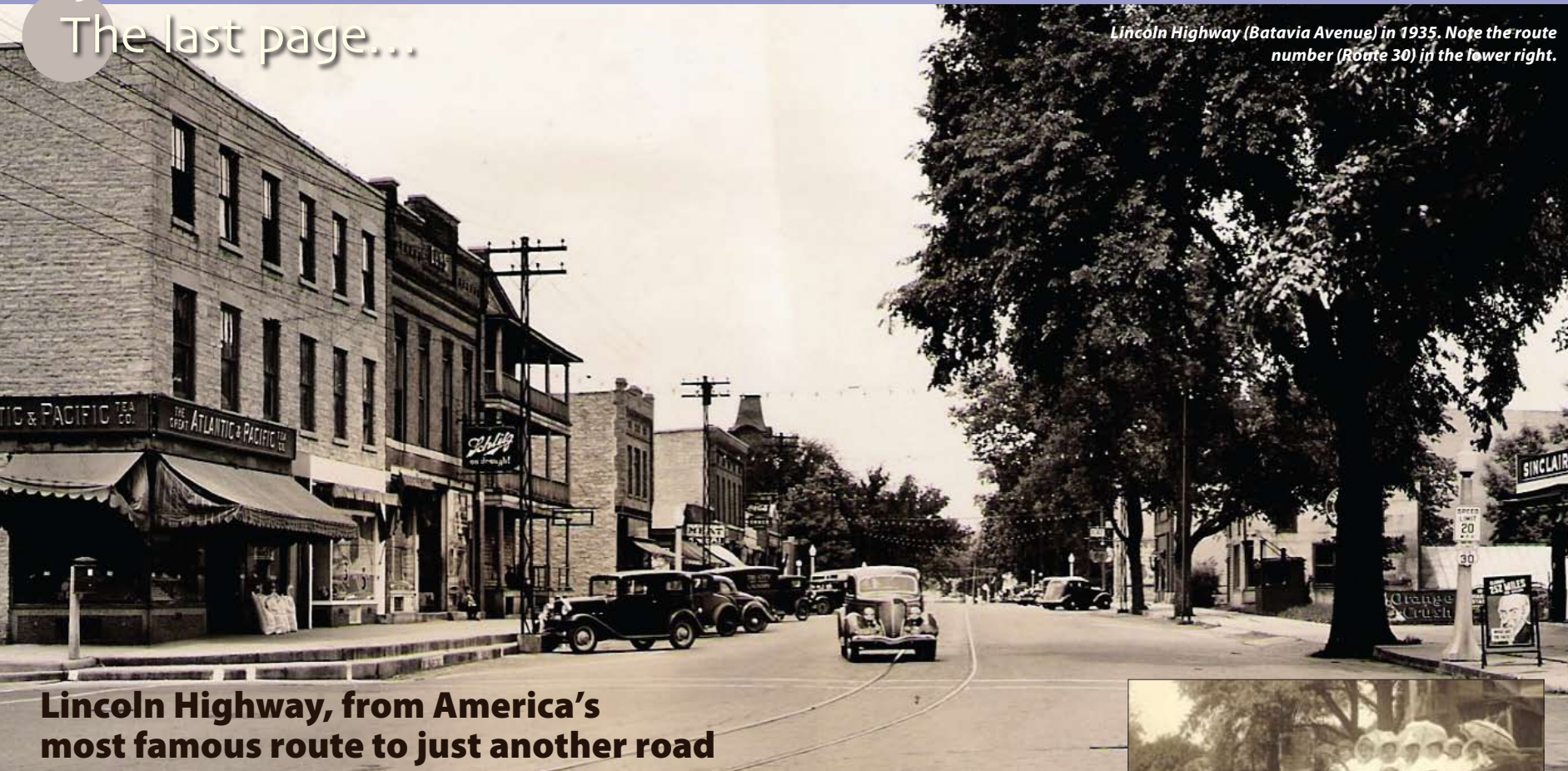


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Lincoln Highway (Batavia Avenue) in 1935. Note the route number (Route 30) in the lower right.

