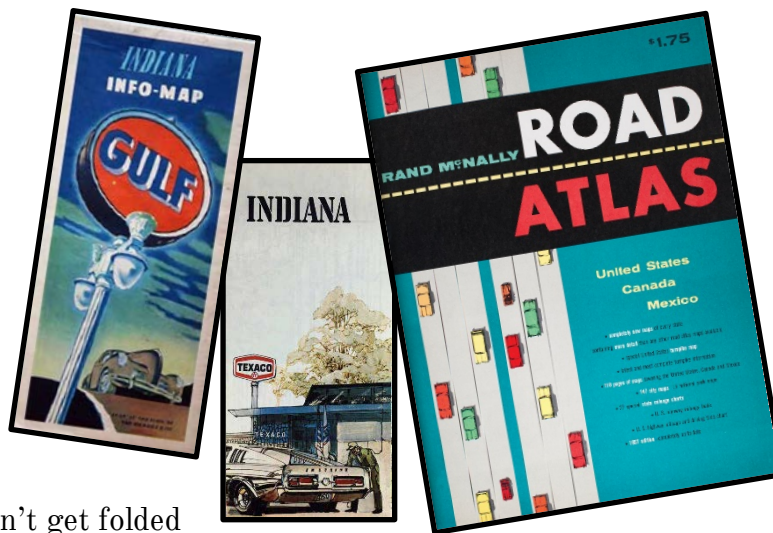


## Traveling the Lincoln Highway In Indiana Then & Now

For most of us preparing to travel to an unknown destination today, our most reliable traveling companion goes by the name of Garmin, TomTom, Magellan, or Navman. These devices not only give turn-by-turn directions, but they constantly update our mileage until we reach our destination as well as gas stations, restaurants, points of interest, and more along the route. At the same time, when traveling the Lincoln Highway in Indiana, I rely on my favorite navigator, my wife Marcia, who doesn't holler at me, "You've left the route!" or "Turn left now!"

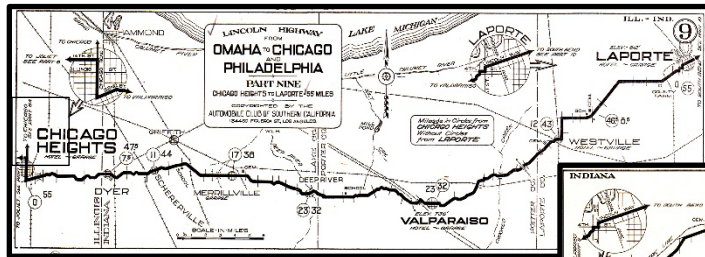


Before the invention of the GPS, many of us—depending on your age—can recall using a Rand McNally road atlas or a foldout map from the automobile club or a gas station chain or even maps published by states. (By the way, if you have any of those old maps you just couldn't get folded properly, there are websites that can help. Seriously, there are.)

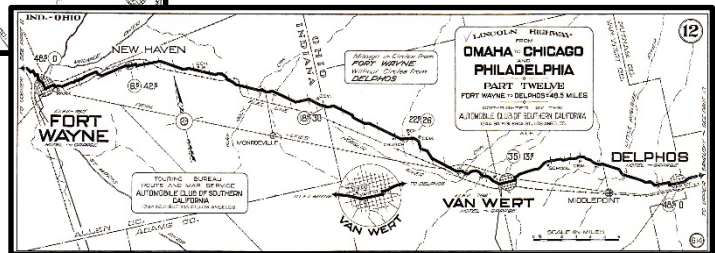
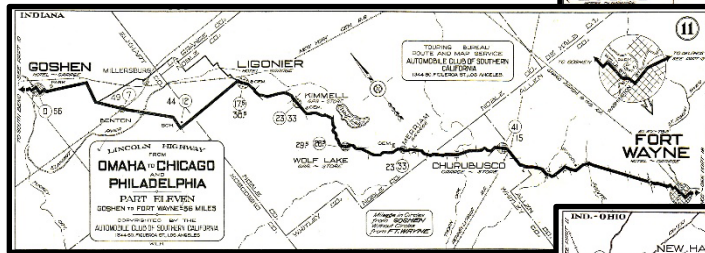
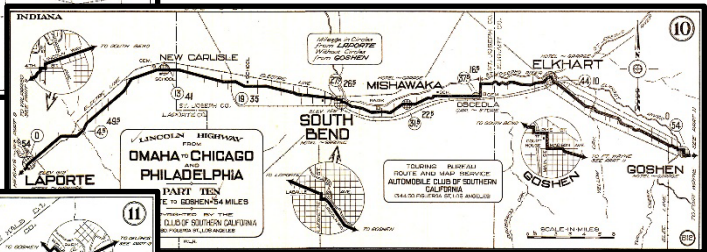


Before the folding maps and atlases we are familiar with, there was another style of maps known as strip maps. The Library of Congress provides some information about these maps, including a series of Lincoln Highway maps published by the Automobile Club of Southern California. (The LOC obtained an incomplete set of 24 maps in 1921.)

