

Pike Creek Bridge – Another minor stream in the Cedar River bottoms was Pike Creek. Parts of this stream meandered roughly north to south through Orono Township. Bridges were readily approved over the Pike Creek in Section 10, where a bridge was needed to carry the Lord’s Ferry Road over the creek. Another, less important road located south in Section 16, just northeast of the town of Conesville, also needed to cross Pike Creek. Unlike the other Pike Creek crossing, which was an obstacle that an important county road needed to cross, the road that needed to cross Pike Creek in Section 16 was a local one, serving just a handful of property owners who lived between Pike Creek and the west bank of the Cedar River. These property owners would wait a long time for a bridge.

In 1881, the Board of Supervisors considered an appropriation for a bridge (or perhaps repairs to an existing bridge) in Section 16 of Orono Township. No appropriation was made.¹⁰⁴ In 1890, a group of Orono township citizens signed a petition asking the Board of Supervisors for a bridge across Pike Creek in Section 16. The matter was referred to Supervisor John Hooley.¹⁰⁵ In July 1891, Supervisor Hooley reported he had rebuilt the bridge over Pike Creek, suggesting there may have been an earlier structure at this location.¹⁰⁶ The bridge built was a timber stringer bridge that is still in use 133 years later, although a steel I-beam was added to strengthen the bridge at some point in the mid to late twentieth century.¹⁰⁷

The 20th Century: From Good Roads to Modern Roads

The development of the modern roads and highways of Muscatine County, state of Iowa, and the nation really began in the early 1900s “with the realization that railroads could not completely satisfy the needs of the public for efficient transportation, especially in the rural areas,” and pressure for better roads gradually increased.¹⁰⁸ In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the increasing use of automobiles as more than just toys of the wealthy and the need for interstate road travel, “pushed Iowa’s General Assembly to take tangible steps to pull Iowa “out of the mud,” signaling the state’s emergence into the twentieth century.¹⁰⁹

In 1904, the 30th General Assembly and Governor A.B. Cummins approved an act creating the Iowa State Highway Commission as part of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in Ames. The commission was charged with providing information and acting “as an administrative advisory agent to the local road jurisdictions,” i.e., county boards of supervisors and township trustees. Although at first it had little funding with which to carry out its duties, according the history of the Iowa Department of Transportation, “the commission was to conduct public highway demonstrations, disseminate information to county supervisors, formulate standards for highway repair and construction, investigate the road problems of Iowa, and record and report progress to the governor each fiscal year.”¹¹⁰ Perhaps most importantly for the development of “good roads,” the commission was to conduct:

extensive laboratory tests of properties of Iowa road materials, and to build sections of experimental roads, to give actual working tests of material and methods of construction suited to Iowa’s special needs.” Other initiatives included testing and designing concrete culverts and bridges, compiling and publishing road census information, and extending the effort to map county roads in Iowa.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴ *Muscatine Journal*, June 16, 1881.

¹⁰⁵ *Muscatine Weekly Journal*, April 11, 1890

¹⁰⁶ *Muscatine Journal*, July 31, 1891.

¹⁰⁷ Pike Creek Bridge is scheduled to be replaced in the very near future.

¹⁰⁸ Thompson, *Transportation in Iowa*, 82.

¹⁰⁹ Historic Auto Trails,” Iowa DOT website, 2023. No longer active webpage.

¹¹⁰ “Iowa DOT History,” Iowa DOT website.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*.



Figure 21. Left - Automobile on a typical dragged (“improved”) dirt road in Muscatine County, c.1908; Right - Motoring on the unpaved Muscatine-Montpelier Road, or River Road, east of Muscatine, 1910. Sources: Collection of Musser Public Library, Muscatine, Iowa

The commission split from Iowa State College and became an independent, three-member commission in 1913 with an adequate budget.¹¹² The impact of this newly independent State Highway Commission “was given supervisory control over all county and township road officials,” including those in Muscatine County, although the commission left county supervisors and township trustees directly in charge of road management and allotted funds.¹¹³

