no longer existed. Accordingly, the national headquarters in Detroit closed and its promotional work on the national level ceased; however, the LHA officers continued to meet when necessary to support regional efforts.¹⁸²

The LHA’s financial contributions to the NDH for highway construction had ceased by 1926; however, the highway continued to be promoted and recognized as the Lincoln Highway through the 1920s.¹⁸³ Newspaper ads and articles in Nevada sometimes used the route’s name and number (US 50) interchangeably. Regardless, all named highway signs were replaced with numbered federal highway shield markers as part of the new federal highway system plan. Road maps showed named highways such as the Lincoln Highway as cosigned as early as 1926 (see Figure 23); however, named highways largely disappeared from road maps within several years.

¹⁸¹ Weingroff, “From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System.”

¹⁸² Gary Kinst, Editor, “Question Answered,” *The Traveler, Lincoln Highway Association - California Chapter* 15 no. 4 (October 2014): 6. LHA records show that the Executive Committee met in 1928, 1929, 1936, and 1941.

¹⁸³ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1923, to June 30, 1924, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1924), 17; State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fifth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1925, to June 30, 1926, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1926), 11.

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Figure 23. 1926 Rand McNally and Company Auto Map. Note both highway names and federal numbers shown.¹⁸⁴

In 1928 the last official promotional activity of the LHA was carried out by field secretary Gael Hoag, who made a final coast-to-coast trip along the Lincoln Highway.¹⁸⁵ He arranged for the construction of approximately 3,000 concrete markers along the route and kept a detailed log of the type and location of each marker. The markers were made of concrete and displayed the Lincoln Highway logo (a red, white, and blue rectangle centered with an "L"), a blue directional arrow, and a bronze medallion of Abraham Lincoln.¹⁸⁶ Boy Scouts across the nation erected the markers in September 1928.¹⁸⁷ Several 1928 concrete markers remain extant along the Lincoln Highway corridor, although some appear to have been repainted or relocated.

¹⁸⁴ Rand McNally and Company, "California, Nevada."

¹⁸⁵ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*, 219–21.

¹⁸⁶ National Park Service, *Lincoln Highway: Special Resource Study, Environmental Assessment* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2004), 4.

¹⁸⁷ Kevin J. Patrick and Robert E. Wilson, *The Lincoln Highway Resource Guide* (Prepared for the National Park Service, August 2002), 254; Weingroff, "From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System"; Richard Weingroff, "The Lincoln Highway," *Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation*, November 18, 2015, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/lincoln.cfm>; Mead & Hunt, Inc. and Heritage Research, Ltd., *Nebraska Historic Highway Survey*, 52.

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(b) Continued improvements

By the late 1920s the NDH recognized that early roads were deteriorated and under-designed to handle the current traffic levels, including long stretches of the Lincoln Highway. The NDH viewed the use of gravel as a travel surface as temporary in nature, which would serve as a permanent foundation for future improvement.¹⁸⁸ These roads were rapidly becoming a serious and expensive maintenance problem which necessitated widening and resurfacing.¹⁸⁹ In 1927 the NDH outlined a plan, in conjunction with the BPR, to develop a program of reconstruction and oiling of gravel surfaced roads. After considering several types of surfacing, a treatment known as *bituminous surface mixing method* was adopted for use in areas where traffic warranted, and budget allowed.¹⁹⁰ Another surface treatment employed in this era was an "oil mat" the NDH developed as an economical solution to providing a satisfactory surface for the state's vast mileage.¹⁹¹

Although the Victory Highway/US 40 was the primary federal route, the NDH continued to improve portions of the Lincoln Highway/US 50. For example, in the 1928 biennium the BPR requested the reconstruction of the Fallon Sink section between Salt Wells and Sand Springs on the Lincoln Highway/US 50 in Churchill County. This section had long been one of NDH's most difficult road building challenges due to the available soil used to build the road's high embankments. The light spongy soil did not consolidate sufficiently to support the traffic load; thus, the travel surface was never entirely satisfactory and was very expensive to maintain.¹⁹²

The Lincoln Highway in Utah continued to deteriorate in the 1920s as the state funneled most of its highway funding to the Victory Highway. The Victory Highway's segment from Salt Lake City to Utah was completed in by 1926 and the LHA had little choice but to designate this portion of the road as the official route of the Lincoln Highway (cosigned with the Victory Highway) in Utah. However, reaching the Nevada state line, the association refused to follow the Victory Highway any further.¹⁹³ As a result, the Lincoln Highway was left with a major unimproved gap between Wendover and Shellbourne. The LHA and its supporters lobbied the State of Nevada to construct a connector road from Wendover to a portion of the original Lincoln Highway north of Ely at Shellbourne and McGill

¹⁸⁸ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Sixth Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1927-1928* (Carson City, Nevada: Nevada Department of Highways, 1928), 21.

¹⁸⁹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Sixth Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1927-1928*, 17.

¹⁹⁰ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Seventh Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1929-1930* (Carson City, Nevada: Nevada Department of Highways, 1930), 96.

¹⁹¹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Eighth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways For the Period of December 1, 1930, to June 30, 1932, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1932), 31.

¹⁹² State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Sixth Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1927-1928*, 17.

¹⁹³ Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28," 15-17.

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(see Figure 24). By 1928 the BPR approved the route and the NDH completed a survey and signed a contract with the Dodge Brothers Construction Company to build the road. On April 17, 1930, Ely businessmen, regional LHA officials, and state and local officials including the governor of Nevada celebrated the opening of the last portion of the Lincoln Highway with the "Lincoln Highway Days Festival."¹⁹⁴ That same year boosters in counties along the route in Eastern Nevada began fundraising to "advertise and popularize the Lincoln Highway."¹⁹⁵ New establishments, such as the Hotel Nevada in Ely, constructed in 1929, opened along the route in anticipation of increased tourism along the route. The NDH also continued to refer to the Lincoln Highway in its biennial reports and adjusted its route listings to reflect the new section between McGill and Wendover (see Figure 25).¹⁹⁶



Figure 24. Wendover to Ely, c.1930.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28," 15–19; State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Sixth Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1927-1928*, 24–25.

¹⁹⁵ Mehls, "Historic American Engineering Record, Lincoln Highway HAER-NV-28," 15–19; State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Sixth Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1927-1928*, 24–25; "Allied Counties Start Campaign," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, January 27, 1930.

¹⁹⁶ S.C. Durkee, "Highway Map of the State of Nevada," 1 Inch: 25 Miles (Carson City, Nev.: State of Nevada Department of Highways, 1927); S.C. Durkee, "Road Map," 1 Inch: 20 Miles (Carson City, Nev.: State of Nevada Department of Highways, 1932).

¹⁹⁷ *Between Ely, Nevada and Wendover, Utah*, Photograph, n.d., University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/linchigh/>; the photograph date is not known but photograph shows roadbed with similar characteristics to a photograph in State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Seventh Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1929-1930* (Carson City, Nevada: Nevada Department of Highways, 1930)

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LINCOLN HIGHWAY		LINCOLN HIGHWAY	
West State Line—East State Line		U. S. ROUTES 40 AND 50—STATE ROUTES 1, 2 AND 24	
GOING		West State Line—East State Line	
WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
436.1	0.0...California State Line.	461.1	0.0...California State Line.
421.7	14.4...Reno.	446.7	14.4...Reno.
418.3	17.8...Sparks.	443.3	17.8...Sparks.
389.0	47.1...Wadsworth.	414.1	47.0...Wadsworth.
385.9	50.2...Fernley.	410.8	50.3...Fernley.
373.7	62.4...Hazen.	398.7	62.4...Hazen.
357.2	78.9...Fallon.	382.4	78.7...Fallon.
321.7	114.4...Frenchmans.	346.8	114.3...Frenchmans.
300.3	135.8...Eastgate.	325.3	135.8...Eastgate.
243.3	192.8...Austin.	269.0	192.1...Austin.
172.5	263.6...Eureka.	198.9	262.2...Eureka.
93.0	343.1...Ely.	119.8	341.3...Ely.
80.2	355.9...McGill.	106.8	354.3...McGill.
50.0	386.1...Schellbourne.	88.6	372.5...Magnuson's Ranch.
0.0	436.1...Ibapah—Utah State Line.	0.0	461.1...Wendover—Utah State Line.

Figure 25. Route of the Lincoln Highway as described on Nevada State Highway maps in 1927 (left) and 1932 (right).¹⁹⁸

By 1930 the NDH's program of reconstructing existing roads had greatly overshadowed the construction of new roads. The narrow right-of-way (ROW) widths (50 and 60 feet) of early road design necessitated construction of deep borrow ditches which were unsightly, difficult to maintain, and a hazard. The 1930 program resulted in the following characteristics of the roadbed: highway projects obtained more ROW whenever possible to accommodate a minimum roadway width 24 feet shoulder to shoulder and filled in the deep borrow ditches. The newly finished roadway now had flattened slopes where the terrain allowed, and drainage ditches 15 feet or more from the shoulder. The slopes were sufficiently flat, where possible, to allow driving on when necessary. The travel surface was rarely less than 18 feet wide, and through towns was often increased up to 20 feet or more. Realignment during this period were meant to solve issues of curves, site line, and embankment that earlier improvements during the late 1910s and 1920s largely did not address.¹⁹⁹

(1) Early grade-separation projects

Through the 1920s the issue of railroad grade crossings was managed at the state level through a process of negotiation with the railroad companies. The state highway department submitted a proposed grade-separation project to the railroad company for consideration and negotiations began on the financing and construction; the railroad share varied from state to state and was generally 50 percent or higher.²⁰⁰ Due to the higher density of rail lines and road crossings in urban areas, the

¹⁹⁸ Durkee, "Highway Map of the State of Nevada"; Durkee, "Road Map."

¹⁹⁹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Eighth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways For the Period of December 1, 1930, to June 30, 1932, Inclusive*, 31, 66-67.

²⁰⁰ Gibb Gilchrist, *Texas Highway Department 1927-1937*, N.p., 1937. Available at Photo Library, Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, Tex.

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grade separation issue was addressed in these areas earlier, and could be funded through city/state/railroad partnerships or city ordinances.²⁰¹

The NDH made a concerted effort to eliminate at-grade crossings on the Lincoln Highway through the 1920s. In 1922 there were 46 grade crossings on the State Highway System, and the NDH prepared plans to eliminate eight of them that biennium.²⁰² By the end of the decade the number of grade crossings on the three transcontinental routes in Nevada (Victory, Lincoln, and Arrowhead Highways) was reduced from 50-60 to just five.²⁰³ Early grade-separation projects completed by the NDH include an overhead structure over the Nevada Northern Railroad in Ely in 1924 (see Figure 26) and an underpass structure under the Southern Pacific Railroad west of Fernley in 1926.²⁰⁴



Figure 26. Grade-separation structure one-half mile west of Ely in Robinson Canyon, 1924.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ "Proceedings, American Road Builders Association, Report of Committee on Highway Intersections and Grade-Crossing Elimination", New Orleans, Louisiana, January 11-15, 1937, 76-79.

²⁰² State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Third Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, 1921-1922*, 52-53.

²⁰³ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Seventh Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1929-1930*, 50.

²⁰⁴ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1923, to June 30, 1924, Inclusive*, 31; State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fifth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1925, to June 30, 1926, Inclusive*, 16.

²⁰⁵ *Grade Separation One Half Mile West of Ely, in Robinson Canyon, Nevada*, Photograph, 1924, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu//linchigh/x-lhc0873/lhc0873>. Based on field survey and review of Google Earth, the grade separation structure appears to be nonextant.

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(2) *The Transcontinental Highway Exposition in Reno*

Improvements to the Lincoln Highway/US 50 in Nevada were well underway during January 1927, in anticipation of the opening of the Transcontinental Highway Exposition to be held in Reno in June of that year.²⁰⁶ The event celebrated the completion of a highway system from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which attracted tourists and officials nationwide. A great hall designed in the Mission Revival style, the California Building, was constructed at Idlewild south of the Lincoln Highway/US 50 in West Reno to host the exposition. Five huge tents erected nearby housed other auto-related activities, including an auto show highlighting Reno auto dealers.²⁰⁷ The exposition inspired additional construction to promote the event, including the original Reno Arch, shown in Figure 27. The event kicked off Friday June 4 and ran for five weeks.²⁰⁸ The exposition grounds became Idlewild Park, anchored by the California Building, and a later iteration of the Reno Arch remains in its original location.²⁰⁹



Figure 27. Nevada and California politicians dedicated the first Reno Arch on October 23, 1926. The text on the arch was subsequently changed to what it is today.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ "Highway Building Well Under Way," *Modesto News-Herald*, January 23, 1927, 17.

