

LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION  
CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Happy Holidays

THE  
TRAVELER

EDITOR  
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Steve Crandall collection

# FROM THE EDITOR

## COVER PHOTO

Can any of our members identify the bridge on this issues cover? The bridge was one of several built at this location on the pioneer route of the Lincoln Highway over the Sierra Nevada's. E-mail me your answer and if you are correct your next issue of the Traveler will be in full color.

## CHAPTER MEETING

The California Chapter held its October meeting at Baker's Square Restaurant in Davis. Again we had a good turnout, with two guest speakers and a special guest. Recorded minutes for the meeting can be found on the Chapter's web site. Our first speaker was Will McKinney, an Eagle Scout candidate from Cameron Park, who gave a presentation of his Eagle project. Will's father's cousin is Steve McKinney who owns property off Mother Lode Road near El Dorado. The original 1913 alignment runs through Steve's property and is part of our Driving Tour # 2. Will's project includes a 150' pathway along the Lincoln Highway with a bridge over a local creek, a park bench and a descriptive plaque. Norm Root graciously donated a 1928 replica concrete marker to highlight Will's tribute to the history of the Lincoln Highway.

Joanne Pelz and her husband made our second presentation. The Pelz's are members of the American Volks Walks Association (AVA) which promote self guided 5K and 10K historic walking tours in cities throughout the United States. Joanne explained how the tours work and the health benefits that can be derived. A motion was made and passed for the California Chapter to join the program in California. There are currently 9 locations on the Lincoln where these tours are taking place. Norm has a sponsor who will help defer costs. This involvement will draw attention to our efforts to promote the Highway.

Due to the length of the meeting our surprise guest wasn't able to speak on his latest adventure. Mr. Robert Chase and his wife Jeanne attended the meeting while on their way to visit friends in Reno. Bob as you may know is one of the "Piaggio Guys" who just completed a transcontinental trip from Lincoln Park to Times Square. Coverage of their trip can be seen on Brian Butko's Blog (Lincoln Highway News.com). Bob will hopefully be a guest speaker at a future meeting.



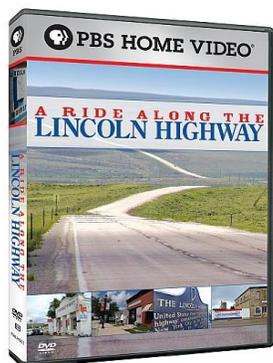
Will McKinney and Joanne Pelz



Robert and Jeanne Chase

## A TRIP ON THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

As mentioned in the last Traveler, the PBS documentary entitled “A Ride along the Lincoln Highway” aired October 29. The documentary produced by Rick Sebak of WQED in Pittsburgh, PA. was an outstanding compilation of material and film gathered on his trip from San Francisco to Times Square. Having edited 90 40-minute films into a 58 minute presentation and still capturing the essence of the entire highway was a remarkable accomplishment. Rick did an outstanding job of telling the story of the Lincoln Highway using vintage photos and film all the while keeping the story alive with narrative from those currently living on the Highway and



those who had traveled the historic road. The California Chapter was fortunate to have two of its members, Paul Gilger and Kell Bigham, included in the cast. As I told Rick, if this film doesn't arouse interest in the highway I don't know what will. I personally received a half dozen phones calls during the show and have been approached my numerous people in town telling me they thoroughly enjoyed the documentary. These folks are avid viewers of PPS. If you wish to purchase a DVD of this documentary contact [PBS.org](http://PBS.org) and one can be purchased for \$24.95.

## JERRY BIRELEY

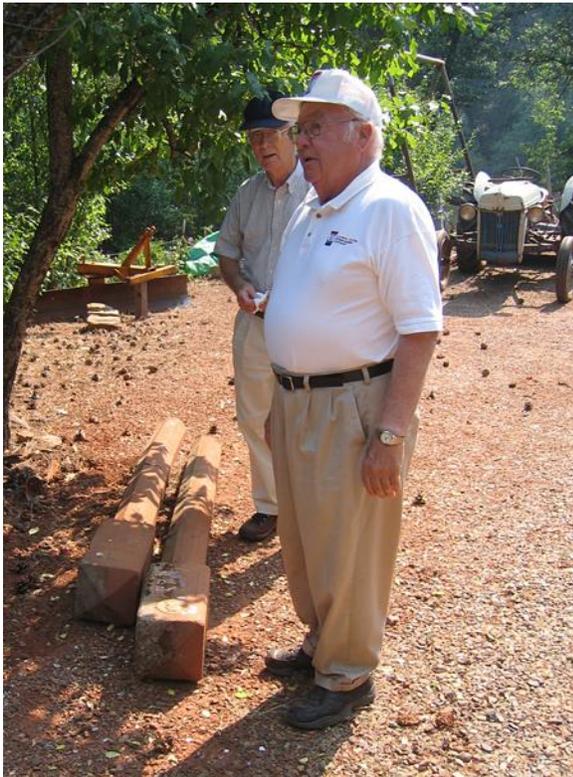
It is with heavy heart that I report the passing of yet another of our chapters members. Mr. Jerry Bireley, of Livermore, passed away October 29<sup>th</sup>. Jerry had been a member since 2005 and was very active with the Livermore Heritage Guild, which oversees the Duarte Garage. Jerry attended meetings with Mike Kaelin and myself during the process of saving the Summit Garage at Altamont. He was always at the Duarte Garage to welcome visitors on our Driving Tours. Of his numerous hobbies, Jerry took pride in restoring one of the family's service stations on Portola Ave. in Livermore. Jerry was the first member to submit an article to the Traveler after I became Editor. Our condolences go out to his wife, children and the staff of the Livermore Heritage Guild.