Muscatine County’s roads at the turn of the twentieth century had made little progress. Despite the construction of four wagon bridges carrying roads over the Cedar River, most of the county’s roads in the early 1900s were not much better than the stage routes of the 1830s. This situation posed more than just transportation difficulties; bad rural roads kept rural communities – most especially those not served by a railroad station or shipping point – socially and economically isolated. As historian Marlin Ingalls writes:

All of the roads in Iowa during the mid 19th century were in poor condition and could be called “seasonal” at best. Rural isolation was common. The roads statewide were essentially static in that nearly nothing was done on them in the form of improvements. County road tax work kept some main roads in a minimal working condition and the better the economy of the county the better its roads, but the deplorable overall condition of the roads was partly the reason for inception of the Good Roads Movement. The movement led directly to a change of thinking in the counties along the route. They began seeing the economic benefit of good transportation beyond the farm-to-market road and the automobile both provided the impetus and helped end rural isolation in Iowa.”¹¹⁴

From a road improvement standpoint, the King Road Drag was possibly the greatest invention ever. The King Road Drag – a split log drag to smooth dirt roads – was invented by D. Ward King, a farmer living near Maitland, Missouri, in the early 1900s. By 1905, his invention had attracted the attention of the newly formed Iowa State Highway Commission, and by 1906, it was introduced and used in every county in Iowa, including Muscatine County. The ease of construction and low cost (from \$1.50 to \$3.00) of the King Road Drag was the subject of demonstrations and lectures at the State Highway Commission’s Road School in Ames, and before farm and business organizations. The King Road Drag was soon and widely adopted by counties, townships, and farmers across Iowa.¹¹⁵ By 1910, the King Road Drag was the essential tool of the growing number of Good Roads organizations in their quest to improve and promote registered routes.

¹¹² “Iowa DOT History.”

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ingalls, *Iowa’s Historic Automobile Roads*, 159.

¹¹⁵ Thompson, *Transportation in Iowa*, 94-95.



Figure 22. Left - Diagram of the King Road Drag with instructions by the Iowa State Highway Commission, 1905; Right - the King Road Drag in use. Sources: Left - Iowa Highway Commission 1905; Right – Minnesota Historical Society/Stilgoe-National Humanities Center

The Good Roads Movement, beginning in the 1890s and early 1900s, was rooted in local grassroots organization, financing, boosterism, competition, and cooperation.¹¹⁶ These groups organized intra-city and county cooperative road improvements, designed special markings for telephone poles and other signage along their routes, and promoted special high-profile automobile tours along their respective routes. The Iowa State Highway Commission assisted the road associations with registration and organizational leadership.¹¹⁷ In 1913, the Iowa Highway Route Registration Act was passed for the registration of the names of highway routes with the State Highway Commission. This law provided local road organizations with a virtual state copyright on the names and blazes of their routes. No other individual or group could erect signs with the names or emblems of registered routes “without consent of the organization securing the copyright.”¹¹⁸ The first route to be registered with the State Highway Commission – the Great White Way (July 1, 1914), was not the first named route to be connected, improved, marked, and mapped across Iowa. The first was the Trans-Continental Route (1910), followed by the Lincoln Highway (1910), then the River-To-River Road (1910), the latter of which stretched from Davenport to Council Bluffs, going through Muscatine County on the old Davenport-Iowa City Road.¹¹⁹

As M. Huebinger, Iowa’s early automobile-era map-maker, saw in the progress of the “Good Roads Movement the essential cooperation between auto enthusiasts and farmers. Huebinger highlighted this auto-enthusiast-farmer collaboration, the King drag, and the early promise of registered routes to the goal of Good Roads in the introduction to his 1910 map and guidebook of the River-To-River Road:

These thoroughfares are extending to all parts of the United States and it is already certain that they are to form the basis of that comprehensive development of good roads which has been long desired for comfort and long demanded by economic requirements, but which, until the great automobile endurance tours came, did not seem possible of speedy attainment. The farmer had felt keenly for years his need of good highways; but, except in a very partial way, he did not realize much of his hopes in that direction until the auto enthusiast joined with him in efforts to reach a common end. In the case of Iowa’s River to River Road, the famous Glidden tour, scheduled to pass along its length if it could be made available, was the immediate occasion for the improvement of the highway. Committees of business and professional men and farmers in each county gladly and energetically assumed the responsibility and expense of preparation of a part of this road. The King drag was brought into action, fills were made where necessary, and, in so short a time that the achievement seemed little less than miraculous, an excellent highway in all weathers was prepared

¹¹⁶ Historic Auto Trails,” Iowa DOT website , 2023. No longer active webpage.

