

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Lincoln Highway – Grand Island Seedling Mile

Other names/site number NeHRSI #HL06-696

Name of related multiple property listing Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska

## 2. Location

Street & Number Seedling Mile Road

City or town Grand Island State Nebraska County Hall

Not for publication  Vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

SHPO/Director

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Nebraska State Historical Society

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official

Date

Title

State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

**Category of Property** (Check only **one** box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property** (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	Buildings
_____	_____	Sites
<b>1</b>	_____	Structures
_____	_____	Objects
<b>1</b>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

TRANSPORTATION/road related (vehicular)

**Current Functions**

TRANSPORTATION/road related (vacated)

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

OTHER

**Materials**

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete

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**Name of Property****County and State****Description****Summary Paragraph**

The Grand Island Seedling Mile is a concrete section of roadway located immediately east of the city, yet remaining in a somewhat rural setting. It is 315 feet in length, 16 feet wide, and built along a section line within a 66-foot right-of-way. It retains all factors of integrity as an extant, early roadway constructed under the Lincoln Highway Association's Seedling Mile program and generally accepted specifications of the time. This nomination includes one resource, the roadway.

**Narrative Description**

As stated in the Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) form, *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska*, "roadways are linear resources and, obviously, the most exemplary property type relating to the historic highway." They are found as segments of road, most often where realignments have left original roadways undisturbed, as in the case of the Grand Island Seedling Mile.

The remaining portion of the original concrete mile is 315 feet in length running directly east to west. Its width is 16 feet, making accommodations for two eight-foot lanes. Although not tested, the thickness of the concrete is thought to be seven inches.<sup>1</sup> This may be consistent with the norm, since a six to nine inch thickness seems to have been specified during the period. Since the road followed an existing section line, the right-of-way is 66 feet. The right-of-way defines the boundaries of the Seedling Mile along with its length. To the north of the road is a shallow ditch for water drainage and a row of utility poles beyond. The Seedling Mile followed this section line road, originally continuing east to a location at the intersection of today's Shady Bend Road, near where the District #74 School is located. The school was later renamed "Seedling Mile School" and the road, "Seedling Mile Road."

According to the Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) form, *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska*, roadways must retain enough characteristic features of the road from the historic period(s) of the highway and must convey their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and/or association. They would embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period(s) or methods of construction.<sup>2</sup> In describing the Grand Island Seedling Mile, these factors are all relevant. Although worn and cracked from continued use and the elements, it retains its historical integrity, making it a rare example of a Seedling Mile project of the Lincoln Highway Association.

By about 1931, the alignment of the Lincoln Highway/U.S. Route 30 east of the city was relocated and the Seedling Mile was vacated as a highway.<sup>3</sup> The new alignment followed a more direct diagonal right-of-way than the east-west section line road the Seedling Mile followed. Thus, the realignment of the highway allowed most of the Seedling Mile to the east and west of the new highway alignment to remain intact, only interrupted by the new intersection and no longer making a continuous section of roadway. The Seedling Mile then became a local road. Remains of the original Seedling Mile traveling east from the U.S. Route 30 intersection were lost when the roadway was rebuilt and widened. This precludes its inclusion in this nomination. However, most of the Seedling Mile to the west was left intact, the subject of this nomination.

Highway improvements to U.S. Route 30 were proposed east of Grand Island as early as 1976, beginning with studies to widen and straighten the highway, add turn lanes, and widen intersections. In 1999, when improvements were proposed at the intersection of the highway, Stuhr Road and Seedling Mile Road, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office identified the original Seedling Mile as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Seedling Mile was to be impacted by the improved intersection and a proposed cul-de-sac to provide access to businesses. The Nebraska Department of Roads proposed mitigation of any potential adverse effects to the historic road. About 1,056 feet of roadway remained of this section of Seedling

<sup>1</sup> Personal communication, Bob Puschendorf, Nebraska State Historical Society, to Wesley Wahlgren, District Engineer, District 4, Nebraska Department of Roads, October 15, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska" (2007).

<sup>3</sup> In 1925 the Lincoln Highway was designated under a uniform numbering system as U.S. Route 30, denoting it as a federal coast-to-coast highway.