Vern Lloyd Service Station Portola Ave. Livermore

## DISCOVERIES

During the October chapter meeting Norm Root and Bob Dieterich told the story of receiving two original 1928 highway markers. As the story goes Bob received an E-mail from Lee Hollifield who wanted to donate the markers to the LHA to be placed on display. Norm, Bob and Lloyd Johnson drove to Camino to investigate the markers. Lee's father-in-law, Ray Helm, had been a co-owner in a salvage store at Smith Flat until about 20 years ago. At that time Ray and his partner dissolved the business and each took what they wanted. Originally there were supposedly 6 posts that had been along the Lincoln in the Placerville area. Two were purchased by a museum volunteer and were placed at the entrance of the El Dorado County Museum in Placerville. Two of the posts are unaccounted for and the two remaining posts were taken to Ray's home where they were left to settle in the red volcanic soil. Lee dug them up and contacted Bob. The posts are now at Norm's being pressure washed and prepped for concrete restoration. It was voted that the two posts should be donated to museums that lie on the Lincoln Highway in Northern California, to be protected and enjoyed for generations to come. Ray Helm will be recognized as the donor.



Norm and Lloyd at the discovery site



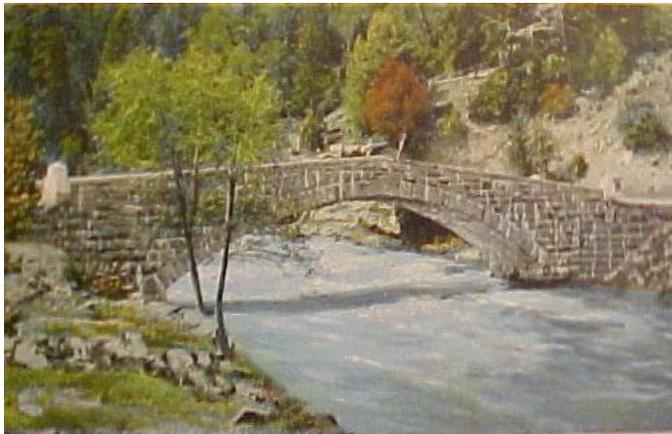
Norm's Grandson Zachary removing red soil

## DISCOVERIES continued



John Juhrend of Geocon Consultants Inc. provided the photos above. John's company deals with environmental issues and was investigating a spill when he discovered these sections of original Lincoln Highway. The left photo shows the Blue Goose Fruit Shed behind Fox Automotive at Webb Street in Loomis, CA. The right photo shows pavement-entering yard of W&W Molding at the Westerly end of Loomis. Both of these sections will require further investigation.

The stone arch bridge, at Riverton, on the Pioneer Branch of the Lincoln Highway was completed in 1900. the bridge was one of 5 bridges that crossed the American River at that location and remained in use until 1930. 4 obelisks formed the corner stones at each entrance. In 1990 the only 2 obelisks known to exist were placed along US 50 near where the Riverton Hotel once stood, as a monument commemorating the historical significance of the bridge. Sometime in the early 2000's a third obelisk was discovered and placed along with the other two. Now in 2008 the fourth obelisk has been discovered.