²⁰⁷ The California Building (ID No. 92001257) is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

²⁰⁸ "Great Automobile Show Opens in Conjunction with Highway Exposition," *Reno Evening Gazette*, June 25, 1927, 10.

²⁰⁹ The California Building, NR ID No. 92001257, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.

²¹⁰ Image courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada-Reno Library.

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(c) Depression-era road construction in Nevada

(1) Funding for road building prior to the New Deal Programs

Passage of the Oddie-Colton Bill in 1930, whereby the federal government assumed the cost of building roads through unappropriated public lands, including survey, construction, reconstruction, and maintenance highway construction of main roads, was a great boon to Nevada. Under this bill, 82 percent of the Lincoln Highway mileage from Wendover to its junction with the Victory Highway in Fernley, and 40 percent of its mileage along its portion cosigned with the Victory Highway from Fernley to the California state line was eligible.²¹¹ In 1931 and 1932 Nevada benefited from Congress's first appropriated emergency funds for road construction, which were essentially a loan program where states received an advancement that was to be paid back through deductions of future federal allotments. Nevada received \$1,049,000 of these funds, which, combined with regular Federal Aid allotments and other state revenues, funded construction projects on U.S. Highway routes in the state, including the Lincoln Highway/US 50.²¹²

Nevada's gaming and divorce industries and its effects on roadside buildings

Nevada weathered the Great Depression and tourism recovered earlier than the rest of the nation. Legislation passed in 1931 to legalize gambling and provide quick divorces stimulated the tourism industry in 1930 and the following decades.²¹³

Casinos developed as destinations providing opportunities to gamble, many located along the state's most traveled highways, including the Lincoln Highway/US 50.

The effects of the quick divorce services were primarily seen in motels after Nevada relaxed its already lenient divorce law by reducing the residency requirement from three months to six weeks. As a result, over 30,000 divorces were granted at the Washoe County Courthouse within the following decade, and Reno became known as the "divorce capital of the world."²¹⁴ Taking advantage of the influx of temporary residents seeking early divorces that traveled by automobile, some motels specifically advertised to this clientele, such as the Silver State Lodge along E. 4th Street in Reno

²¹¹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Seventh Biennial Report of the Nevada Department of Highways, for the Fiscal Years of 1929-1930*, 23-25.

²¹² State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Eighth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways For the Period of December 1, 1930, to June 30, 1932, Inclusive*, 10.

²¹³ Guy Rocha, "The Great Depression in Nevada" (Nevada State Library & Archives, n.d.), 1, nsla.nv.gov/Archives/Myths/The_Great_Depression_in_Nevada/, "History of Gaming in Nevada," *Nevada Resort Association*, accessed September 16, 2018, <http://www.nevadaresorts.org/about/history/>.

²¹⁴ "Reno: Twentieth-Century Divorce Capital," *O.N.E. Online Nevada Encyclopedia*, accessed August 10, 2018, <http://onlinenevada.org/articles/reno-twentieth-century-divorce-capital>.

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(see Figure 28).²¹⁵ The University of Nevada, Reno, acknowledges that the Silver State Lodge was known for “Catering to the divorce crowd...offering rustic cabins, each with a stone fireplace, kitchen, and porch.”²¹⁶ Additional sources show motel owners were designing accommodations for extended stay comforts.²¹⁷

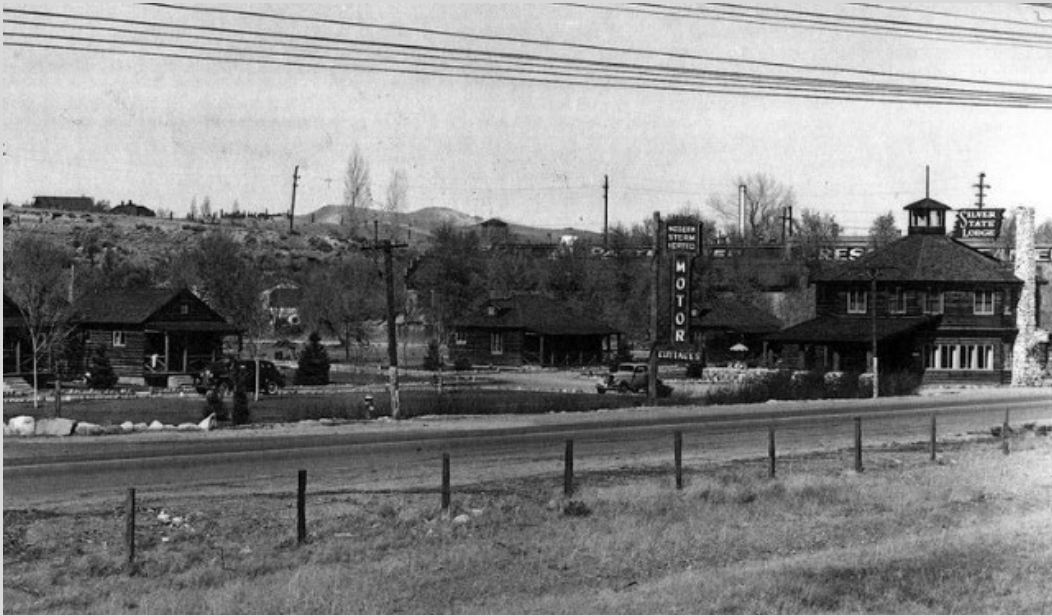


Figure 28. The 1931 Silver State Lodge (nonextant), on a portion of the route cosigned as the Victory Highway and Lincoln Highways, catered to divorce-seekers.²¹⁸

(2) Federal aid and New Deal programs in Nevada

Beginning in 1933, in an effort to pull the country out of the Great Depression, the Roosevelt Administration and Congress enacted an array of programs and agencies that came to be known as the New Deal. Beginning in 1933 passage of work-relief legislation put unemployed young men to work in the nation's parks and forests. Legislation such as the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) of 1933 and the Hayden-Cartwright Act of 1934 provided funds for highway and bridge construction. The Federal Emergency Relief Appropriation Act (FERA) of 1935 marked a shift away from direct relief to states and provided a broad national works programs creating jobs for the unemployed. FERA funded the Works Progress Administration (WPA, later the Works Projects

²¹⁵ David Cavers, “Migratory Divorce” (Duke University School of Law, 1937), 97-98, https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5461&context=faculty_scholarship.

²¹⁶ “Silver State Lodge,” *Reno Divorce History*, accessed October 16, 2018, <http://renodivorcehistory.org/library/silver-state-lodge/>.

²¹⁷ Mella Harmon, “Silver State Lodge (Site),” *Reno Historical*, accessed October 16, 2018, <http://renohistorical.org/items/show/21?tour=1&index=12>.

²¹⁸ Harmon, “Silver State Lodge (Site).”

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Administration), an agency that oversaw a wide variety of make-work projects, including highway and bridge improvements. Additional programs included the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The increased federal support of highway construction during the depression years was an effective vehicle to put thousands of Americans back to work.²¹⁹

New Deal programs and other federal support were instrumental in Nevada's economic recovery. Due in part to the efforts of Nevada Senator Key Pittman, the state received the highest per capita federal dollars of the states benefiting from the New Deal programs. In addition, Nevada was also first per capita in loans, CWA and CCC funds, and funds for public roads.²²⁰ New Deal programs resulted in several projects completed along the state's roadways.

Utilizing New Deal era federal funding, the Lincoln Highway was improved across the state, including a section cosigned with the Victory Highway/US 40 in Sparks to create a more direct path through the area (see Figure 29). Instead of turning south at 15th Street, the new route veered onto B Street (Victorian Avenue) near the Coney Island auto campground to create a relatively straight path through Sparks. B Street and Prater Way were linked with the construction of an extension near Coney Island, creating the junction now known as the "Y." The new "B Street extension" and several miles of US 40 were paved in asphalt. The new stretch of highway was four lanes and 40 feet wide with parking lanes on both sides. Prater Way between B Street (now Victorian Avenue) and 15th Street, which by that time had grown into a popular tourist corridor, was bypassed. Business owners and operators along the Prater Way corridor protested the reroute. A group of business owners along the route sued the City of Sparks for loss of business and property values.²²¹

²¹⁹ Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Historic Context for Louisiana Bridges* (prepared for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, December 2013), 24–25.

²²⁰ Rocha, "The Great Depression in Nevada," 1.

²²¹ "Park Motel and Park Grocery | 4th Street Prater Way History Project," *4th Street Prater Way History Project*, accessed August 24, 2018, <http://4thprater.onlinenevada.org/article/park-motel-and-park-grocery>; Andrew Wood, "US 40 Begins (1929-1945)," *4th Street Prater Way History Project*, accessed August 8, 2018, <http://4thprater.onlinenevada.org/era/us-40-begins>; "Park Motel and Park Grocery | 4th Street Prater Way History Project."

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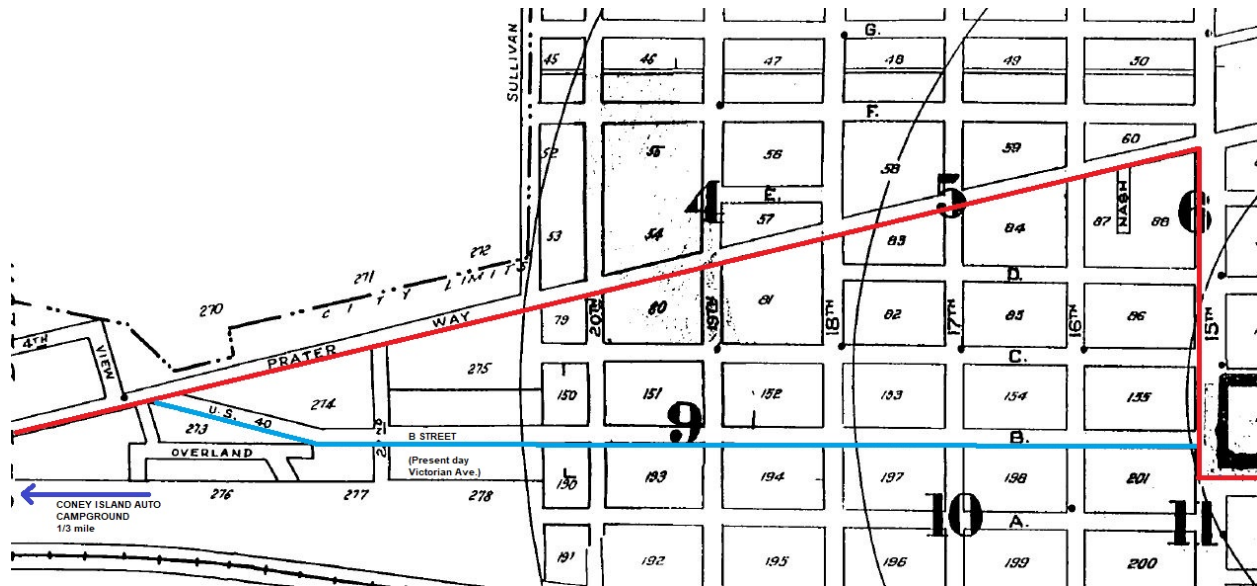


Figure 29. 1946 Sanborn fire insurance map of Sparks showing the 1934 US 40 reroute that created the “Y” junction at Prater Way and B Street.²²² The previous route is shown in red and the reroute in blue.

i. Grade-separation structures

In the early 1930s the inability of the railroads to support the volume of grade crossing improvements needed resulted in an increase of vehicle fatalities, while federal support available to states to fund road and bridge projects remained limited. New Deal legislation enabled federal and state highway agencies to respond to the crisis and assume the cost burden in order to make progress in grade elimination projects.²²³ Legislation such as the NIRA, the Hayden-Cartwright Act, and the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act included funds to separate road grades at railroad crossings, reconstruct existing railroad grade crossing structures, and relocate highways to eliminate railroad crossings altogether. The increased focus on improving grade crossing safety resulted in a decrease in vehicular fatalities after 1935.²²⁴

The WPA, the largest of the New Deal programs, included funds for road and bridge construction and grade separation.²²⁵ The WPA in particular put a great deal of emphasis on increasing safety for the travelling public through the elimination of at grade railroad crossings.

²²² “Sparks, Nevada, 1946,” 1:600 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1946).

²²³ “Proceedings, American Road Builders Association”, 77.

²²⁴ Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Historic Context for Louisiana Bridges*, Section 2, 24-25.

²²⁵ Eric Arnesen, *Encyclopedia of U.S. Labor and Working-Class History* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 1540.