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Mile.<sup>4</sup> As mitigation, most of the roadway was to be avoided, retaining much of this section of the Seedling Mile. However, an overzealous contractor lifted a large portion of this section of original concrete, leaving only 315 feet. While this loss was disappointing, enough of this section of original highway remains for interpretation and still exhibits integrity. Ownership of the Seedling Mile has been transferred to the City of Grand Island. It has been closed to all vehicular traffic. The City has constructed a pad for parking, which is accessible from the cul-de-sac. Today, a Nebraska Historical Marker, located just to the east of the nominated property, interprets its significance, stating the following:

*Here is a section of an original Seedling Mile on the Lincoln Highway. It was completed November 3, 1915. Grand Island was the second city in the United States to build such an example of concrete roadway. The original Seedling Mile extended from the corner of Willow Street one mile east, ending near the Seedling Mile School.*

*By 1913 the route of the Lincoln Highway had been chosen and dedicated nationwide by the newly formed Lincoln Highway Association. The association's main goal was to develop a paved, toll-free, transcontinental highway from New York City to San Francisco. To help meet this goal, the association conceived the Seedling Mile program. Seedling Miles would be the "seeds" from which paved roads would extend across the nation.*

*The Seedling Mile was constructed with locally donated cement and funds. Fred W. Ashton of Grand Island raised \$1,170 for the project. Realignment of the highway in 1931 allowed this section to be preserved. It is the only remaining original section of a concrete Seedling Mile that has not been widened or covered with asphalt.*

<sup>4</sup> Leonard Sand, Nebraska Department of Roads, to Greg Miller, Nebraska State Historical Society, February 9, 2000, attachment titled "Boundary Description," Grand Island East, S-30-4(1019), C.N. 40058, Nebraska Department of Roads, nd. Copy in NeHRSI (HL06-696), Nebraska State Historical Society.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** Removed from its original location.
- C** A birthplace or a grave.
- D** A cemetery.  
A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- E** A commemorative property.
- F** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Areas of Significance

TRANSPORTATION

#### Period of Significance

1915-c. 1931

#### Significant Dates

1915

c. 1931

#### Significant Person

NA

#### Cultural Affiliation

NA

#### Architect/Builder

Ray D. Kingsbury, road builder

### Statement of Significance

#### Summary Paragraph

The Lincoln Highway was envisioned to be a paved, toll free cross-country highway. Organized by the Lincoln Highway Association, which was founded in 1913, supporters propelled the highway into national significance as the nation's first transcontinental automobile route. In one of its earliest and most enthusiastic promotional devices, the Lincoln Highway Association conceived the "Seedling Mile" program just one year following the organization and routing of the Lincoln Highway. The Seedling Mile program demonstrated the value of improved roads, not only to area motorists but also to those traversing the highway long distance. The roadway represents a single event - the construction of Nebraska's first Seedling Mile - and a pattern of events - the Lincoln Highway Association's promotional scheme to demonstrate the value of improved roads. It was also an early "object

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lesson” in the use of concrete as a permanent, all-weather road surface. The Grand Island section of Seedling Mile, constructed in 1915, was the first of only three that were approved and built in the state. No other example of a Seedling Mile is known to be extant in any of the five states that built Seedling Miles. The roadway exhibits excellent integrity and is considered a significant representative of the development of the early Lincoln Highway as a whole. It is therefore being evaluated at the statewide level of significance under Criterion A. The period of significance is 1915 through about 1931, when improvements to the Lincoln Highway/U.S. Route 30 east of the city caused the Seedling Mile to be vacated as the route of the highway.

**Narrative Statement of Significance****Background:*****“Great oaks from little acorns will grow...”***

The coming of the automobile brought major attention to the poor condition of the nation’s roads. But unlike the great transcontinental railroads, which were built with bonds and federal land grants some fifty years earlier, the building of early roads began as grass-roots, local efforts. The Lincoln Highway was one of the earliest and most ambitious efforts. It was conceived as the nation’s first transcontinental automobile route. Organized in 1913, the goal of the Lincoln Highway Association was:

(t) to immediately promote and procure the establishment of a continuous improved highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, open to lawful traffic of all descriptions without toll charges, and to be of concrete wherever practicable. This highway is to be known, in memory of Abraham Lincoln, as “the Lincoln Highway.”<sup>5</sup>

Since no significant financial resources were then available to construct the highway, it was aided by local subscriptions, local labor and community resources, and beginning in 1916, some federal aid for road construction.

