

WEST MAIN STREET IS A 'LINCOLN WAY'

WAS EMANCIPATOR'S FAVORITE
ROUTE INTO URBANA.

Judge Cunningham Relates Reminiscences in Address Before Daughters of the American Revolution—Unity Club Meets.

Alliance chapter of Urbana and Champaign, Daughters of the American Revolution, met Wednesday afternoon with Mrs. George W. Bussey, 506 West Green street, Urbana, with a large attendance, about forty members and a few visitors being present.

During the business hour a motion was made and carried to donate ten dollars to the memorial picture fund of the late Mrs. Adlai E. Stevenson of Bloomington, Ill., who was three times president-general of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The picture, when completed, will cost approximately \$2,500 and will be placed in Continental Memorial hall at Washington.

Resolutions of Condolence.

The corresponding secretary was instructed to draft resolutions embracing the sympathy of the daughters for the members of the bereaved family and friends of the late Mrs. George M. Gillespie of Champaign, who was a member of the chapter at the time of her death.

Mrs. Mary C. Lee gave an interesting five minutes' talk on the historical events of the month of November, which included the birth of a number of prominent men and some of the presidents of the United States, the landing of the Mayflower and our national Thanksgiving.

Tells of Lincoln.

Judge J. O. Cunningham, Champaign county historian, gave a very interesting address upon "The Real Lincoln Highway in Illinois," in which he showed how many of the highways in Illinois, as well as in other states, were surveyed following the trail of the buffalo and later of the Indians. Judge Cunningham was introduced as an annual speaker for the daughters and when he arose to begin his address, he said that he was glad that he had not become a "chestnut" for

such roads or traces were established? Let a well known and authentic writer, the author of "Historic Highways of America," from which I quote, answer:

"The first explorers that entered the interior of the American continent were dependent upon the buffalo and the Indian for ways of getting about. Few of the early white men who came westward journeyed on the rivers, and to the trails of the buffalo and Indians they owed their success in bringing to the seaboard the first accounts of the interior of the continent."

From this it will be seen that to the buffalo and the aboriginal Indian, humble as those agencies may be considered, society owes the location and existence of many of its best recognized highways, as well as the location of the mighty railroads which followed and in part supplanted them.

Champagn county was no exception to the conditions found elsewhere. Here as in other places the buffalo and the Indian made their roads, generally of a single track, leading from grove and pasture ranges to streams or water ponds. These were found by the white man and by him utilized as roads in fact. Particularly was this true here of one road more conspicuous than others, referring to a road known to pioneers, as the Danville and Fort Clark road, which connected the region of Danville with that of Fort Clark, on the Illinois river, now the location of the city of Peoria.

When the United States surveyors in 1821 came upon this territory to divide it into towns and sections as we now find them, they found this road or trace plainly leading across the country between these terminals. That it owed its existence to the agency I have named is beyond a doubt. At the eastern end was the Vermilion river and upon its banks were salt springs to which the buffalo and the Indian had need to resort for their supply of that necessary article. The road led along to the westward and northwesterly, crossing the Salt Fork of the Vermilion at what was then known as Prather's ford a mile north of the village of St. Joseph, thence to and across the Senzamen river at what was then known as Newcomb's ford, near the south-west corner of East Bend township, thence northwesterly to Chocoma's grove, and on to Bloomington and Peoria. Besides being the trace of the buffalo, who it is presumable was its originator and first occupier, seeking the waters named and the boundless pastures of the grand prairie, which lay along its course, it is certain that the Kickapoo Indians, who occupied the territory of McLean county and

feasible route thereto, with his plow and team made a furrow from that neighborhood to the incipient canal, which was accepted by public user and became what may now be seen, the road known as the Bloomington road except where vacated by the action of the two cities or turned around the corner of somebody's farm.

These digressions from apparently following the line indicated by our topic, to which a return will now be made, are only justified that an additional and historical dignity may attach to what I shall claim and insist has perhaps the highest claim to be designated and treated as "The Real Lincoln Highways of Illinois."

What is now known to us as the Danville and Urbana road, running east through St. Joseph township and thence to Danville, is partly upon the line of the old Danville and Fort Clark road, before spoken of as having originated before the settlement of the country. So much of that old road as extends from a point where it crosses the east line of St. Joseph township to Danville, may safely be said to remain of that road, marked out by buffaloes. From that point west the road is of later date and though in part a diagonal road, is of lawful origin, leading directly to Urbana. Thence directly to the west leads the Springfield road, known within the municipalities as Springfield avenue, leading along section lines to the west line of the county towards Monticello and long traveled by those destined for Monticello and Springfield. So, there is the road before spoken of as leading northwesterly, known as the Bloomington road. And these are the roads of this county to which I would particularly call attention, for it was over these roads, leading from his home in Springfield to this and other county seats that Abraham Lincoln, the country lawyer of that day, but the president of the great republic and the emancipator of a race of a later day, for many years passed and re-passed in his attendance upon the courts. How and in what manner he came and went is best told by his intimate and trusted friend, Major Henry C. Whitney, in his book, "Life on the Circuit With Lincoln."

"I saw Lincoln on the twenty-fourth day of October, 1854, when he came to Urbana to attend the fall circuit court. I saw him as he drove into town behind his own horse, which was an indifferent, raw-boned specimen, in his own blacksmith-made buggy—a most ordinary looking one. He was entirely alone, and might have passed for an ordinary farmer, so far as appearances were concerned."

Whitney does not here say over what roads he usually came to Ur-

guided the driver and entertained us on that dismal October evening, on that wretched muddy road, in that dark melancholy stretch of woods. What effect this concert had on the owls and bats, I am not advised, but it was noisy and ridiculous and at no expense to anybody. It combined utility and diversion."

This detail of what would ordinarily be considered inconsequential acts, performed in behalf of friends and in their service, by the light of events occurring thereafter and within a brief period, in the history of the chief actor, render the story one of great interest as it must ever be considered. But to us, who are now considering the claims of this highway with its extensions westward, to ever hereafter bear the honored name of Lincoln, it is most significant and decisive. What other road or road north or south can lay such claims to be called "The Real Lincoln Highway?" What other road has been sanctified by his actual touch in person, forming a disinterested, humble way for a friend so marked as a Lincoln characteristic? The answer must be "No one."

In conclusion now let me plead the supreme claims of this road, passing but a few hundred feet from where you are now assembled, and reaching out to Danville on the east and to the home of Lincoln at Springfield on the west to ever bear that honored name—claims supported by such indisputable facts as I have been able to array here today—controverted only on behalf of roads perhaps never seen by the great emancipator.

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