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Associated programs such as the Works Progress Grade Crossing Program (WPG) and the Federal Aid Grade Crossing Program (FAG) were created solely for the purpose of eliminating what was considered a primary public safety issue. In addition, an expansion of the 1938 federal aid program pertained to eliminating grade crossings: projects were entirely federally funded and were not restricted to primary highways but focused on the most dangerous crossings.²²⁶

New Deal federal programs enabled the NDH to construct new, or reconstruct existing, grade-separation structures along the Lincoln Highway/US 50 in Nevada. Some projects were undertaken individually, and others were in conjunction with highway projects as the surface was widened and paved in the depression era. Examples include the widening of an underpass structure at Fernley in 1936 and the construction of an overpass structure west of Ely in 1938.²²⁷

ii. NDH road-building activities

Between 1930 and 1940 highway design evolved in relation to emerging traffic needs, developing specifications, and shifts in construction policy. The NDH continued to refine its highway design in accordance with the type and volume of traffic to be carried, topography, and materials available, and also to provide maximum salvage value when additional improvement became necessary.²²⁸ Materials became more standardized, such as asphalt, and in 1933 Nevada adopted tentative standard specifications for all road oils and cutback asphalts, in cooperation with the BPR and Asphaltic Institute.²²⁹

By the mid-1930s the NDH adopted a new highway construction policy geared toward safely accommodating fast-moving traffic. Highways were designed to provide the shortest distance between given points and to eliminate or flatten curves as much as possible; in other words, cost of construction within a reasonable limit, was sacrificed for shortest distance and good alignment.²³⁰ Research by the NDH, in conjunction with other state, federal, and private agencies, began in 1938 to address the issue of designing highways for definite speeds, led to

²²⁶ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, 1938-1940* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1940), 12.

²²⁷ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Tenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1934, to June 30, 1936, Inclusive*, 77; State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Department of Highways For the Period of July 1, 1936, to June 30, 1938, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1938), 82.

²²⁸ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, 1938-1940*, 39.

²²⁹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Ninth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, for the Period July 1, 1932 to June 30, 1934, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1935), 55.

²³⁰ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Tenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1934, to June 30, 1936, Inclusive*, 53.

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further advances in design standards. The emergence of "high type" of highway construction or reconstruction was first seen in the few years before World War II, which featured a wide strong base to withstand anticipated loads and a long-lasting surface. The NDH developed a method of grading gravel at the construction site, which cut costs of this base material in half.²³¹

By 1940 NDH highway design included wider rights-of-way, wider pavements, wider shoulders that were stabilized to be safe for use in emergency, and use of higher-type surfaces where traffic conditions warranted. A more extended use of flat fill slopes and cut slopes, construction of footpaths for protection of pedestrians, and incorporation of landscape features in the general design were also seen. On major highways a lane width of 12 feet was the minimum, with 11 feet on roads with medium-volume traffic, and no traffic lanes less than 10 feet in width were designed for roads with light traffic. For ordinary two-way traffic this provided surface widths of 24 feet, 22 feet, and 20 feet, respectively. On all heavily traveled roads, except in mountainous areas due to excessive cost, shoulders at least 7 feet wide were designed.²³²

Improvements on the Lincoln Highway centered around upgrading the travel surface, and also focused on reducing curves in the horizontal and vertical alignment. Examples include the completion of an oil-processed, crushed-gravel travel surface from Campbell Creek Ranch to Austin (37.3 miles) and from 12 miles east of Austin to the Lander County line (23.7 miles) in 1934. In 1936 the travel surface between Austin and 12 miles east was paved with road-mix asphalt.²³³ In 1939 a portion of US 50 in Churchill County from 1.5 miles west of Leeteville to Fallon was widened and several dangerous horizontal and vertical curves were eliminated; two narrow bridges were also widened as part of this project.²³⁴

During the 1938-1940 biennium the NDH developed several basic considerations for roadside improvements: new plant material, ground cover, soil preparation, landscape grading, old alignment and road scars, rest area, and scenic turnouts. This program was implemented along US 50 from Fallon to Leeteville.²³⁵

²³¹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Department of Highways For the Period of July 1, 1936, to June 30, 1938, Inclusive*, 63–65.

²³² State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, 1938-1940*, 41.

²³³ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Ninth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, for the Period July 1, 1932 to June 30, 1934, Inclusive*, 23; State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Tenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1934, to June 30, 1936, Inclusive*, 49.

²³⁴ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, 1938-1940*, 68–69.

²³⁵ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, 1938-1940*, 54.

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(3) *Promoting the Lincoln Highway during the 1930s*

Although the LHA discontinued national promotion of the route in 1927, the Lincoln Highway remained a fixture in the public consciousness. Its iconic status was sustained through nostalgia, patronage of local businesses established during its heyday, and various media that served to promote the route. A 1935 publication entitled *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*, which was based on data taken from the day-to-day transactions of the LHA and published by Dodd, Mead & Company (New York), told the story of the Lincoln Highway. "The Lincoln Highway Radio Show" premiered in 1940 and was broadcast coast-to-coast on over 48 stations. The show featured a Lincoln Highway-themed song and a "series of living stories" starring various celebrities.²³⁶ Even in Nevada, references to the Lincoln Highway reemerged from time to time. A 1940 article in the *Reno Evening Gazette*, for example, declared "Lincoln Highway Shows Heavy Traffic."²³⁷ The NDH continued to refer to the "Lincoln Highway" in biennial reports through 1936.²³⁸ In an interview on July 3, 1938, Carl Fisher stated that the Lincoln Highway had by that time "accomplished its primary purpose," which was to show the potential of highways and importance of "a unified, safe, and economical system of roads." Fisher felt that the country was now at the beginning of "another new era in highway building." Earlier that year President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1938, which called for a report (Toll Roads and Free Roads) that signaled a move toward the creation of the Interstate Highway System.²³⁹

In the early 1930s state branches of the LHA and VHA worked tirelessly to promote their routes through Nevada. Elko newspapers reported that both organizations planned to spend \$6,000 annually on marketing campaigns. News of the Victory Highway's efforts reached the editor of the *Fallon Standard*, who attacked the Victory Highway supporters as trying to take business away from the Lincoln Highway. Tensions grew between the highway associations until a meeting was held in Elko in March 1930, during which delegates agreed to use shared road signs in Wendover and Fernley. In September 1931 promoters of both highways met in Fallon to organize a new joint association, the Victory-Lincoln Highway Association. A collaborative and far-reaching marketing campaign was launched in an effort to attract motorists to Nevada, utilizing billboards and newspaper articles extolling the virtues of both highways.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Weingroff, "The Lincoln Highway."

²³⁷ Lincoln Highway Association, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*; Weingroff, "The Lincoln Highway"; "Lincoln Highway Shows Heavy Traffic," *Reno Evening Gazette*, September 3, 1940.

²³⁸ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Tenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1934, to June 30, 1936, Inclusive*.

²³⁹ Weingroff, "The Lincoln Highway."

²⁴⁰ Christine Adalia Fey M.S., "A Preservation Plan for the Lincoln Highway in Nevada" (University of Nevada, 1991), 35–36.

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The LHA had officially ceased activities by 1927; however, an attempt at national-level promotion of improvements to the Lincoln Highway was revived with the formation of the Lincoln Highway Bureau in Iowa. The Lincoln Highway Bureau formed to assist regional Lincoln Highway boosters across the country in fund-raising and promotional activities. In October 1932 the organization met in Austin with the LHA of Nevada, local boosters from towns along the route, and highway officials to promote improvements and travel along the Lincoln Highway in Nevada.²⁴¹ The Lincoln Highway Bureau's attempts at reviving national promotional efforts appear to have been short lived and research revealed no evidence that the organization continued activities in Nevada after 1932.

As the NDH steadily completed improvements in the 1930s, local boosters and private interests in cities along the route in Nevada began to shift their promotional focus away from the route's designation as the Lincoln Highway to its designation as US 50. In May 1937, an article in the *Reno Evening Gazette* recounted a meeting in Carson City between representatives from cities and towns along the Lincoln Highway in California and Nevada to form a new road organization affiliated with the national U.S. Route 50 Association. The new organization adopted the name Pony Route Division, U.S. 50 Highway Association and set forth to "promote tourist travel over present Route 50 [US 50] from Salt Lake City through Wendover, Ely, Eureka, Austin, Fallon, Dayton, Carson City, the south end of Lake Tahoe, Placerville through Sacramento to San Francisco." According to the article, the LHA of Nevada would be replaced by the new US 50 organization.²⁴²

On June 8, 1937, Vail Pittman, former president of the LHA of Nevada and the new U.S. No. 50 Association of Nevada, presided over a meeting that included representatives along the route and state highway officials from both Nevada and Utah. Topics at the meeting focused on highway improvements and increasing tourism over US 50 and newspaper accounts made no mention of the route as the Lincoln Highway.²⁴³ This shift along with the increased role of the NDH in the highway's design and maintenance after 1926 and through the 1930s signaled the end of direct and active local promotion of the route by private interests as an early named highway (the Lincoln Highway) and reflects its increased promotion and improvement as a US highway (US 50).

²⁴¹ "Lincoln Highway Plans Drawn at Austin Meeting," *Nevada State Journal*, October 11, 1932.

²⁴² "Road Association Formation Is Planned," *Reno Evening Gazette*, May 26, 1937.

²⁴³ "Road Association Formation Is Planned"; "Highway Group Meets in June," *Reno Evening Gazette*, May 29, 1937; "Road Completion Is Urged at Meet in Ely," *Reno Evening Gazette*, June 8, 1937.

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Green Books

African American Migratory Experience

Due to widespread discrimination, travel was full of potential danger for African Americans prior to 1967. Those seeking basic services on the road may not have had clear information on which businesses would welcome their patronage. Recognizing the need for a travel guide to serve the African American community, Victor Green, a postal worker from New York City, patterned a guide bearing his name after a similar publication put out by the Jewish community. The Green Book outlined the businesses that served African Americans on the road, including hotels, gas stations, and restaurants, as well as a host of other businesses. Through his postal system contacts, Green was able to compile information from every state, Canada, and Mexico. While Green Books were not available for Nevada between 1938-1941 and 1948, versions were available from other years that proved invaluable for African American travelers. The passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 lessened the need for the Green Book, and three years later the last edition was published.²⁴⁴

Research revealed four tourist homes that were listed in the Reno Green Book near the Victory Highway/Lincoln Highway: Billie Ross, proprietor (520 Spokane Street, 1948), Mrs. Floyd Gardener, proprietor (875 E. 2nd Street, 1948), Hawthorne Guest House, J.R. Hamlet, proprietor (542 Valley Road, 1952), and New China (260 Lake Street, 1961). While none of these buildings are extant, future research may reveal additional Green Book-related resources that could further inform the African American travel experience between 1936 and 1967.

²⁴⁴ Kristy Totten, "Historic 'Green Book' Saved Lives Nationwide, Locally," *Nevada Public Radio*, March 27, 2017, <https://knpr.org/knpr/2017-03/historic-green-book-saved-lives-nationwide-locally>.

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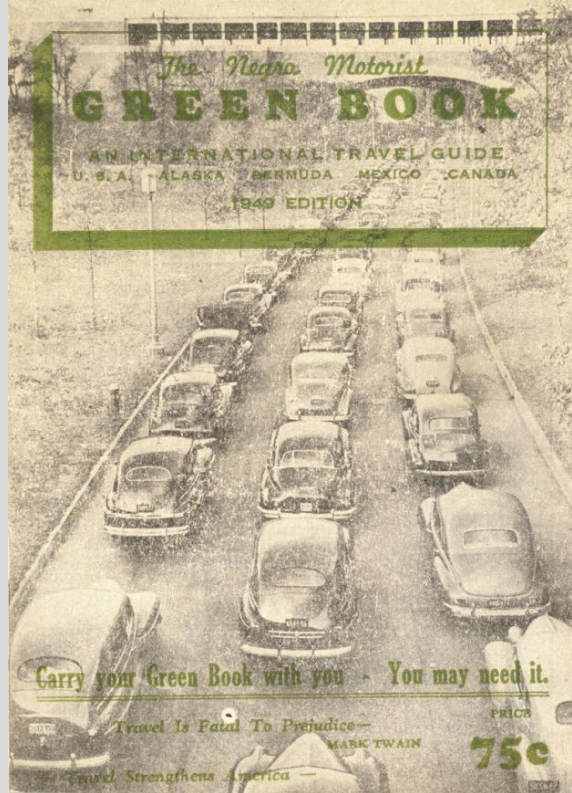


Figure 30. 1949 Issue of the Green Book.²⁴⁵

6. World War II and the Interstate Highway System in the Postwar Era, 1938-1970²⁴⁶

In 1939 the Public Roads Administration and the War Department designated a special system of interstate and interregional highways as a strategic network to carry troop movement and supplies. These routes were designated of primary importance and part of the strategic network by providing direct connections between cities and military facilities and needed to meet minimum design requirements of “widths of roadway surface, shoulders, bridge loadings, etc.” to handle “heavy and fast-moving” equipment.²⁴⁷

In Nevada, US 50 (the route of the Lincoln Highway) and US 6 (south of US 50) were designated as alternate secondary routes in the strategic network, and US 40 (the route of the Victory Highway) and

²⁴⁵ Totten, “Historic ‘Green Book’ Saved Lives Nationwide, Locally.”