New techniques demonstrated for construction of roads were called “object lessons.” These were examples to further the use of “scientific” new construction techniques by adopting model specifications available from various sources, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture or “good roads” publications. Among the early trials were the use of sand-clay underlayment, the road drag for road maintenance, and the use of other surfacing materials, such as stone. Likewise, concrete surfacing was an object lesson in road construction.

The Lincoln Highway Association came up with promotional devices to increase the highway’s exposure and rally support. One promotional scheme was the development of “Seedling Miles.” A Seedling Mile, as the name implies, would be a mile-long strip of standard concrete road surface. Seedling Miles would be the “seeds” from which paved roads would extend across the nation. “Great oaks from little acorns will grow; long roads of concrete from ‘seedling miles’ will spring,” the Lincoln Highway Association proclaimed.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the concept was to build these improved sections of road through donations that would, in turn, encourage improvements along the entire route and demonstrate the value of such improvements. Seedling Miles, according to a Lincoln Highway Association’s guidebook, were intended “to demonstrate the desirability of this permanent type of road construction” and “crystallize public sentiment [for] further construction of the same character.”<sup>7</sup> As Carl G. Fisher, originator of the Lincoln Highway explained, one of the goals of the new highway would be to make it an object lesson that would “stimulate as nothing else could the building of enduring highways everywhere....”<sup>8</sup>

In its “Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway,” published in 1915, the Lincoln Highway Association reported that it had placed a total of \$40,000 worth of cement in the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and

<sup>5</sup> Lincoln Highway Certificate dated 1913. Copy in the collections of the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, Grand Island, Nebraska.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Anderson, “Hall County’s Seedling Mile Holds Memories of Nation’s First Transcontinental Highway,” *Prairie Pioneer Press* 25, no. 10 (October, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Weingroff, Richard F., “The Lincoln Highway.” Washington, D.C. Office of Infrastructure and Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

<sup>8</sup> Weingroff, Richard F., “The Lincoln Highway.” Washington, D.C. Office of Infrastructure and Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

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Nebraska.<sup>9</sup> Donations by the Portland Cement Association and its affiliated producers, donors, local sponsors and local governments would provide for their construction in these five states.<sup>10</sup>

After 1919, cement manufacturers no longer felt it was necessary to donate materials or labor toward these Seedling Miles, and no others were constructed. By then, however, state and federal governments would be investing more in highway systems, beginning with the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 and a successor, the Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1921.

These sections of the Lincoln Highway began to convert skeptics of concrete as a road surface material. The Lincoln Highway Association had proven the value of a hard-surfaced highway.

**The Lincoln Highway in Nebraska:  
“The route is natural and easy.”**

The broad Platte River valley in Nebraska was a natural corridor of travel. In the mid-nineteenth century, it was the route of the Oregon-California Trail, the Mormon Trail, and Pony Express. Next to come was the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad as it built through the Platte River valley beginning in 1866. The Lincoln Highway, established in 1913, was another milestone in the evolution of the Platte River valley in Nebraska as a route for the nation’s travel: a trail of the twentieth century.

A route of an early east-west overland automobile road across the state makes its earliest appearance in a Nebraska guidebook dated 1913.<sup>11</sup> Pronounced by the Nebraska State Automobile Association as the “Platte River Trans-Continental Route,” it extended from Omaha to Cheyenne and Denver. The nationwide route of the Lincoln Highway was mapped that year. In a promotional booklet issued by the Lincoln Highway Association for its 1913 meeting in Detroit, the road in Nebraska was described:

At Omaha the state of Nebraska is entered, following the historical Overland Trail up the broad and prosperous Platte river valley. The entire distance across the length of this state is, approximately, 450 miles. The route is natural and easy. It affords opportunities for constructing a picturesque roadway such as cannot be equaled in any state in the union.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the early history of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska, road maintenance and improvement was the major challenge. In 1914, a year after the Lincoln Highway was established, the State Board of Irrigation, Highways, and Drainage Biennial Report stated that the route was “in fairly good shape through the state excepting at the western portion, where there is room for a large improvement.”<sup>13</sup> The eastern portion of the highway was graded, but the west section, having not been graded was only made up of deeply rutted trails. A 1918 touring guide described the highway as a “Good dirt road through absolutely level country. In dry weather good time can be made. Slippery in wet weather; use care.”<sup>14</sup> For many years much of the road surface remained dirt. Full-scale federal and state involvement with highway construction was a decade away.