The Stone Arch Riverton Bridge

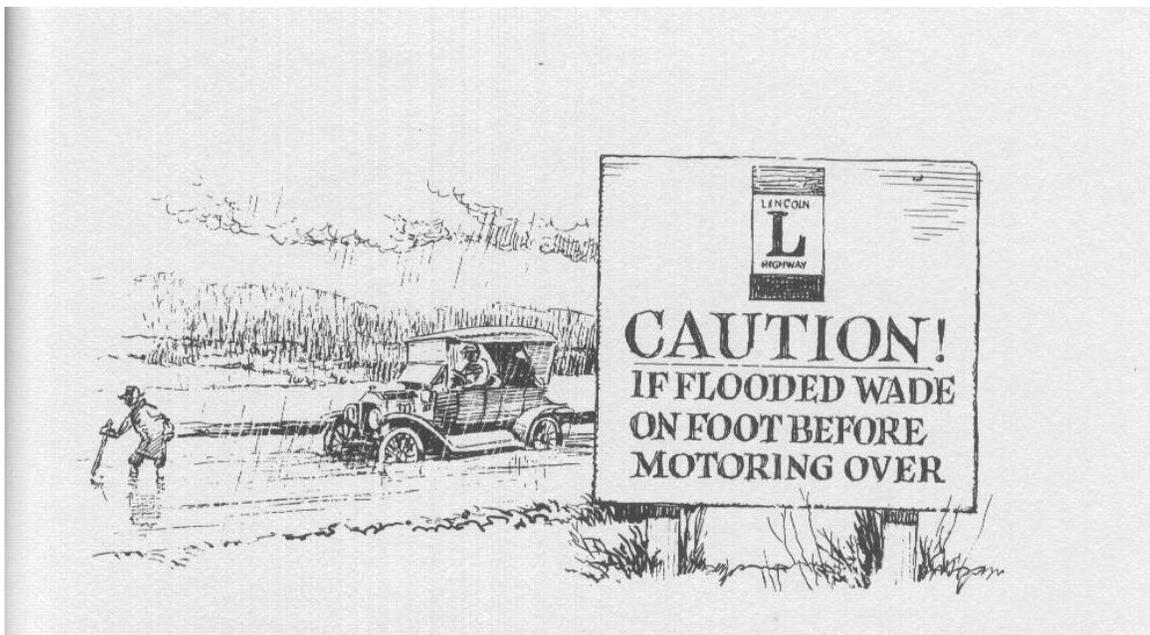


Norm and Lloyd with missing obelisk

While promoting the Lincoln Highway at the Clarksville Day Celebration, Bob, Norm and Lloyd were approached by a gentleman asking if they knew the whereabouts of the 4<sup>th</sup> Riverton Bridge obelisk. They proceeded to relate several versions of the possible location, none of which having been confirmed. To their surprise the gentleman responded "I DO". The promoting was rapidly abandoned and the three treasure seekers piled into Bob's Jimmy making a hasty run to Placerville. They were told the obelisk could be found in a construction company parking lot on Placerville Drive. Upon arriving on scene, the three proceeded to search the area with little results. A worker happened to appear and related that he had heard something about the obelisk. A phone call to his mother, after convincing her that the three were not the local police, revealed the exact location. The obelisk is located at the entrance to Vicini Construction Co. at 315 Placerville Drive near a, still visible, section of Lincoln Highway.

## TRIVIA

I recently read a book entitled “Return to Taos a twice told tale” by Eric Sloane. The book recounts a trip in 1925 by the author from New Jersey via the Lincoln Highway to Colorado then South to New Mexico. In 1925, as a young itinerant sign painter, Eric borrows the family’s Model T roadster and heads west painting signs to pay for gas and food. Not a believer in cabin camping, Eric slept stretched across the Model T’s seat or on an improvised bed under a tarp attached to the car. This was a practice undertaken by many travelers on the Lincoln. Thus begins a story filled with interesting facts concerning early highway travel and points of interest along the road. Some of the trivial information I found quite interesting and I have copied one paragraph to illustrate that point. “My first night on the road was somewhere near Flemington, New Jersey, where I pulled off the road and slept on the seat of the car. I considered I’d made good mileage. Without any speedometer, however, I did a lot of guessing. I had learned that there are twenty city blocks to a mile and as I went along the highway I tried to clock the miles by counting telegraph poles, which were usually placed a chain length apart (eighty to a mile). The world of yesterday was measured in strange and wonderful arithmetic, and the chain measurement (designed by a fellow named Gunter) is still responsible for much of today’s measurements. Gunter decided on a sixty’-six foot linked surveyor’s chain. Some say that was his age when he invented it. Others say it was the length of his house. You might wonder why a rod is sixteen and a half feet; four rods however, add up to sixty-six feet. You might also wonder where the “5,280 foot mile” came from but it happens to be eighty chains! And you might wonder where the “43,560 square foot acre” came from; that happens to be ten square chains. Gunter also decided that fence posts should be one rod (16 ½ feet) apart. Which sounds like a strange rule; but a man could then look at any fenced field and count the acreage instantly just by counting the fence posts, (measuring it in chains or acres). The roads I traveled in 1925 were still twenty-two feet wide, with no shoulders for parking. That, too, came from old Gunter’s decree, (one third of a sixty-six foot wide land grant).” This is a great book for anyone interested in Lincoln Highway travel. It contains numerous sketches by the author who in later life would become a world famous artist.



Eric Sloane sketch