²⁴⁶ The end date for this period is 1970 reflecting the 50-year cutoff per National Register guidelines; US 50 was never decommissioned and remains in use.

²⁴⁷ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1942), 12.

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US 91 (current I-15) were designated primary routes.²⁴⁸ Designation as an alternate secondary route in the network did not translate into immediate improvements along US 50 to accommodate heavy military vehicles, and most road work was delayed upon entering World War II and the diverting resources into the war effort.

Wartime efforts had a direct effect on road building in Nevada and on US 40. Federal policies during World War II had a profound effect on the NHD, as funding cuts coupled with wartime shortages of labor and materials brought highway construction to a virtual halt. Approved projects were limited to those deemed essential to the war effort, such as those along primary or secondary strategic routes or along roads providing access to military or mining facilities.

This period reflects the function of the highway as a primary U.S. Highway and the effects of federal transportation policy carried out by the NDH, which was greatly strengthened by its designation as a primary highway in the strategic network. This designation coupled with federal transportation legislation in 1941, 1944, and 1956 resulted in focused roadway improvements to provide interstate access and its role as the primary highway in northern Nevada and supplanting its identity and promotion as a named highway. As such, the history and themes during this period relate to US 50 and other larger national and statewide postwar trends and not the Lincoln Highway.

This MPDF provides the chronological period related to its role and use as a named transcontinental highway, the Lincoln Highway, 1913-1937. This section includes a discussion after this period to address its history and physical development as a U.S. Highway. This period is provided to understand how its role as a U.S. Highway differed from its role as a named transcontinental highway and is provided to assist in identifying and evaluating associated property types in Section F.²⁴⁹

(a) Defense Highway Act of 1941

Mobilization for the war effort placed limits on civilian access to gas and tires and, as a result, substantially cut highway usage for travel, especially for recreational purposes. With the exception of roads needed for military purposes, road construction activities generally stopped leading up to and during World War II. The Defense Highway Act of 1941 further restricted the activities of state highway departments by limiting federal highway funds to improvements only on roads in the strategic

²⁴⁸ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1942), 12.

²⁴⁹ This MPDF does not address the significance of U.S. Highways in Nevada and properties that fall outside the chronological period identified for the Lincoln Highway, 1913-1937. Associated properties prior to this period or after this period may possess historical importance for themes not addressed in this MPDF, such as its role as an early U.S. Highway, and may need to be evaluated for National Register eligibility for other themes and areas of significance separately.

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network; the construction of roads to military bases, defense manufacturing plants, or air bases; and advanced engineering surveys for projects to be initiated after the war. In 1941 the BPR prepared a report on "Highways for National Defense" as a part of the war preparedness efforts leading up to entry into the war.²⁵⁰ In Nevada, by 1939 US 40 and US 91 had already been designated as primary routes and US 50 and US 6 were designated alternate routes in the strategic network.²⁵¹ Priority was given to primary routes in terms of federal expenditures.

These federal policies during the onset of World War II had a profound effect on the NDH, as funding cuts coupled with wartime shortages of labor and materials brought highway construction to a virtual halt. Approved projects were limited to those deemed essential to the war effort, such as those along primary or secondary strategic routes or along roads providing access to military or mining facilities. US 50 was designated an alternate route in the strategic network. The NDH kept busy in the interim, building flight strips for the Army Air Force and other projects for the military.²⁵² In addition, the NDH continued to carry out highway maintenance at a high standard that resulted in a large expenditure of state funds.

(b) Wartime improvements and developments along US 50, 1941-1945

US 50 was an alternate route in the military's strategic road network and few improvements were made along the highway during the war period since a large portion of state funds were dedicated to US 40, a primary route in the strategic network and priority for maintenance and construction, to offset shortfalls in federal funding. The shortfall in federal support was predicted by NDH and planned to be made up in the post-World War II (postwar) years. Indeed, a review of NDH Biennial Reports confirms that little construction occurred along US 50 during the war. Several sections of US 50 and US 40 during the war were reconstructed with a widened roadbed, wider paved asphaltic surface, and widened shoulders that totaled 50 miles in length; an additional 21 miles of both highways was reconstructed with a paved asphaltic surface on widened roadbeds.²⁵³ A feeder road between US 50 (Keystone Junction) and copper mines at Ruth and Kimberly, approximately 6 miles

²⁵⁰ Darcel M. Collins and Darryl Hampton, "Defense Access Roads," *Federal Highway Administration Research and Technology: Public Roads*, June 2012, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/12mayjune/02.cfm>; Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers*, 176–77.

²⁵¹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942, Inclusive*, 12–13.

²⁵² State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1942, to June 30, 1944, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1944), 7–8.

²⁵³ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942, Inclusive*, 35.

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west of Ely on US 50, was completed and consisted of grading the roadbed and adding an asphalt surface and an overpass over the Nevada Northern Railway.²⁵⁴

During World War II funding for construction was discontinued statewide and for several years roads that should have been reconstructed required extraordinary maintenance by the State (both primary and secondary roads). The NDH kept roads in as good of condition as possible despite a lack of personnel and old equipment. Maintenance during this time consisted of adding bituminous mixes to add thickness to road surfaces, heavy seal and chip jobs, and correcting drainage issues that required breaking up the road base and surface in many places.²⁵⁵

Highway survey and planning also became a focus of the NDH during this period and continued until the end of World War II. Under Section 9 of the Defense Highway Act of 1941, Congress authorized \$10 million for the purpose of "making studies, surveys, plans, and estimates for future development of the strategic network of highways, including bypasses around and extensions into and through municipalities and metropolitan areas" and Nevada was given \$127, 536.²⁵⁶ The act required matching state funds at the normal federal aid pro rate, which in Nevada amounted to 16.13 percent of the total estimated cost \$24,528, which resulted in \$152,067 available for advanced engineering studies.²⁵⁷ Considerable studies yielded six projects inaugurated by the State, including advanced engineering studies by NDH along US 50 in Fallon, and east of Fallon for 8 miles, between 1942 and 1944.²⁵⁸ By 1944 the NDH had designated over \$3 million worth of projects ready to be funded in the postwar period, with equal weight given to interstate highways and secondary farm-to-market roads.²⁵⁹

(c) Postwar development and emergence of the Interstate Highway System

(1) Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944

The passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 provided a nationwide federal appropriation of \$1.5 billion over a three-year period to modernize the nation's highway system. The act called upon

²⁵⁴ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1940, to June 30, 1942, Inclusive*, 36.

²⁵⁵ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1945, to June 30, 1946, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1946), 37.

²⁵⁶ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1942, to June 30, 1944, Inclusive*, 16.

²⁵⁷ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1942, to June 30, 1944, Inclusive*, 16.

²⁵⁸ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1942, to June 30, 1944, Inclusive*, 55.

²⁵⁹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1942, to June 30, 1944, Inclusive*, 7–8.

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the states and the BPR to designate a national system of interstate highways connecting state capitals, principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers by direct routes. The stipulations divided funding so that 45 percent was to be spent on the federal-aid highway system, 30 percent on secondary and feeder roads (those that branched from through routes), and 25 percent on urban extensions. Less than two months after the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, Congress declared that the war emergency was sufficiently resolved and authorized the postwar road program to proceed. Funds became available to states in late 1945, and construction programs began soon after. Initially, the NDH felt that the funds provided by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 (\$5,966,089 between July 1, 1946, and June 30, 1948) would go a long way toward catching up on road work deferred during the war. However, escalating costs of materials and labor associated with highway construction meant that the funds only covered approximately half the work originally planned.²⁶⁰

(2) Postwar road construction along US 50

After the conclusion of World War II, highway construction projects that had been put on hold during the war due to funding were taken up once again. Postwar traffic volumes in Nevada increased rapidly and surpassed forecasts by traffic engineers. By 1946 traffic volumes were nearly 50 percent higher than those in 1941 and the number of heavy commercial vehicles also reached an unprecedented level.²⁶¹ New construction along US 50 was limited since US 40 continued to receive the majority of cross-country traffic and funding due to its designation as a primary route. However, several projects along US 50 did occur in the years immediately following World War II that consisted primarily of short reconstruction and maintenance projects. Between 1944 and 1946 Contract No. 669 called for construction of SR 2/US 50/93 between McGill and Magnusen's Ranch in White Pine County, on a new alignment with a 32-foot bituminous surface between shoulders, and flat fill and cut slopes.²⁶² Two floods of considerable impact along US 50 between 1944 and 1946, one at Devil's Gate (12 miles west of Eureka) and another in the flat between Little Antelope Summit and Pancake Summit, required immediate reconstruction.²⁶³ Between 1946 and 1948 two reconstruction projects along a 19-mile segment of US 50 near Austin were awarded at a cost of \$537,922.60.²⁶⁴ In Elko

²⁶⁰ Nevada Department of Highways, *State of Nevada Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways* (Carson City, Nevada, July 1, 1950), 12–13, 68; *State of Nevada, Biennial Report: Fiscal Years 1955-1956* (Carson City, Nevada: Nevada Department of Highways, 1956), Table 14, 42.

²⁶¹ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Fiscal Years of July 1, 1946 to June 30, 1948* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1948), 14.

²⁶² State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1945, to June 30, 1946, Inclusive*, 41.

²⁶³ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Period July 1, 1945, to June 30, 1946, Inclusive*, 42; State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Fiscal Years of July 1, 1946 to June 30, 1948*, 14.

²⁶⁴ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways for the Fiscal Years of July 1, 1946 to June 30, 1948*, 19.

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County, between Boone Springs and White Horse Pass (between Wendover and Ely), 16.21 miles of new roadway with asphaltic roadmix surface was completed along US 50 between 1948 and 1950.²⁶⁵ Segments of US 50 between Wendover and Ely, south of Fallon, and along Lake Tahoe were also improved in 1955-56.²⁶⁶

(3) Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 allocated \$1.1 billion to states for the construction of 40,000 miles of the new federal Interstate Highway System, previously proposed in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944. In passing the act, Congress declared it essential to the national interest to provide a national system of Interstate Highways for early completion. The act also increased Nevada's share of construction funds by almost 50 percent over previous congressional grant support, which included \$12 million dollars allotted in federal funds the first year. The NDH increased personnel over 20 percent to meet the new demands.²⁶⁷ By August 1956 three construction projects laid claim to be the first segments of the new Interstate Highway System: two in Missouri and one in Kansas. Construction on I-80 in Nevada also began in 1956 and continued through the mid-1960s. Nevada's main east-west Interstate Highway, I-80, followed US 40 (formerly the route of Victory Highway) instead of US 50 (former Lincoln Highway).²⁶⁸ The funding and construction projects authorized under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 signaled an important shift in the development of highways in Nevada and throughout the nation.²⁶⁹ The Interstate Highway System was signed into law in 1956; however, it took two decades to construct. In Nevada I-80 was not completed until 1981.

(4) Postwar development trends along US 50

In the postwar period Nevada followed national trends in which travel along most highways increased dramatically due to increases in automobile ownership and leisure activities, which resulted in greater interest in taking scenic drives, visiting campgrounds for picnicking and camping, and other tourism destinations, resulting in an increase in auto-related businesses catering to tourists and the traveling public. However, postwar development in the small towns along US 50 was limited and consisted of a few motels, gas stations, and restaurants; new businesses often opened in prewar buildings and established businesses also continued into the postwar period.

²⁶⁵ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Seventeenth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, for the Period July 1, 1948 to June 30, 1950, Inclusive* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1954), 37.

²⁶⁶ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Twentieth Biennial Report of the Department of Highways, Fiscal Years 1955-1956* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1956), 48, 61, 65.

²⁶⁷ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Biennial Report: Fiscal Years 1955-1956* (Carson City, Nev.: Nevada Department of Highways, 1956), 9-10.

²⁶⁸ State of Nevada, Department of Highways, *Biennial Report: Fiscal Years 1955-1956*, 10.

²⁶⁹ "U.S. Highway 50 - Nevada," *AA Roads, See the Road before You Go*, October 8, 2012, http://www.aaroads.com/west/us-050_nv.html; National Park Service, *Lincoln Highway: Special Resource Study, Environmental Assessment*, 2004, 30.