**Grand Island’s Seedling Mile  
“...a good, honest piece of road...”**

Fred W. Ashton, an attorney who was the Hall County consul to the Lincoln Highway Association and president of the Grand Island Commercial Club, led the charge in matters related to development and promotion of the highway in the county. Shortly after the founding of the Lincoln Highway Association, Ashton spoke at the dedication of a Civil War monument, stating “[the] spirit of patriotism which has made it possible to erect this

<sup>9</sup> The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, (Detroit, Michigan: The Lincoln Highway Association, 1915), 31.

<sup>10</sup> Lincoln Highway Association, The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade that Made Transportation History (New York, N.Y.: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935), 135.

<sup>11</sup> Nebraska State Automobile Association, Official Road Book. Fremont, Nebraska: Road Book Department of the Nebraska State Automobile Association, 1913.

<sup>12</sup> As quoted in the Columbus Telegram, October 3, 1913, page 7.

<sup>13</sup> State Board of Irrigation, Tenth Biennial Report of The State Board of Irrigation: Highways and Drainage 1912-1914 (Lincoln, Nebraska.: State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage, 1914).

<sup>14</sup> TIB Automobile Route Book, 1918. Kansas City: TIB Automobile Route Book Company, page 248.

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monument...is the same spirit that prompted a young man in Indianapolis [Carl Graham Fisher, originator of the highway] to plan a great permanent highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific as a memorial to Abraham Lincoln."<sup>15</sup>

In Grand Island, the 1913 route of the Lincoln Highway passed through the downtown on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. As the route traveled east, it passed under a railroad viaduct at Plum Street, avoiding a potentially dangerous railroad crossing. At the east outskirts of town, it approached the Union Pacific yards and continued east to a section line road. Ashton acted rapidly after the Lincoln Highway Association announced its Seedling Mile project with his eye on improving the road in this vicinity. In a letter to the Hall County Board of Supervisors dated August 24, 1914, Ashton was already trying to negotiate with the Union Pacific Railroad to lease right-of-way south of its yard. The railroad, however, was proposing an expansion leaving no logical east-west road to extend the highway east from the city. Presenting a map to the supervisors, Ashton proposed a roadway farther to the south, but on rather low ground and subject to drainage problems. "(O)wing to the fact that the Lincoln Highway follows this route east from the city limits and it is the intention of the Highway Association to eventually build a concrete road, I would ask that steps be taken at once to grade up this new route, and put in condition for the concrete work without any unnecessary delay."<sup>16</sup> Ashton would meet many times with the Hall County Board of Supervisors regarding the roadway, which as a section line road was owned and maintained by the county township.

Ashton submitted Grand Island's application for a Seedling Mile in December 1914. Three miles of Seedling Miles were allocated to Nebraska, and Grand Island received its request for one mile. Building a Seedling Mile near this large and prosperous Nebraska city (1910 population 10,326) would garner exposure for the improvement and be seen as a credit to the city.

Upon the approval of the application, Ashton learned that Hall County had been allocated two thousand barrels of cement from the Lincoln Highway Association. Ashton also indicated that he secured a release of the funds deposited in three Grand Island banks amounting to approximately \$1,200 to purchase two thousand barrels of additional cement, sufficient to build the section of road one mile in length and sixteen feet wide. In order to secure the cement and funds, he stated that the county and township must furnish labor and material. He would also address the Grand Island city council for support. Ashton urged that a committee consisting of representatives of the city council and township be formed by action at the next county board meeting "so that a plan could be agreed upon and recommendation made with reference to this work."<sup>17</sup> Ashton also thought that gravel, sand, and teams of workhorses could be obtained for free. The supervisors appointed a joint committee of the city council and the township the next month.<sup>18</sup>

The committee reported the following month that the estimate for the project would be \$12,000. Giving credit for the donated cement, a balance of \$6,000 to \$8,000 would have to be secured. This must have raised some concerns from the county supervisors. To save money – and perhaps to resolve his own hesitation about the large amount to be raised - Ashton suggested that the roadbed be reduced to a width of ten feet of concrete with four feet of gravel on each side.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps this was not to the specifications required of Seedling Miles or in a final analysis, since this was not pursued.