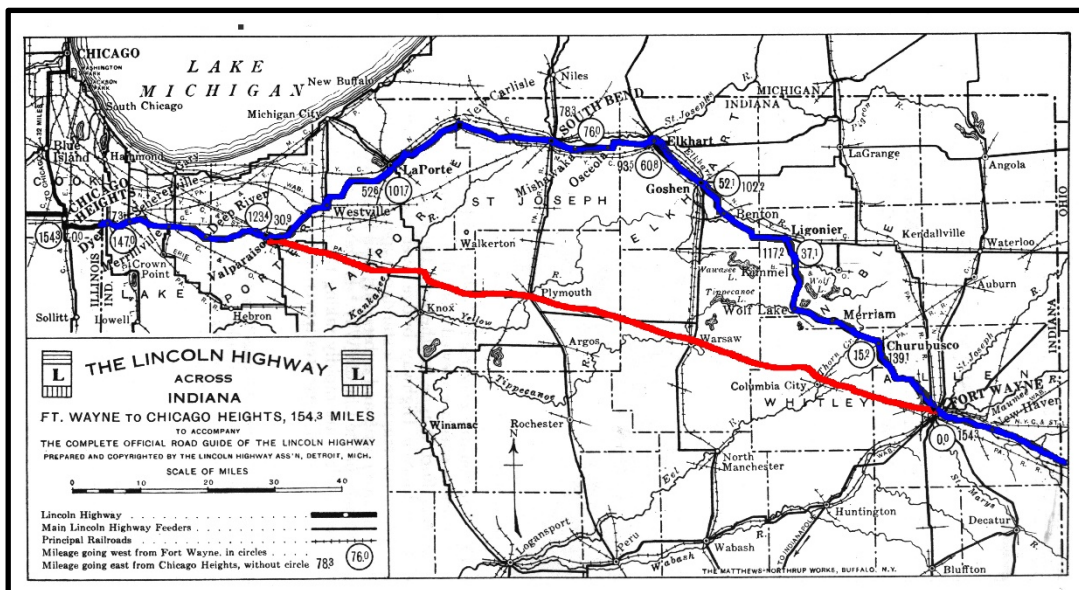
Strip maps once helped drivers navigate major routes and often included a list of “approved” hotels, restaurants, and auto repair stations. Their name likely stems from the narrow rectangular paper strip upon which they were printed. The maps were made to an exacting cartographic standard, often relying on the U.S. Geological Survey, state highway maps, and local maps as sources of reference.



These four images took travelers on the 1913 route from Dyer to Townley (at Indiana/Ohio border).

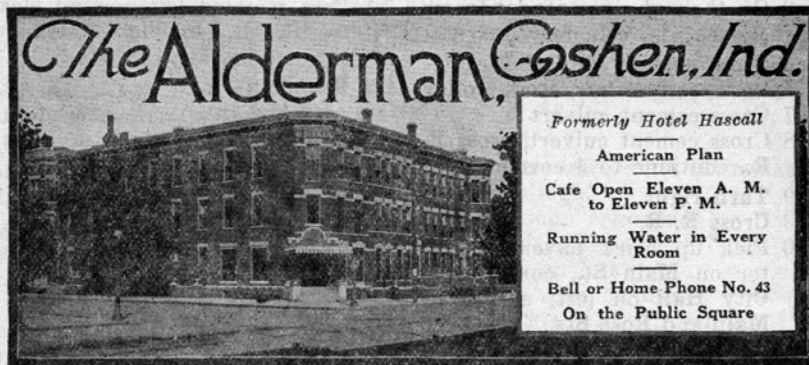


The map below was created by the Lincoln Highway Association. The blue line is the 1913 route. The red line has been added to highlight the 1928 route.



With a GPS unit, there is little reason to look at your odometer, but in early automobiles, the odometer was not standard equipment until around 1919. The Stewart-Warner odometer was patented in 1903 and was available as an aftermarket item that could be attached to your auto. Did you know that the Ford Model T never came with a speedometer or odometer as standard equipment (1908-1927)?