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In Ely the population declined from 4,140 to 3,500 between 1940 and 1950, respectively, so postwar growth and development was limited.²⁷⁰ Postwar construction along US 50 in Ely included the 18-room c.1955 Deser-est Motel at 1425 East Aultman Street with its low-pitched shed roof, planters, and neon signage. Established businesses such as the c.1940 Phillips 66 service station and Miller Motel at 701 E. Aultman Street and the 1929 Hotel Nevada and Gambling Hall at 501 Aultman Street continued to serve both locals and the limited number of tourists traveling along US 50 throughout the postwar period.

The former mining towns of Eureka and Austin experienced very little postwar development. In Eureka, the Ruby Hill Motel at 380 North Main Street was constructed c.1955 but most buildings pre-date the postwar period and continued in use during the postwar period. In Austin, postwar Nevada State Highway maps touted Stokes Castle (one mile south of town) as an attraction for travelers. Little growth occurred in Austin following World War II; the population of Austin township in 1950 was only 419.²⁷¹ However, established businesses like the c.1915 Austin Garage and c.1935 Lincoln Motel at 60 Main Street continued to serve travelers along the route during the postwar period. The relative isolation of these small towns along the Lincoln Highway was not attractive to investors or entrepreneurs wanting to establish businesses or services due to low traffic volumes and meager populations unable to sustain a large number of businesses.

West of Fallon, US 50 diverted from the original Lincoln Highway route toward Fernley and Reno and extended southwest toward Carson City. Historic topographic maps indicate that development in Carson City was concentrated around the downtown core, at the intersection of US 50 and the north-south-oriented US 395 and extended out in each direction from this location. Postwar development in Carson City was limited and the extent of development had not changed much by 1963. Postwar commercial development, including motels, restaurants, and auto-related businesses, occurred primarily along South Carson Street (US 395). Due to its booming tourism and gaming economy, and direct connection to US 40, the state's primary route across northern Nevada, Reno was the epicenter of postwar development in this region of the state.

The majority of traffic traveling across northern Nevada during the postwar period was funneled through Reno via US 40 and portions of I-80 that were complete by that time. However, those traveling from, or to, Lake Tahoe frequented that portion of US 50 that extended south from Reno or

²⁷⁰ Bureau of the Census, United States of America, *1950 Census of Population*, vol. Volume 1. Number of Inhabitants (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1950), 28–6,
<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/population-volume-1/vol-01-31.pdf>.

²⁷¹ Bureau of the Census, United States of America, *1950 Census of Population*, Volume 1. Number of Inhabitants:28–6.

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southwest from Fallon and then west from Carson City; both road corridors were originally part of the Pioneer Branch of the Lincoln Highway. As discussed in detail in the MPDF titled *Lincoln Highway – Pioneer Branch, Carson City to Stateline, Nevada* and in period NDH Biennial Reports, the segment of US 50 between Carson City and Lake Tahoe was of growing importance (presumably for tourist traffic) during the postwar years. In October 1957 a new four-lane alignment of US 50 between the US 395 intersection south of Carson City and Spooner Summit officially opened to motorists.²⁷²

7. Summary

Designated in 1913, the Lincoln Highway represents one of the earliest successful campaigns to develop and promote a transcontinental route in Nevada resulting from the national Good Roads Movement. The highway was widely promoted by private interests from 1913 into the 1930s. Much of its route was designated US 50 (and US 40 where it was cosigned with the Victory Highway) in 1926. After that time, LHA funding ceased in Nevada and state and federal governments assumed an ever-greater role in physical development of the route. As a result, the need for promotion had diminished, and in 1927 the LHA closed its national headquarters and instead LHA national officials continued meeting only as needed through the onset of World War II. This shift away from its identity as a named highway is reflected in the late 1930s by the absence of reference to the route as a named highway on State Highway maps (the Lincoln Highway was last shown in 1932) and in NDH biennial reports (the Lincoln Highway was last mentioned in 1936). Additionally, local boosters and regional promoters of the Lincoln Highway increasingly promoted the route as a US Highway, and in 1937 the LHA of Nevada was replaced by an organization that promoted the route as US 50. As such, the late 1920s and 1930s reflects a period of transition in which the historic identity of the Lincoln Highway diminishes and its identity as a secondary east-west route across northern Nevada greatly increased.

With the onset of World War II, US 50 was formally designated an alternate and secondary route in the strategic network of highways in Nevada. Its subordinate role as a secondary east-west route in Nevada was firmly established. As a secondary route, it received limited state and federal funding for maintenance and improvements during World War II. This trend continued after the war as the route continued to function as a secondary route with the bulk of highway funding focused on improvements to US 40 as the main east-west interstate connection to the north.

In summary, the Lincoln Highway/US 50 has three distinct chronological periods that relate to its historic use:

²⁷² "Clear Creek New Highway Open Friday," *Nevada State Journal*, September 29, 1957, 1.

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- 1913-1926 reflects the period in which the highway functioned as the state's earliest named transcontinental automobile highway promoted by private interests and the LHA.
- 1927-1937 reflects the period when it was designated US 50 and its status as a secondary east-west highway in northern Nevada gradually solidified as state and federal funding for improvements increased. Local boosters and regional promoters of the route gradually shifted away from its promotion as a named highway in favor of its designation as a US highway. By 1937, the LHA of Nevada was replaced by an organization that promoted the route as US 50. Two years later, its status as a secondary highway was firmly set when it was recognized as an alternate and secondary route in the strategic highway network. This period reflects its dual role and transition period as private interests continued to promote it as a named highway, while increasing its identity as a secondary connection within the broader U.S. Highway System.
- After 1937, during World War II, and subsequent postwar trends reflect the end of its association as a named transcontinental highway when it was fully recognized as a secondary U.S. Highway in northern Nevada and in the national strategic network, and its east-west interstate connection was relegated to secondary status after being supplanted first by US 40 and then by I-80.

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Associated Property Types

This section of the MPDF provides a consistent process to apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation to identify the associated property types, evaluate their significance, and assess their integrity. The associated property types of the Lincoln Highway are defined to be two main types:

- Roadbed segments and road-related structures: the linear structure of the roadbed and associated road-related structures constructed or improved as part of an alignment of the highway from 1913-1937.
- Individual properties and linear highway historic districts: roadbed segments with one or more road-related buildings constructed to provide auto-related commercial services or promoted as tourist destinations with a direct association to the Lincoln Highway, 1913-1937.

The *Statement of Historic Contexts* (Section E of this MPDF) concludes with three chronological periods that reflect the use of roadbed as the Lincoln Highway versus US 50. The first two chronological periods serve to define how associated property types derive significance with the Lincoln Highway through 1937 as follows:

- *Early named highway, 1913-1926* – this period reflects associated property types constructed and promoted as the Lincoln Highway and have a direct and important association with the Lincoln Highway.
- *Named highway/early numbered U.S. Highway, 1927-1937* – this period reflects associated property types that have a direct and important association with the Lincoln Highway and may illustrate both a time of active promotion and recognition of the route as the Lincoln Highway and its transition into an early numbered U.S. Highway.

After 1937 the highway's historic identity as the Lincoln Highway ended and its history and importance were related to the development of the U.S. Highway System and not as an early named transcontinental highway. Therefore, after 1937 the highway does not have a direct and important association with an early named transcontinental highway and it will not possess significance under the theme of the Lincoln Highway and the period of significance for a roadbed will not extend past 1937. This MPDF does not address associated property types constructed after 1937 that may possess significance for themes other than the Lincoln Highway, such as US 50. These properties should be evaluated under another context following the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

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Section E, *Statement of Historic Contexts*, establishes this chronological period related to its role and use as a named transcontinental highway; however, Section E also includes a discussion of the transition of this highway after 1937 to address its history and physical development as a U.S. Highway, US 50. This period is provided to understand how its role as a U.S. Highway differed from its role as a named transcontinental highway and is provided to assist in identifying and evaluating associated property types that fall within this chronological period.

A “direct” association must be established in evaluating roadbed segments. Direct association can be established through historic mapping or other research to confirm that the roadbed carried the Lincoln Highway. This information should be clearly presented in the evaluation. Establishing an “important” association with the highway is discussed below under Section 1(b), *Significance*.

1. Roadbed and Road-related Structures

(a) Description

The roadbed serves as the primary property type addressed in this MPDF. Segments of roadbed are classified as a linear structure. The basic elements of a roadbed include the visible components of the roadway such as materials and its physical form, including width, number of travel lanes, and shoulders; the foundation, or embankment, often raised, built to support the roadway components; the grade (vertical alignment) and curve (horizontal alignment) of the roadbed; and road-related structures.

Road-related structures are those identified in construction plans within the period of significance and may include the following:

- Bridges
- Tunnels
- Drainage features (may include culverts, gutters, drains, ditches, or dikes)
- Retaining walls
- Highway markers (including Lincoln Highway and US 50 markers and highway right-of-way markers, also known as “N-blocks”)

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- Safety controls and barriers (components may include guard rails, curbs, and pedestrian railings)
- Parking and sidewalks
- Landscaping features (typically only within the right-of-way)
- Overlooks and turnouts (connected to the road)
- Traffic signals and road-related signage
- Lighting
- Associated features related to the construction or operation of the roadbed
- Other engineered roadbed features

An entire alignment of roadbed or individual roadbed segments may be evaluated for significance. Typically, road-related structures were designed to function as part of the overall highway and lack sufficient size and scale to alone convey the historical significance of the Lincoln Highway. As such, they typically should be evaluated along with the roadbed segment and not individually.

(b) Significance

A segment of roadbed and road-related structures may possess historical significance at the state level for its association with the history and development of the Lincoln Highway in Nevada. Evaluating the roadbed, in whole or in part, should consider the important themes, trends and events within the chronological period identified in the *Historic Context Statement* (Section E of this MPDF) and may require further research to understand its construction history and use as it relates to the Lincoln Highway versus its later history and use as a U.S. Highway. The first two chronological periods serve to define how associated property types derive significance with the Lincoln Highway through 1937 versus only for US 50 as follows:²⁷³

²⁷³ Alignments of the Lincoln Highway consist of more than US 50; more detail on the various local, state and US highways that carried the Lincoln Highway are listed in Section H, *Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods*.

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- *Early named highway, 1913-1926* – this period reflects the beginning of the Lincoln Highway as an early named transcontinental highway and the active promotion and improvements by the LHA and other private interests. Roadbed segments dating to this period possess a direct association to the early history of the Lincoln Highway in Nevada.
- *Named highway/early numbered U.S. Highway, 1927-1937* – this period reflects roadbed segments that functioned as the Lincoln Highway and US 50 after implementation of the U.S. numbered highway system beginning in 1927. Promotion of the Lincoln Highway continued through this period; however, after its designation as a U.S. Highway the role of state and federal government agencies increased, and the use and improvement of the roadbed was increasingly related more to statewide and national transportation themes. Roadbed segments dating to this period may have associations with both the Lincoln Highway and US 50. Significance evaluations of roadbed segments must consider whether the history and importance of the segment, within the context of transportation, is most reflective of its role as the Lincoln Highway or as an early numbered U.S. Highway. In order for a roadbed segment to possess significance it must retain a direct association to the Lincoln Highway in Nevada and the statement of significance must clearly explain how the roadbed derives its association and illustrates its role as an early named transcontinental highway relative to its role as an early numbered U.S. Highway during this period. After 1937 the highway does not have a direct and important association with an early named transcontinental highway and it will not possess significance under the Lincoln Highway in Nevada context; therefore, the period of significance for a Lincoln Highway roadbed will not extend past 1937 (see above).

Portions of the Lincoln Highway west of Fernley through Reno to the California border were co-signed with the Victory Highway/US 40, another named transcontinental highway/U.S. Highway that crossed northern Nevada. The portion of the Lincoln Highway co-signed with the Victory Highway may gain significance for themes and areas of significance associated identified in a separate MPDF, *Victory Highway in Nevada, 1921-1939*. Segments of roadbed that were cosigned may be evaluated as a single entity provided that the association with both named highways are addressed in evaluating significance.

A roadbed segment must be demonstrated to have an “important” association with the Lincoln Highway and must be established in evaluating roadbed segments. Important association can be established through the important themes, trends, and events within the chronological periods identified in Section E of this MPDF and may require further research. This MPDF assumes that each roadbed segment will be evaluated for importance on a case-by-case basis requiring an

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understanding of the history of the overall highway and how the segment under evaluation relates to the larger highway. Generally, segments will have a period of significance that does not begin before 1913 and will not extend past 1937; major alignment(s) during this period would generally have an important association; however, realignments, detours, or segments of road that were in use briefly or that served a secondary function and do not reflect the evolution, variation, or transition of the route may not demonstrate an important association.