The supervisors voted to allow \$2,000 out of their permanent road fund contingent of the remaining funds to be subscribed and paid.<sup>20</sup> However, an amendment was attached that asked for one-half of the mile be built east of the railroad shops and another non-contiguous section west of the railroad tracks. This was not to the satisfaction

<sup>15</sup> Anderson.

<sup>16</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of meeting held August 25, 1914. Transcript of Ashton's letter to the supervisors, dated August 24, 1914.

<sup>17</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of meeting held December 30, 1914.

<sup>18</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of meeting held January 26, 1915.

<sup>19</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of meeting held February 9, 1915.

<sup>20</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of meeting held February 9, 1915.

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of the Lincoln Highway Association and the motion was rescinded in April. In another resolution, the county supervisors agreed to take over and maintain the road in good condition for at least five years.<sup>21</sup>

In special session of the county supervisors, bids were opened on July 31, 1915. One was received in the amount of \$5,250 from Tanner & Sons and the other, \$4,800, from Ray D. Kingsbury. The two bids were rejected after a representative of the cement manufacturers considered both too high. The project was re-advertised and rebid.<sup>22</sup> Finally, in a special session on August 14, the Hall County board of supervisors accepted the bid for \$4,375 by Ray D. Kingsbury of Grand Island.<sup>23</sup> It had taken almost nine months since submittal of the application until the bid was accepted to resolve all of the previous complications that had ensued.

Construction began when City Engineer Kibbey laid out the stakes. The road was closed to traffic during construction.<sup>24</sup> Groundbreaking was celebrated August 30, 1915. Probably further boosting local enthusiasm was a slideshow and lecture at the courthouse by Mrs. Lee C. Boardman, founder of the Lincoln Highway Woman's Auxiliary, and Mrs. Sarah Wright McDannold, executive chairman, both of New York City.<sup>25</sup> The event was hosted by the Women's Park Association on September 1.

During a trip from San Francisco in October, Henry Ostermann, field secretary and consul for the Lincoln Highway Association, stopped in Grand Island where he met with Ashton and a representative of the *Grand Island Independent* and observed the work in progress. The newspaper reported that Ostermann observed the work as a "good, honest piece of road...that will be as durable as it can be made" and was "firmly convinced that nothing Grand Island has done will give it so much, and so valuable advertising as this public improvement and evidence of interest in the national highway."<sup>26</sup> On November 3, 1915, Grand Island, Nebraska celebrated as it became the first city in the state to complete a Seedling Mile.<sup>27</sup> It was the second Seedling Mile to be constructed in the United States, the first being completed in Illinois in October of 1914.<sup>28</sup> Proud of the accomplishment, Ashton sent a telegram to the Lincoln Highway Association proclaiming "SEEDLING MILE AT GRAND ISLAND COMPLETED TODAY." In final tally, the total collected for the project was \$7,651.40 leaving a surplus of \$142.49.<sup>29</sup>

Two weeks after Grand Island's Seedling Mile was completed, one at Kearney was opened (not extant). Exceeding all others, both within Nebraska and nationally, the most remarkable 'mile' was the third to be built in Nebraska near Fremont (also not extant). It measured six miles.

### Significance - Criterion A

The Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska* defines the parameters to evaluate significance of properties associated with the highway.<sup>30</sup> As stated in the MPD, a roadway may be eligible under Criterion A as an example of a single event, a pattern of events or activities, the pioneering or advancement of road construction, transportation and travel patterns, development of the highway, or representative of highway-related travel or commerce.

The roadway represents a single event - the construction of Nebraska's first Seedling Mile - and a pattern of events - the Lincoln Highway Association's promotional scheme to demonstrate the value of improved roads. It was also an early "object lesson" in the use of concrete as a permanent, all-weather road surface.

<sup>21</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of meeting held April 27, 1915.

<sup>22</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of special meeting held July 31, 1915.

<sup>23</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of special meeting held August 14, 1915.

<sup>24</sup> *Grand Island Independent*, August 21, 1915.

<sup>25</sup> *Grand Island Independent*, August 31, 1915.