## Route 2—Indiana



### Ligonier to Goshen, Ind., 19.2 miles

Via Burr Oak and Edge of Millersburg.

Macadam and gravel 7.2 miles, balance mostly all brick pavement.

#### Route 2—Reverse Route 1

- .0 Leave 3 corners, **Cavin and First Sts.**, go north on **Cavin St.**, brick pavement
- .1 Cross concrete bridge over river
- .2 Go under **R. R.**, curve left, then right on **Chatham St.**
- .3 End of brick pavement, running on gravel road up easy grade, to end of street
- .6 Turn left on **North St.** to end of street
- .7 Turn right
- 1.1 Through cross roads, large brick school on left, continue to end of road, meeting heavy poles
- 2.1 Turn left
- 2.3 Through cross roads
- 3.2 Pass road on right to end of road
- 3.7 Turn right
- 4.0 Turn left with road, to end of road
- 4.7 Turn right through
- 5.4 Burr Oak  
Passing brick school and church on left, to 4 corners, meeting heavy power poles

Going back a little farther in time to the early 20th century and the increased use of the automobile, combined with an ever-growing system of roads—mostly unimproved or “improved” with macadam, oiled earth, stone, or gravel—publications known as road guides were used by travelers. The *Automobile Blue Book* (not the same as the Kelly Blue Book of auto values), *King’s Official Route Guide*, and others. Rand McNally would introduce their Auto Trails series of maps that gave a comprehensive accounting of all roads and the nearly 250 named trails or highways, including the **Lincoln Highway**.

Can you imagine traveling using the *King’s Official Route Guide*? (See sample to the left.)

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Indiana

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Lincoln Highway Garage

**Section 4** **Indiana**

**VALPARAISO**

**Ft.W. Clin. Control Sign, Wheeler-Elam Lincoln Way Garage.**  
**126.5 193.2** Pop. 6,987. Alt. 736 feet. County seat, Porter County.  
**8.0** Two hotels; garages. State law governs local speed limit.  
**Macadam** Three banks, 3 railroads, 1 interurban line, 2 express companies, 1 telephone company, 2 newspapers, Valparaiso University with an average enrollment of 3,500 students.  
 All road information at Lincoln Highway Garage.  
 L. H. Consuls, Perry L. Sisson, Leon Wheeler.

**DEEP RIVER**

**Ft.W. Clin. Control Station, Post Office.**  
**134.5 185.2** Pop. 60. Lake County. No accommodations for tourists.  
**7.0** Gas, oil and phone.  
**Macadam**

**MERRILLVILLE**

**Ft.W. Clin. Control Sign, Walter Bros. Garage.**  
**141.5 178.2** Pop. 215. Lake County. One hotel, 1 garage. Route marked through town. One railroad, 1 express company, 1 telephone company.  
**5.8** L. H. Local Consul, Walter Brothers.  
**Oiled Macadam**

**WALTER BROS. GARAGE**

MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

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Phone 684 or 1614 J-3

Although founded in 1913, the exact route of the Lincoln Highway from Times Square in New York to Lincoln Park in San Francisco, was often a work in progress as the Lincoln Highway Association (LHA) strived to create the most direct (straightest) route possible across the United States. It is thought that some of the earlier road guides may have helped influence the routing of the Lincoln Highway. First in 1915, and then in 1916, 1918, 1921, and 1924, the LHA published its *Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway*. (See sample page at left from 1918 edition.)

Just as the earlier road guides had done (see red circle on the previous page), motorists using the LHA *Official Road Guide* would reset their odometer to 0 before traveling on to the next city. By leaving Valparaiso at 0, you could monitor the 8 miles it

would take to get to Deep River. By doing the same at Deep River, you could begin your 5.8-mile trip to Merrillville.

If you are like me, you may have wondered when the traditional mile marker, or “reference location sign” if a mile apart and an “intermediate reference location sign” if identified in tenths of a mile came to be. Historically, the Romans had mileage markers on their roads 2,000 years ago and the National Road (built between 1811 and 1834 as the

first federally funded road project in America) also had mileage markers identifying the distance between cities (see image to right). Mileage markers as we know today would be introduced at the same time the Interstate Highway system was introduced in 1956.