(1) Criterion A: Event/History

A segment of roadbed and road-related structures may possess significance under *Criterion A: Transportation* for an association with important trends in twentieth century transportation development. The Lincoln Highway was the first east-west transcontinental automobile route crossing Nevada resulting from the Good Roads Movement. Between 1913 and 1921 the Lincoln Highway provided the primary means of east-west automobile travel across northern Nevada. After the Victory Highway emerged in 1921 the Lincoln Highway was increasingly relegated to a secondary position and by 1926 LHA funding for improvements to the Lincoln Highway had ceased in Nevada. Despite the competition from the more successful northern east-west route of the Victory Highway, the LHA and local boosters saw the economic potential and benefit of improved roads and continued to promote the transcontinental route nationally and in Nevada. The NDH improved and maintained the Lincoln Highway as US 50 and played an increasingly important role in its development. Local boosters and regional promoters of the Lincoln Highway increasingly promoted the route as a U.S. Highway, and in 1937 the LHA of Nevada was replaced by an organization that promoted the route as US 50, which marked the end of its active promotion as the Lincoln Highway. Its history as the Lincoln Highway is associated with important national and state trends in early-twentieth-century transportation development in the area of Transportation under *Criterion A*. Segments of roadbed constructed and in use between 1913-1937 may qualify under *Criterion A: Transportation* representing a direct and important association with the Lincoln Highway in Nevada at the state level before its evolution to a primary U.S. numbered highway.

A segment of roadbed and road-related structures may also possess significance under *Criterion A: Government/Politics* for an association with Depression-era federal work-relief programs aimed to alleviate unemployment and improve transportation infrastructure. Enacted in the 1930s as part of New Deal legislation of the Roosevelt administration, these programs provided funding for road and bridge building and improvements that employed thousands of unemployed persons in Nevada and represent an important trend in twentieth-century government programs. Numerous projects completed under New Deal funding or labor were completed in the state during the 1930s. Projects that improved the Lincoln Highway prior to 1937 may qualify in the area of Government/Politics at the

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state level. A segment of roadbed and road-related structures must have a direct association to both the Lincoln Highway and to a specific project of a Depression-era, federal work-relief program to possess significance. A direct association must be made by establishing that the project received funding and/or labor from a Depression-era, federal work-relief program. Such evidence will typically be demonstrated by listing the Depression-era, federal work-relief program and project number and other details and will not be speculative.

(2) Criterion B: Significant Person

This criterion is unlikely to apply to a segment of roadbed and road-related structures of the Lincoln Highway. Properties may possess significance under *Criterion B* if they convey a strong association with a person significant to the history of the highway. *Criterion B* may apply to segments of roadbed associated with an individual in Nevada who was the key figure in promotion or development of the route on a regional, state, or national level between 1913 and 1937. The specific contributions of the individual must be identified and be important in the history of the Lincoln Highway. The segment of roadbed must also best illustrate the person's important achievements related to the history and development of the highway. Mere association with the Lincoln Highway, such as involvement by an engineer or contractor in design or construction, alone would not render a roadbed segment significant under *Criterion B*. Distinctive works of road design or construction by engineers, designers, contractors, and artisans are typically recognized under *Criterion C*.

(3) Criterion C: Design/Construction

A segment of roadbed and road-related structures may possess significance under *Criterion C* if they exhibit distinctive design features, important innovations, or an evolution in road-building practices or construction methods, or an important period of construction in the area of Engineering. All roads can display patterns of features common to their particular road type and can therefore generally serve as representative examples of the application of road design standards as specimens of the type or period under *Criterion C*. Therefore, mere representation of widespread highway design standards common to its time and construction is alone not sufficient to possess significance in the area of Engineering. A segment of roadbed and road-related structures may possess significance for engineering only if it represents important design and/or construction features such as an important variation of road features or an early evolution or transition in road technology or construction practices, that are deemed important in road design or that serve to distinguish it from other roads of the same type and period.

Examples may include efforts to traverse mountainous terrain or improvements that employed innovative construction methods to address challenging site conditions that may exhibit the use of

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innovative or important engineering design or construction techniques that serve to distinguish the design or construction of these segments from similar segments. Based on research for the historic context, much of the highway's design and construction appear to fall within the established standard practices of highway design and road construction during the period between 1913 through 1937 and this criterion is expected to apply less often than *Criterion A*.

(4) Criterion D: Potential to Yield Information

This criterion is unlikely to apply to segments of roadbed or road-related structures associated with the Lincoln Highway. To possess significance for information potential, the information yielded must answer specific important research questions that cannot be otherwise answered. Roadbeds are designed structures whose physical development relates to engineering, technology, and building practices of roads, which is generally well understood and documented. Roadbed segments and road-related elements are unlikely to yield important information that cannot be discerned from archival records and plan sets. Earlier segments of roadbed were likely obliterated as improvements were made after 1921 and earlier wagon roads pre-dating the Lincoln Highway do not relate to the *Historic Context Statements* and should not be evaluated under this MPDF for its association with the Lincoln Highway.

As such, archaeological sites should be evaluated under another context following the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and not this MPDF.

(5) Criteria Considerations A through G

None of the National Register Criteria Considerations are expected to apply to roadbed segments and road-related structures of the Lincoln Highway.

(6) Period of significance

A segment of roadbed and road-related structures can derive significance from important historical associations or feats of engineering in state history under *Criterion A* or *Criterion C*. National Register guidance states the period of significance is the length of time when a property was associated with important events, trends, or activities, or attained the characteristics that qualify it for listing in the National Register. The overall chronological periods of development discussed in the *Statement of Historic Contexts* (Section E of the MPDF) related to the Lincoln Highway extend from 1913 to 1937. When evaluating and nominating individual segments of roadbed and road-related structures under this MPDF, a specific period of significance must be determined. Under *Criterion A: Transportation*, the period of significance for a roadbed and road-related structures will relate to when

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the segment served as a component of the Lincoln Highway based on its date of construction and continued use as part of the Lincoln Highway, likely ending in or before 1937. Under *Criterion A: Government/Politics* the period of significance will encapsulate the period in which the construction of the federal work-relief project commenced and ended. Under *Criterion C: Engineering*, the period of significance for roadbed segments is typically the date of construction or the date of the improvements found to have significance.

(c) Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for the National Register, a segment of roadbed and road-related structures must not only possess significance, but also retain historic integrity. Per the National Register guidance, historic integrity is “the ability of a property to convey its significance.”²⁷⁴ It is necessary to have a clear understanding of why and when a highway was important in order to identify the road’s essential physical features, and to understand which aspects of historic integrity are most important to convey its significance. In assessing historic integrity, a segment of roadbed needs to retain all of its essential physical features and most, if not all, of the seven aspects of integrity to provide a sense of time, place, and travel experience from the period of significance (see *Assessing integrity* below).

(d) Essential physical features

Essential physical features of the Lincoln Highway include the following and must be from the period of significance:

- *Surface* – identifiable components that work together to comprise the physical form and materials of the roadbed. The physical form includes the roadway width, number of travel lanes, shoulders, and major features in the right-of-way essential in understanding its function and significance. Materials under this feature relates to the visible elements of travel surface and shoulders.
- *Embankment* – identifiable components include the raised foundation of materials built to support the roadway components consisting of a berm and slope.
- *Alignment* – identifiable components include the grade (vertical alignment) and curve (horizontal alignment) of the roadbed.

²⁷⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (1991, rev), 44.

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Essential physical features may also include:

- *Road-related structures* – identifiable components include one or more road-related structures listed in Section 1(a) above that contribute to historic character the segment of roadbed.

Not all identifiable components need to be present to retain an essential physical feature. For example, some rural roadbeds may not have had shoulders (surface), some urban roadbeds may lack a raised foundation (embankment), and in other cases the identifiable components may be interrelated, such as urban roadbeds that will often retain their overall roadway width while the number of travel lanes may have increased or decreased. Guidance on assessing integrity is provided below.

Segments of roadbed are not required to continue to serve their historic function of carrying vehicular traffic to be nominated under this MPDF. Segments of roadbed closed to vehicular use and in recreational/trail use may meet the registration requirements if they retain their essential physical features. Segments of roadbed and road-related structures that are not of a sufficient size, scale, or length and that do not exhibit the essential physical features above cannot convey significance and are not eligible for listing in the National Register.

(e) Assessing integrity

If the essential physical features of the roadbed are present, the segment of roadbed being evaluated must also demonstrate most, if not all, of the aspects of integrity important to conveying the road's significance and historic identity from the period of significance. Per National Register guidance, "It is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must retain, however, the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity."²⁷⁵ The seven aspects of integrity as they apply to segments of roadbed and road-related structures, include:

- *Design* – The combination of elements that create the grade, curve, and physical form of the roadbed. Among other things, design encompasses alignment and roadway components related to its form and road-related structures.
- *Materials* – The physical composition of the roadway components, embankment, and road-related structures.

²⁷⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (1991, rev), 46.

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- *Workmanship* – Elements that reflect physical evidence of the labor and skill of artisans or master craft persons. Due to standardization and the widespread use of mechanization in road construction, this aspect of integrity is rarely expected to apply to roadway components or the embankment; however, workmanship may be evident in road-related structures (e.g., dry-laid stone retaining walls) or may be evident in New Deal federal work-relief construction.
- *Location* – The spatial location of the roadbed when constructed. Realignments of the Lincoln Highway through 1926 will generally not constitute a loss of integrity. Both the realignment and the bypassed alignment may have integrity if they retain their essential physical features from their period of significance. Realignments after 1926 need to be assessed for integrity of location based on the period of significance. (See Alterations below for more guidance on realignments.)
- *Setting* – The elements in the environment that comprise the character of the surroundings of the segment. The physical features that comprise the setting may vary along the length of the segment. Combined with other aspects of integrity, setting helps convey a sense of time and place.
- *Feeling* – Results from the presence of elements that evoke and express the historic character of the roadbed. Generally, this aspect of integrity is dependent on retaining the other aspects of integrity to add to a sense of time, place, and travel experience.
- *Association* – Located along the Lincoln Highway prior to 1937 and demonstrated by the presence of its essential physical features that convey its function and direct relationship to the historic themes.

Under *Criterion A*, design, location, association, setting, and feeling are generally the most important aspects of integrity and must be retained because they convey the function and establish its relationship between the road or road-related resources and the Lincoln Highway. The essential physical features convey a road's historic function from the period of significance. Under *Criterion A* the number of travel lanes and narrow shoulders are especially important roadway components. For roads with historic significance under *Criterion C*, design, materials, workmanship (if applicable), association, and location are generally the most important aspects of integrity and must be retained because they convey its function as a highway. The essential physical features demonstrate the important road design or construction related to engineering significance. Under *Criterion C* road-

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related structures may be essential features and width and material are especially important roadway components.

(f) Alterations

Changes to the segment of roadbed and road-related structures outside the period of significance should be identified to determine if the changes impact essential physical features and to what degree the changes diminish the aspects of integrity. The size and scale of the change need to be considered to determine if the change is severe enough to diminish one or more aspects of integrity. Due to ongoing maintenance and changes in design and safety standards, segments of roadbed and road-related structures typically experienced steady changes that may be reflected within and outside of the period of significance. Typically, roadbed segments include changes to the travel surface material, such as changes in paving, changes to the embankment and travel lanes due to widening, and realignments.

In-kind replacement of the travel surface materials, such as replacing asphalt with asphalt, is a common change associated with highways and will typically not result in a loss of integrity. Resurfacing resulting in a new surface material (e.g., from gravel to asphalt) may result in a change to the essential physical feature and may result in the loss of integrity unless the resurfacing was done during the period of significance. Not all changes, including those to essential physical features, will diminish a road's historic integrity to the degree that it can no longer convey significance. For example, a small amount of widening may not result in the loss of essential physical features if the number of travel lanes, embankment, and alignment can continue to convey its historic identity from the period of significance.

Realignments of the Lincoln Highway through 1926 will not constitute a loss of integrity and realignments from 1927 through 1937 need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the realignment is historically significant in its own right or should be considered a loss of integrity. Both the realignment and the bypassed alignment may possess integrity if they retain their essential physical features from their period of significance. Bypassed and abandoned bypassed segments are given greater allowance for integrity of design due to the degradation associated with natural processes such as erosion, washouts, and encroaching vegetation but must have sufficient length to convey a sense of connectivity from the period of significance. Sufficient length is demonstrated by having an uninterrupted view of the roadbed within the viewshed, which serves to provide a sense of automobile travel from the period of significance. Early alignments reflect lower travel speeds before efforts to flatten the grade and straighten the curves and may require less length, while higher travel speeds and flatter grade and straighter curves may require more length to retain integrity.

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In addition to assessing individual changes, the cumulative effect of multiple changes to the segment needs to be considered as it may collectively diminish aspects of historic integrity. Alterations completed within the period of significance generally will not diminish historic integrity.