<sup>26</sup> *Grand Island Independent*, October 28, 1915.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. West Research, Inc., *Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Hall County, Nebraska* (July 1995), 47-48. Available at the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebr.

<sup>28</sup> *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway*, (Detroit, Michigan: The Lincoln Highway Association, 1915), 81.

<sup>29</sup> Hall County Board of Supervisors, proceedings of meeting held December 21, 1915.

<sup>30</sup> See MPD "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska."

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The Grand Island Seedling Mile can be considered as a significant component representative of the development of the Lincoln Highway/U.S. Route 30 within the state when evaluated at the statewide level of significance. This level of significance, however, should not preclude a consideration of national significance for this section of Seedling Mile. It is the only known intact example of such in the five states that received and built Seedling Miles. Also, a 2004 Lincoln Highway "Special Resources Study/Environmental Assessment" was conducted by the National Park Service under a Congressional directive (Public Law 106-563, Appendix A). The Grand Island Seedling Mile was identified in the study's reconnaissance survey (summer 2002) and considered as a resource falling under the parameters for national significance of the Lincoln Highway as a whole. Although the report was not conclusive, it is the first known study that sought to document the Lincoln Highway in a national context.

Roadways often represent more than one period of significance as the transition of highway development and improvements occurred. According to the Multiple Property Documentation form, the first period of significance relative to roadways on the Lincoln Highway is defined as 1913 through 1916 with the formal establishment of the highway and the early efforts of local governments, "good roads" advocates, and boosters affiliated with the Lincoln Highway Association. At the time, most of the highway consisted of dirt roads and trails.

Another period of significance begins in 1916 with the precedent-setting Federal-Aid Road Act, continues with the Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1921, and ends in the 1930s, when state and federal governments significantly led most initiatives for road construction. This period represents the most significant advancement of road construction until that time. Within this period of significance was the trend to improve dirt roads with concrete and gravel surfacing, address dangerous crossings and intersections, and reroute existing roads to make highways more direct.

The period of significance for the Grand Island Seedling Mile is 1915, the date of its construction and extends to c.1931 when the existing road was vacated in favor of a new alignment that was more direct. At that time, the original Seedling Mile became a local road.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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### Bibliography

Tom Anderson, "Hall County's Seedling Mile Holds Memories of Nation's First Transcontinental Highway," (Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, *Prairie Pioneer Press* 25, no. 10 (October, 1991).

Weingroff, Richard F., "The Lincoln Highway." Washington, D.C. Office of Infrastructure and Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, manuscript nd.

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TIB Automobile Route Book, 1918. Kansas City: TIB Automobile Route Book Company.

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U.S. West Research, Inc., *Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Hall County, Nebraska* (July 1995).

“Special Resource Study/Environmental Assessment,” National Park Service, Department of the Interior (May 2004).

Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska” (2007).

Archival Sources:

Hall County Board of Supervisors, Proceedings (various 1914-1915). Research courtesy of Pam Andersen, Grand Island, NE

Newspapers (various):

*Grand Island Independent*

*Columbus Telegram*

Research courtesy of Pam Andersen, Grand Island, NE.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

**Primary location of additional data:**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (Name of repository)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Nebraska Historic Resource Survey and Inventory (HLO6-696)

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than one USGS Quadrangle Grand Island Quadrangle

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

- |    |          |                  |           |                   |
|----|----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>40.930936</u> | Longitude | <u>-98.324067</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 3. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 4. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Seedling Mile Road at the Sharon Rose Subdivision, running from the corner of Willow Street and extending 315 feet east within a 66-foot right-of-way.

Legal: Beginning at the Northwest corner of the Northeast quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 15, Township 11, Range 9 West and extending east along a 66-foot right-of-way of the north line of Sections 15 and Section 10 for 315 feet.

Lincoln Highway – Grand Island Seedling Mile  
**Name of Property**

Hall County, Nebraska  
**County and State**

### Boundary Justification

Includes the beginning and end point of the nominated roadway within a standard 66-foot right-of-way. Includes the historically associated structure (the roadway).