Lincoln Highway, from America's most famous route to just another road

The Lincoln Highway (now Rt. 31) was once the most famous road in America. It was the symbol that "Good Roads" supporters rallied around in their crusade to create a highway system for the country. It was the first successful transcontinental highway and served as the catalyst for the driving improvements that were being demanded by an increasingly mobile public and by the car makers of Detroit. The Lincoln Highway was the first successful, all-weather, coast-to-coast, automobile highway. The Lincoln Highway owed its success to promotion.

In the beginning, there was no federal funding to build highways. In 1913, when Carl Fisher proposed the "Coast-to-Coast Rock Highway," dirt roads led from one town to the next, and few people could give directions beyond that. Fisher was a dreamer. He had founded the Indianapolis Speedway, owned the Prest-O-Lite

Headlight Company, and would later create the Dixie Highway. He approached the fledgling automobile industry for support and funding for his highway. Eager to put America on wheels, many executives from automobile manufacturers and tire companies joined ranks of the Lincoln Highway Association in its inaugural meeting on July 1, 1913.

Within a year of its beginnings, The Lincoln Highway Association was broke, but just beginning their crusade to enlist the public and the government to build better roads. Mooseheart, a 1,200 acre community for children, was established in 1913 between Batavia and North Aurora along the then dirt-surfaced Lincoln Highway. On Good Roads Day, 1,500 Moose members from all over the country came to the Batavia area with pick and shovel to grade the highway. In appreciation, the state of Illinois paved an extra ten-foot strip in



Cruising the Lincoln Highway (Batavia Avenue) in a 1918 Cole Aero 8

front of Mooseheart.

It was said that the road was paved more with printers ink than with concrete. The Lincoln Highway Association realized that its limited funds were better spent on promotion than on highway construction, especially after corporate America failed to provide strong sponsorship. They made the Lincoln Highway the centerpiece in a massive marketing campaign to convince the public that better roads were needed and that the government should build them.

The Lincoln Highway and the Good Roads Movement faded away as a result of their own success. By the late 1920's, there was a reliable network of roads crisscrossing the nation. At least nine transcontinental highways existed by 1922. The Lincoln Highway, although famous for many more years, was just another road.

Excerpts reprinted from the Lincoln Highway Association Web site. For more information visit drivelincolnhighway.com.

Citizens of the Year and a life to remember

Linnea & W.C. "Buzz" Miller

by Roger Breisch

Having called Batavia home since 1978, it is probably easier to list what organization Linnea and Buzz haven't been involved with, as it is to name where they've helped. Early on, they volunteered at the schools of their three children: Elizabeth, Cory and Alex. They were also Boy Scout and Girl Scout leaders, involved with the Indian Guides program and participated in various roles at Bethany Lutheran Church. As the children grew, so did the scope of their volunteering.

In 1991 Linnea attended a retreat concerning the future of Batavia. This spurred her into even more activity within the Batavia community. Because of her interest in history and preservation, she joined the Architecture and Design Committee which developed from discussions at the retreat. Service on this committee eventually led to her direct involvement in the formation of Batavia MainStreet. Linnea was appointed an alderwoman in 1995, a precursor to her appointment as the city representative to the Batavia Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors in 1996; a position she held for eight years.

Buzz found his 'niche' serving as chairperson for Batavia ACCESS Committee for five years, working on Concerts for a Cause, the Toy Drive and most prominently on the Fireworks Committee since 1983. He also stepped up as the first person to volunteer when Bob Popeck (then the administrative assistant to the mayor) sent out word that he needed help to bring in and erect windmills in Batavia. Buzz is still an active member of Bob's MOB (Molinologists of Batavia).

The Millers are quick to downplay their roles in the community. Squeezed in between his volunteer duties, Buzz does have a day job, too. He manages Du-Call Miller Plastics, a family owned plastic molding firm in Lisle, founded by his father in the 1950s.

The community was saddened to lose Linnea to breast cancer on January 5, 2010 after a long, courageous battle.

PHOTOS COURTESY BATAVIA DEPOT MUSEUM



1916 map of the Lincoln Highway from the Lincoln Highway Museum