(g) Determination of eligibility

Roadbed segments or road-related resources that are demonstrated to have a direct and important association, possess significance, convey their essential physical features, and retain most, if not all, aspects of integrity are individually eligible for listing in the National Register as a structure.²⁷⁶

Roadbed segments that do not retain integrity do not convey significance for their association to the Lincoln Highway and are not eligible for listing in the National Register. Historic boundaries should be delineated to include the extent of the essential physical features that retain integrity.

2. Individual Properties and Historic Districts

This section addresses how to evaluate two property types: individual road-related properties and road-related historic districts. Both property types have similar requirements: one or more road-related properties that are located along and immediately adjacent to a segment of roadbed that possesses significance and retains integrity as outlined in the requirements in the previous section. Individual road-related properties were generally constructed to provide auto-related commercial services, promoted as tourist destinations along the route, or otherwise had a direct association to the highway. Historic districts will be comprised of a concentration of individual road-related properties; because of this, many of the overall National Register eligibility requirements are similar. As such, the requirements below apply to both individual road-related properties and historic districts unless specially indicated.

(a) Description

(1) Individual properties

Individual road-related properties are those that are historically related to the highway by providing auto-related commercial services, that were promoted as tourist destinations along the route, or

²⁷⁶ Segments of roadbed are considered structures. On a practical level, segments of roadbed are recorded and are approached as components of one structure, similar to a linear historic district, with various roadbed segments either contributing to the overall highway by possessing significance and retaining integrity or not contributing to the overall highway by either lacking significance or integrity. When recoding a segment of roadbed contact the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office to ensure proper recordation in the Nevada Cultural Resources Information System (NVCRIS).

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otherwise had a direct association to the highway. Associated property types include the following historic functions:

- Lodging (auto campgrounds, cabin courts, motels, hotels)
- Food service (restaurants, diners, cafes)
- Automobile services (gas and service stations, auto showrooms and garages)
- Commercial signage
- Waysides
- Tourist attractions

An individual road-related property may derive significance for its association with the Lincoln Highway if it is located immediately adjacent to a segment of roadbed that is found to both possess significance and retain integrity and falls within the period of significance of that segment of roadbed. Structures integral to the roadbed associated with the highway are addressed in Section F.1 and should be evaluated as part of the roadbed, not as individual properties. Additional properties along and immediately adjacent to the highway may have a direct and important association with the highway if they meet the same requirements as set forth for buildings below.

(2) Historic district

A concentration of individual road-related property located immediately adjacent to a segment of roadbed that possesses significance and retains integrity may form a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction and be considered as a highway historic district. Collectively, the grouping will include an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties that convey the overall historic environment and illustrate their interrelationship with the Lincoln Highway within its period of significance. Per National Register guidance, "a district must be significant, as well as being an identifiable entity."²⁷⁷ Guidance on determining significance and whether a concentration forms an identifiable entity is provided below.

(b) Significance

An individual road-related property or highway historic district must be located immediately adjacent to a segment of roadbed that is found to both possess significance and retain integrity. This requirement is necessary to establish a direct association with the highway. One or more individual

²⁷⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (1991, rev), 5.

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road-related properties that fall within the period of significance of the segment of roadbed may possess historical significance for an association with the history and development of the Lincoln Highway in Nevada, individually or collectively as a historic district.

Further intensive-level research is critical in establishing and documenting the historic function and use of an individual road-related property or historic district and establishing a direct association with the highway; the association to the highway cannot be speculative. Intensive-level research and documentation may include advertisements, newspaper articles, and promotional literature linking the property to efforts to provide services or serving as tourists attractions specifically to travelers along the route versus merely providing services to local residents. For individual road-related properties that were constructed prior to the period of significance of the associated segment of roadbed, a direct association with the highway within the period of significance needs to be demonstrated during the period of significance of the roadbed to possess significance.

Evaluating road-related properties and historic districts should consider the important themes, trends and events within the chronological period identified in the *Statement of Historic Contexts* (Section E of this MPDF) and requires research to understand the construction history and historic function and use as it relates to the Lincoln Highway versus its use to provide other functions unrelated to the highway or primarily to local residents and not the traveling public and tourists during the chronological period.

(1) Criterion A: History

An individual road-related property or road-related historic district must possess significance for a direct and important association with the Lincoln Highway under *Criterion A* in the area of Transportation. This association is demonstrated through the location of one or more individual road-related properties along and immediately adjacent to a segment of roadbed that is significant and retains integrity.

An individual road-related property or road-related highway historic district may also possess significance for an association with one or more supplemental areas of significance related to other themes of the Lincoln Highway identified in Section E. Supplemental themes include:

- *Criterion A: Commerce* – The Lincoln Highway in Nevada facilitated commercial development in communities and way stations along the route. Businesses catering to travelers and tourists

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developed along portions of the highway to provide needed goods and services in addition to serving local residents. The presence of the highway led to substantial numbers of automobile-related businesses such as restaurants, motels, service garages, and gas stations in direct response to through traffic along the route. Auto-related commercial development in close proximity to the Lincoln Highway serving the through-traveler representing an important trend in auto-related commercial development at the state level.

- *Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation* – Tourism became one of Nevada's major industries beginning in the 1910s based largely on its scenic landscape and outdoor recreational opportunities. Legislation passed in 1931 legalized gambling and enacted the most relaxed divorce laws in the country. As a direct result of tourism and this legislation, select commercial and recreational development along the Lincoln Highway, especially through Reno and Sparks to accommodate the needs of the gaming public, temporary residents, and divorcees in transition. Travel along the Lincoln Highway to a variety of tourist destinations in Nevada was actively promoted by auto clubs, chambers of commerce, local booster groups, and the hotel, motel, and gaming industries. As such, the Lincoln Highway in Nevada served as an important tourist route. Tourist attractions adjacent to the Lincoln Highway promoted to the through-traveler represent an important trend in auto-related tourism at the state level.

Further research may yield additional areas of significance under *Criterion A* if they relate directly to the highway during its period of significance.

(2) Criterion B: Significant Person

This criterion is unlikely to apply to an individual road-related property or historic district along the Lincoln Highway. Properties may possess significance under *Criterion B* if they convey a strong association with a person significant to the history of the highway. *Criterion B* may apply to road-related buildings or historic districts associated with an individual in Nevada who was the key figure in promotion or development of the route on a regional, state, or national level between 1913 and 1937. The specific contributions of the individual must be identified and be important in the history of the Lincoln Highway. The individual road-related property or historic district must also best illustrate the person's important achievements related to the history and development of the highway. Mere association with the Lincoln Highway, such as involvement by an architect, contractor, or figure associated with the promotion of the road, alone would not necessarily render an individual road-related property or historic district significant under *Criterion B*. Distinctive works of design or high

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artistic value are typically recognized under *Criterion C*. Properties found to possess significance under this criterion would likely derive importance at the state level.

(3) Criterion C: Design/Construction

An individual road-related property or historic district may possess significance under *Criterion C* if it exhibits distinctive design features, important innovations, an evolution in building practices or construction methods, or an important period of construction in the area of Architecture. Under these aspects of *Criterion C*, individual road-related properties and historic districts are most likely to derive significance as distinctive examples of a property type, representative examples of a distinctive style or form, or by exhibiting high artistic value.

Historic districts will possess significance under *Criterion C* following the guidance of the National Register: A district must be significant, as well as being an identifiable entity. It must be important for historical, architectural, archeological, engineering, or cultural values. Therefore, districts that are significant will usually meet the last portion of *Criterion C* plus *Criterion A*, *Criterion B*, other portions of *Criterion C*, or *Criterion D*.²⁷⁸

(4) Criterion D: Potential to Yield Information

Road-related buildings, structures, and sites were few and far between in the early years of the highway's designation. Former buildings, structures, and sites may have lost integrity as built environment properties but may offer important answers to understand the nature and early development of auto travel experience. Former buildings, structures, and sites may be eligible for National Register listing under *Criterion D* for the potential to yield important information about early travel along this highway; however, they may predate the establishment of this highway and care should be taken to determine whether a direct and important association exists with the Lincoln Highway. Former buildings, structures, and sites may address current data gaps, provide alternative theories, or reconstruct the sequence of archeological cultures for the purpose of identifying and explaining continuities and discontinuities in the archeological record for a particular area. Information that can be derived from archeological sites, and the value of such information, will vary among property types and will largely be affected by the extent of the remaining undisturbed features of the site. Integrity is based on the property's potential to yield specific data that addresses important

²⁷⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (1991, rev), 5.

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research questions and will need to be assessed on a property-by-property basis. The assessment of integrity will be evaluated based upon whether or not the significant cultural material remains sufficiently intact to convey valuable information. As such, archaeological sites should be evaluated under another context following the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and not this MPDF.

(5) *Period of significance*

Under *Criterion A* the period of significance for the individual road-related property or historic district will correspond to the period of significance of the roadbed segment since it is the roadbed that establishes the association with the Lincoln Highway. Individual road-related properties constructed after the period of significance are not associated with the roadbed during its use as the Lincoln Highway, would not derive significance under Transportation for an association with the Lincoln Highway, and do not qualify for eligibility or as contributing resources to a historic district.

The Lincoln Highway traveled through towns and along downtown “main” streets and through way stations in rural areas with pre-existing properties that may have earlier had different earlier historic functions and uses. Individual properties constructed prior to the start of the chronological period identified in the *Statement of Historic Contexts* (Section E of this MPDF), 1913, may have a direct and important association and possess significance if they meet the requirements above.

(c) *Eligibility requirements*

To be eligible for the National Register, an individual road-related property or historic district must not only possess significance, but also retain historic integrity. Per the National Register guidance, historic integrity is “the ability of a property to convey its significance.”²⁷⁹ The ability to convey significance requires a direct association with the highway. This is established by the presence of a segment of roadbed that possesses significance and retains integrity and to serve as a focal point around which other associated properties are organized in a linear fashion. Without an intact segment of roadbed located immediately adjacent to individual road-related properties or a historic district, they do not qualify for listing under this MPDF due to lack of association with the Lincoln Highway. To retain setting and feeling individual road-related properties and contributing resources within a historic district must have a strong physical orientation to the highway through location, signage, presence of storefronts, or other design features intended to catch the attention of travelers along the highway.

²⁷⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (1991, rev), 44.

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In assessing historic integrity, individual properties must retain their essential physical features and most, if not all, of the seven aspects of integrity to provide a sense of time and place from the period of significance.

(d) Assessing integrity

(1) Alterations

Individual properties will be required to retain their essential physical features and those aspects of historic integrity deemed most important under each property type as described in the list of associated individual properties below. Generally, under *Criterion A*, location, association, feeling and setting are more important aspects of integrity because they establish the relationship of the property to the highway. On the other hand, generally integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are more important considerations for properties that are distinctive examples of a property type or architectural style under *Criterion C*.

Alterations completed within the period of significance generally will not diminish the historic integrity of the property. The evolution of the public's needs and tastes dictated that the services provided for the automobile traveler evolved with the times. Most service facilities, such as gas stations, hotels and restaurants, were built to provide a needed service to the public until demand changed. Thus, property types related to the automobile tourist often underwent a variety of changes to "keep up with the times" and the services that were expected by the traveling public. For example, the physical building form of a gas station evolved from a small structure to a service station with one or two service bays to repair vehicles. Other businesses such as tourist courts also evolved to provide expanded services to the traveler by adding a gas station and/or cafe. As such, some alterations over time are common for these property types. This MPDF acknowledges that modest alterations may be permissible when assessing integrity under *Criterion A* provided the property continues to convey its essential physical features from the period of significance or if it is a rare surviving example of a property type under *Criterion C*.

Significant alterations or the cumulative effect or multiple modest alteration occurring outside the period of significance can result in the loss of essential physical features and/or diminish the overall integrity of a property, thereby disqualifying it from National Register listing. Significant alterations

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may include large additions, altered fenestration patterns, replacement exterior cladding, or removal of buildings or structures within a complex.

Several types of properties were once prevalent along the highway but are now disappearing from the highway landscape. For example, tourist courts and large multilevel hotels outside Reno appear to be a rare property type not commonly seen along the route today. The relative scarcity and lack of comparable properties should be used to inform the degree of alterations acceptable while still retaining their essential physical features and historic integrity. As a result, a larger degree of alterations may be acceptable for a rare property type, while few alterations may be acceptable for more common property types because other examples with better integrity can tell the same story.

Individual road-related properties are not required to retain their historic function to be nominated under this MPDF. Properties that are vacant or have been adaptively reused may registration requirements if they retain their essential physical features and those aspects of integrity important to understand its historic function and use during its period of significance.

(2) *Essential physical features and integrity of individual properties*

For individual road-related properties to possess integrity they must physically convey their historic function and association to the highway, which is demonstrated through retaining essential physical features and retaining most, if not all, of the seven aspects of integrity.