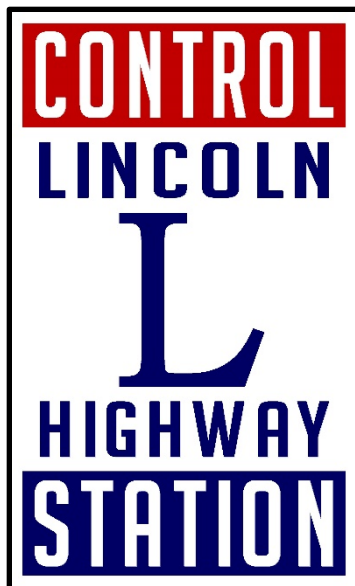


Ever the visionaries, the Lincoln Highway Association acknowledged the challenges of traveling using mileage, the variations between odometers, and other factors in their 1916 Road Guide. They stated –

The Lincoln Highway Association is planning on the establishment of definite control stations at each point on the Lincoln Highway, and it is expected that during the present year a great many such stations can be determined upon and the point marked with a distinctive sign bearing the Lincoln Highway marker and the words “**control station.**”

The concept of **Control Stations** and **Control Station Signs** were introduced in the 1918 Road Guide –

For guidance of the motorist who desires to keep an accurate check on mileage made, and to follow in detail the mileage figures given in this Road Guide, the Lincoln Highway Association has established definite “Control Stations” at the various points along the route.



By “Control Station” is meant the point at which the speedometer [odometer] reading was taken for this Road Guide and consequently the point at which speedometer readings can be checked or set in accordance with these readings.

Some tourists wish to be able to tell at any time, by glancing at their speedometer, their exact distance from their destination or from the next city and from the same point as the printed log. At many principal points on the Lincoln Highway and particularly those points where the speedometer has been set to zero, the Association has placed official control signs of red, white, and blue, and in smaller communities where

no signs have been erected, a Control Station, or point to which the log reads, has been selected at some convenient central corner or landmark.

All control stations are indicated in this guide, on the first line following the mileage reading, under each city, town, or village. Where there are signs placed, the wording will read, “Control Sign,” and where there are no signs, the point from which the speedometer readings were taken will be indicated as “Control Station.”

By setting your speedometer in accordance with the figures given in this Guide, at any Control Station indicated, you will be able to follow the Association’s logging with great accuracy, checking up any minor differences noted, at succeeding “Control” points.

The LHA also established a system of “consuls” along the highway that served as modern day welcome center or convention and visitors bureau. These consuls could answer questions about the local area, road conditions ahead, restaurants, gas stations, hotels, or attractions.

Here in Indiana, Dyan Wheeler-Quilter, Historic Building Manager at the **Wood’s Historic Grist Mill** (9410 Old Lincoln Highway, Hobart, IN) and member of the Indiana Lincoln Highway Association’s Board of Directors, has volunteered to serve as a modern-day consul. Dyan and her staff are excited to also be a “Control Station” identified with a soon to be installed “Control Sign” along the route of the 1913 Lincoln Highway.

In addition to providing brochures about the Indiana Lincoln Highway, a new banner has been set up in the visitor gift shop at the Mill which includes historical images and other information about the original control stations and signs. Dyan says, “So many eyes have been on the banner. It’s just so great!!! I have posted about on Facebook but also all the park guests are stopping and



reading it. Our Park traffic picks up in the fall because of the changing fall colors, so in the next 6 weeks there will be lots more people reading it.”

Looking for a Fall road trip on the Lincoln Highway in Indiana? You won’t be disappointed with a visit to the Mill.

Not too far away, at 1370 Joliet St, Dyer, IN, is the recently restored **Henry C. Ostermann Memorial Seat and the Ideal Section Monument** with historical bronze plaques and two interpretive signs. Learn about what the 1921 Ideal Section was in terms of Indiana and worldwide transportation history as well as more about the Lincoln Highway. **Please note:** There is no onsite parking, but you can park at the Meyer’s Castle restaurant on the east or at the Woudeland Professional Center on the west and take the sidewalk to the memorials.

Some rainy day reading –

Rand McNally is celebrating their 96<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Road Atlas with a timeline and historical graphics.

<https://www.randmcnally.com/96years>

Almost everything you wanted to know about road signs. Did you know the first stop sign was posted in 1915 in Detroit? It had black lettering on a white background.

<https://www.degemmill.com/history-traffic-signs/>

Another great timeline of maps through the years. Don’t forget to click at the bottom to go to the next page.

<https://roadmaps.org/map-information/maps-by-the-decade/>

How the U.S. Highway System works and much more. Very interesting.

<https://wandrlymagazine.com/article/us-highway-system/>