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bob Puschendorf, Associate Director/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date 10/19/2012  
street & number 1500 R Street telephone (402) 471-4769  
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501  
email bob.puschendorf@nebraska.gov

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### Additional Documentation

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

#### Photo Log

Name of Property Lincoln Highway – Grand Island Seedling Mile  
City or Vicinity Grand Island County Hall State Nebraska  
Photographer Patrick Haynes Date Photographed 1-18-2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

Photo 1 of 4 (NE\_HallCounty\_LincolnHighwayGrandIslandSeedlingMile\_001)  
Grand Island Seedling Mile and Nebraska Historical Marker. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 2 of 4 (NE\_HallCounty\_LincolnHighwayGrandIslandSeedlingMile\_002)  
Grand Island Seedling Mile. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 3 of 4 (NE\_HallCounty\_LincolnHighwayGrandIslandSeedlingMile\_003)  
Grand Island Seedling Mile. Camera facing east.

Photo 4 of 4 (NE\_HallCounty\_LincolnHighwayGrandIslandSeedlingMile\_004)  
Grand Island Seedling Mile, detail.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Lincoln Highway – Grand Island Seedling Mile  
**Name of Property**

Hall County, Nebraska  
**County and State**



Photo 1 of 4



Photo 2 of 4

Lincoln Highway – Grand Island Seedling Mile  
**Name of Property**

Hall County, Nebraska  
**County and State**



Photo 3 of 4



Photo 4 of 4



**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Lincoln Highway – Grand Island Seedling Mile
----- Name of Property
Hall County, Nebraska
----- County and State
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

Page 2

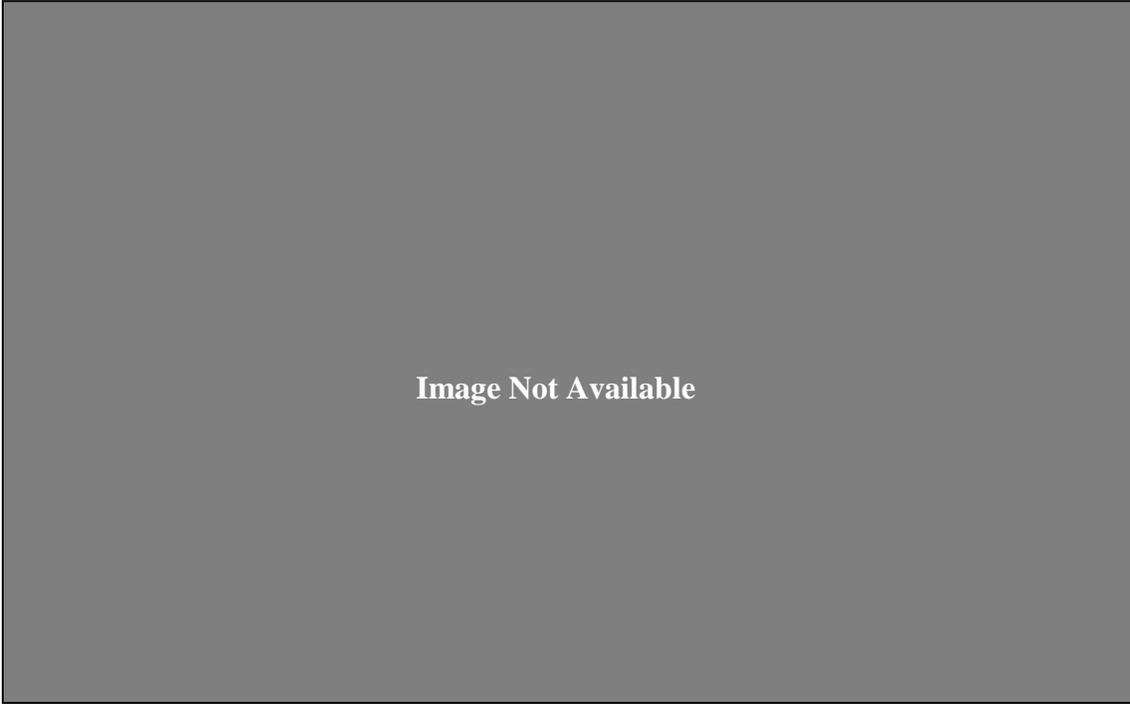


Figure 3: "First Arrival at Opening of Seedling Mile. Grand Island, Nebr. - Aug. 30, 1915." Used with permission from Lombard-Leschinsky Studio Collection: Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.