A list of typical essential physical features and integrity considerations by property type is provided below.

i. Lodging (auto campgrounds, cabin courts, motels, hotels)

Auto campgrounds

- Open space for car camping in a park-like setting
- Amenities may include a communal washroom or shower building, fireplaces, grills or facilities for cooking, picnic shelters, electrical hookups, and recreation areas
- May be a portion of a larger community park

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- May have associated parking lots or parking may be on the street
- Signage may be free-standing

Motels

- Accommodations provided in small, one-story, individual buildings (e.g., cabins, cottages, etc.) grouped together
- Arrangement of buildings in a row or in a U- or L-plan around an open space is common
- Rooms typically accessed from exterior doors
- Complex typically includes an office (often in a freestanding building)
- Amenities may include a communal laundry, store, gas station, or children's play area or other recreational facilities
- Parking area
- Signage may be on the building (may include a painted early highway marker or free-standing oriented to the road)

Hotels

- Accommodations provided in buildings that are two or more stories in height housing a large number of guests
- Rooms typically accessed from the interior by linear corridors
- Buildings housed guest amenities such as restaurants, ballrooms, lounges, small retail shops, and personal services (e.g., laundry, salons, barber shops)
- Prominent entryway often with a portico opening into a large lobby space
- Signage may be free-standing and/or located on the building

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Integrity

To meet the requirements for National Register listing under *Criterion A: Commerce*, lodging properties should retain their essential physical features and integrity of location, association, feeling, and setting as these are important to establish the property's relationship to commercial development along the highway for automobile tourists. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are also needed but are less important to establishing the relationship to commerce. In order to meet the requirements for National Register listing under *Criterion C: Architecture* as an example of a property type or architectural style, a lodging property should retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship as these are important to demonstrate the property's significance as an example of a property type or an architectural style. In general, these properties should display few alterations to the massing, fenestration patterns, and historic materials unless it is a rare property type. Alterations to individual buildings of a complex may be acceptable if they were sensitive to the original design and the alterations were completed within the period of significance and thus are part of the evolution of the property. Removal of key components of a complex, such as the majority of the individual lodging buildings in a tourist court, will result in a loss of integrity under either *Criterion A* or *C*.

ii. Food service (restaurants, diners, cafes)

Restaurants, diners, and cafes

- Free-standing buildings often characterized by a simple rectangular form with a variety of roof types, such as flat, shed, or vaulted. Exteriors are typically unadorned commercial vernacular style or exhibit modest architectural features and may have plate-glass windows.
- Interior area for seating or ordering
- Interior area for food preparation
- Parking lot if in a free-standing building

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- Signage as free standing, attached to, or painted on building to catch motorist's attention
- Building form may serve as advertisement/signage (for programmatic architecture)

Integrity

To meet the requirements for National Register listing under *Criterion A*, food service properties should retain their essential physical features and integrity of location, association, feeling, and setting as these are important to establish the property's relationship to commercial development along the highway for automobile tourists. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are needed but are less important to establishing the relationship with the highway under *Criterion A*. Alterations may be acceptable if essential physical features are intact and the alterations were sensitive to the original design and were completed within the period of significance. For these properties to be eligible for National Register listing under *Criterion C* as distinctive examples of a property type or architectural style, they should continue to exhibit major characteristic features from the period of significance and retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

iii. Automobile services (gas and service stations, auto showrooms and garages)

Gas stations and service stations

- Building with office and sales space
- Large entry doors or service bays for automobiles to pass into the building (if service station)
- Island for gas pumps (original pumps need not be present)
- Canopy extending outward from the building or separate free-standing canopy over pumps
- Curb cuts for entrance and exit
- Signage as free standing, attached to, or painted on building to catch motorist attention

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Auto showrooms and garages

- Large open lot area and/or interior showroom with windows to display vehicles
- Large entry doors or bays for automobiles to pass into the building for repair (auto showrooms/dealerships must contain auto repair to meet registration requirements)
- Light standards to light open lot area to display vehicles
- Signage, free standing and/or attached to building, which may include a painted early highway marker

Integrity

To meet the requirements for National Register listing under *Criterion A*, automobile service properties should retain their essential physical features and integrity of location, association, feeling, and setting as these are important to establish the property's relationship to transportation on the highway. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are needed but are less important to establishing the relationship with the highway under *Criterion A*. Alterations may be acceptable if character-defining features are intact and the alterations were sensitive to the original design and completed within the period of significance. For automobile service properties to be eligible for National Register listing under *Criterion C* they should continue to exhibit essential physical features from the period of significance and retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. In general, under *Criterion C* these properties should display few alterations to the massing, fenestration patterns, and historic materials, and continue to clearly convey their historic function. Very few gas stations retain original pumps; therefore, this is not a requirement for eligibility.

iv. Commercial signage

- Two- or three-dimensional objects mounted on buildings or free-standing structures, such as poles or towers
- Graphics, symbols, and/or text
- Illuminating elements for visibility at night

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Integrity

To meet the requirements for National Register listing under *Criterion A*, commercial signage should retain its essential physical features and integrity of location, association, feeling, and setting as these are important to establish the resource's relationship to the commercial development along the highway for automobile tourists. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are needed but are less important to establishing the relationship with the highway. Alterations may be acceptable if significant features are intact, the alterations were sensitive to the original design, and alterations were completed within the period of significance. A certain level of alterations to wording or symbols may be acceptable to accommodate the needs of subsequent businesses if the overall form, design, and materials of the signage remain intact.

Signage may also be eligible for National Register listing under *Criterion C: Architecture* as distinctive examples of a property type. For commercial signage to be eligible for National Register listing under *Criterion C* as distinctive examples of a property type, it should continue to exhibit essential physical features from the period of significance and retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. In general, these properties should display few alterations to the design and historic materials even if the function of the business or other enterprise with which the signage may have been historically associated have changed.

Signage related to the highway must be immediately adjacent to a segment of roadbed date from the period of significance of segment of highway. Reproduction signage is not eligible for the National Register.

v. Waysides

- Restroom facilities
- Parking area
- May include recreational features such as shelters and picnic tables and playgrounds
- May include a spring and/or spring shelter
- Other recreational amenities such as playgrounds or vistas

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- Signage, usually freestanding
- Setting, location may be selected to include scenic vistas

These properties are addressed in Section F.1 above as road-related structures. Typically, road-related structures were designed to function as part of the overall highway and may have been included in construction plans for the highway. These properties typically lack sufficient size and scale to alone convey the historical significance of the Lincoln Highway. As such, they typically should be evaluated along with a segment of roadbed and not individually.

vi. Tourist attractions

- Buildings located adjacent to the roadside with a service counter or office area for staff to provide information, brochures, or directions to tourists
- Buildings may be modest, reflect popular architectural styles of the time period, or include elements of programmatic architecture (sometimes also called novelty architecture or memetic architecture) to catch the attention of customers
- Freestanding signage or attached to buildings or structures, which may include features specifically designed to catch the attention of customers, such as use of neon, bright colors, exotic fonts, symbols, or whimsical themes
- Restroom facilities
- Parking area
- May include recreational features such as shelters and picnic tables and playgrounds
- Casinos have served as a tourist destination; their essential physical features may include prominent entrances, illuminated signage (often neon) on the building and free-standing along the Lincoln Highway, and massing may incorporate hotel amenities.

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Integrity

To meet the requirements for National Register listing under *Criterion A: Commerce*, tourist attraction properties should retain their essential physical features and integrity of location, association, feeling, and setting as these are important to establish the property's relationship to commercial development along the highway for automobile tourists. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are also needed but are less important to establishing the relationship to commerce. In order to meet the requirements for National Register listing under *Criterion C: Architecture* as an example of a property type or architectural style, a tourist attraction property should retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship as these are important to demonstrate the property's significance as an example of a property type or an architectural style. In general, these properties should display few alterations to the massing, fenestration patterns, and historic materials unless it is a rare property type. Alterations to individual buildings of a complex may be acceptable if they were sensitive to the original design and the alterations were completed within the period of significance and thus are part of the evolution of the property.

(3) Historic character and integrity of historic districts

A historic district consists of a concentration of contributing resources (intact examples of the property types listed above) with a direct relationship to the Lincoln Highway and form a concentration organized along the road segment in a linear fashion. A historic district derives its importance from being a unified entity that conveys a visual sense of the highway during the period of significance by the arrangement of historically and functionally related properties, even if it is composed of resources that lack individual distinction. A historic district qualifies for listing in the National Register under *Criterion C as A Significant and Distinguishable Entity Whose Components May Lack Individual Distinction*. Each resource within a historic district will have its own history and potentially contribute to the significance of the historic district for its own reasons and needs to be assessed for integrity on a case-by-case basis; therefore, this MPDF provides general guidance but does not provide prescriptive integrity thresholds to determine whether resources contribute or do not contribute to a historic district.

For individual road-related resources to contribute to a Lincoln Highway historic district, they must retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic function, which is demonstrated through retaining most, if not all, of their essential physical features, and retain most if not all of the seven aspects of integrity. Significant alterations or the cumulative effect or multiple modest alterations occurring

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outside the period of significance can result in the loss of essential physical features and/or diminish the overall integrity of a resource such that it no longer contributes to the significance of the historic district. Significant alterations may include large additions, altered fenestration patterns, replacement exterior cladding, or removal of buildings or structures within a complex which affects integrity of design, materials, feeling, setting and workmanship.

Intrusions from noncontributing resources along the segment of roadbed that are out of scale or detract from the linear nature of the historic district diminish the overall historic environment and the historic and functional arrangement of the resources along the Lincoln Highway which affects integrity of setting and feeling. The presence of a sufficient number of such intrusions will result in a loss of overall integrity of setting and feeling such that and it will not comprise a unified entity be eligible for listing in the National Register.

The boundaries of a district can contain resources or open spaces located adjacent to the roadbed that do not contribute to the significance of the district; however, the number of noncontributing properties must not detract from its ability to convey its sense of time and place and its historical environment from the period of significance.

(e) Determination of eligibility

An individual road-related property or a historic district that is demonstrated to have a direct and important association, possess significance, convey their essential physical features, and retain most, if not all, aspects of integrity are eligible for listing in the National Register as a structure or a district. Those that do not retain integrity do not convey significance for their association to the Lincoln Highway and are not eligible for listing in the National Register. Historic boundaries should be delineated to include the parcels of the road-related properties the extent of the roadbed immediately adjacent to the properties.

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Geographical Data

The geographic area covered by this MPDF extends statewide along the alignments that historically carried the Lincoln Highway. Maps delineating known alignments of the Lincoln Highway are attached to this MPDF as additional information.

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Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

This MPDF is based on work completed in 2017-2018 by Mead & Hunt, Inc. (Mead & Hunt) for the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT). This MPDF was completed as report NV18-036 for the Nevada Department of Transportation. Electronic GIS mapping of the route of the highway was prepared as part of this project and provided to NDOT.

Archival research focused on addressing the themes in the *Statement of Historic Contexts* (historic context), which covers the development of the Lincoln Highway/US 50 nationally and in Nevada. The historic context is a synthesis based on archival documents and primary sources such as state maps, NDH plans and biennial reports, and secondary source materials addressing the origins and development of Nevada's road system and U.S. Highways and, in particular, the Lincoln Highway. Research was completed at the Nevada State Library and Archives; the Nevada Historical Society; the University of Nevada, Reno, Special Collections Library and Archives; and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Special Collection Library; online sources; and the files of NDOT. Sources are listed in Section I, *Bibliography*.

Preparation of the MPDF included review of inventory forms for previously surveyed resources associated with the Lincoln Highway/US 50 provided by NDOT. NDOT requested this data from the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office's Nevada Cultural Resource Information System (NVCRIS) for non-archaeological resources.

Research and field review found portions of the Lincoln Highway that were not designated US 50. On the eastern side of the state, the route east of the junction of US 93 and State Highway 893 (near Shellbourne Station) was never designated US 50. Portions of the route west of the Fallon Cutoff to Reno and the California state line were never designated US 50. Over time, many realignments and bypassed segments emerged due to improvements made to the roadway by the NDH and promotional activities of the LHA. As a result, future research on segments of roadbed will reveal other local, state, and U.S. Highways that carried the Lincoln Highway. The route of the Pioneer Branch of the Lincoln Highway from south of Reno to Carson City was SR 3, not US 50. Alignments of the Pioneer Branch of the Lincoln Highway from Carson City to the California state line are addressed in a separate MPDF titled *Lincoln Highway – Pioneer Branch, Carson City to Stateline, Nevada*.

Field review of the overall route and associated property types was completed in July 2018 by Mead & Hunt staff. Field review consisted of a windshield survey of the drivable portions of roadbed, which were mapped and inspected.

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