¹¹⁷ Historic Auto Trails”: “Many of the early road associations and organizers in Iowa achieved statewide and national prominence, and were recognized as a beacon for international developments in transportation. As far east as Russia, visitors came to study and learn from the experienced members of the Iowa Highway Commission (IHC), the board responsible for registering the auto routes and inspiring Iowan’s to individually promote change and progress. Iowa’s road association movement did not come without its logistical difficulties. Despite the tremendous efforts by the IHC to push into the public consciousness the need and value of registering automobile routes (to comply with the 1913 Iowa Highway Route Registration Act), many willing and able road associations were left with a sense of confusion. Many associations laboriously corresponded with the IHC to qualify for registration. At the same time, the road associations were working feverishly to get their routes placed on the national tourist maps. The goal was to become the traveler’s route of choice, which would then result in eventual improvement of the route and local revenue generation.”

¹¹⁸ *Muscatine Journal*, April 3, 1913.

¹¹⁹ State Highway Commission, *Report of the State Highway Commission for the Year Ending December 1, 1919* (Des Moines, IA: State of Iowa, 1919), 12; M. Huebinger, *Huebinger’s Map and Guide to the River-To-River Road* (Des Moines: Iowa Publishing Company, 1910).

the width of the Hawkeye state, a highway doubtless destined to such further improvement in the near future that it will become part of a great national pike on the way between Chicago and Denver.¹²⁰

Number	Name of Route	Date Registered
1	Great White Way.....	July 30, 1914
2	Green Crescent.....	July 30, 1914
3	Center Point Motor Club.....	Sept. 1, 1914
4	Red Ball Route.....	Jan. 2, 1915
5	King's Highway.....	June 28, 1915
6	Southwest Trails.....	June 28, 1915
7	Waubesaie Trail.....	April 3, 1916
8	Chariton & Leon Short Line.....	April 3, 1916
9	John D. Parmelee Trail.....	April 3, 1916
10	Capitol Highway.....	June 9, 1916
11	Red Line.....	June 9, 1916
12	Farmers Highway.....	June 9, 1916
13	Black Hawk Trail.....	Sept. 25, 1916
14	Jefferson Highway.....	Sept. 25, 1916
15	Hamlin Short Route.....	Sept. 25, 1916
16	Hawkeye Cut-Off.....	Sept. 25, 1916
17	Black Diamond Trail.....	Sept. 25, 1916
18	Lincoln Highway (Iowa Division).....	Dec. 2, 1916
19	Daniel Boone Trail.....	Dec. 22, 1916
20	Perry Pike.....	Dec. 22, 1916
21	Diamond Trail.....	Dec. 22, 1916
22	Red X Route.....	Dec. 22, 1916
23	Okoboji Trail.....	Mar. 23, 1917
24	Cedar Rapids, Ottumwa & McGregor Trail.....	Mar. 23, 1917
25	Tourist Trail.....	Mar. 23, 1917
26	Grand Line.....	Mar. 23, 1917
27	Washington Highway.....	Mar. 23, 1917
28	Lineville-Indianola Short Line.....	Mar. 23, 1917
29	Blue J Highway.....	Mar. 23, 1917
30	Hawkeye Highway.....	June 29, 1917
31	Star Route.....	Dec. 1, 1917
32	Burlington Way.....	Dec. 1, 1917
33	Iowa Blue Grass Route.....	Dec. 1, 1917
34	Denison-Sioux City Cut-Off.....	Dec. 1, 1917
35	Imperial Highway.....	Jan. 4, 1918
36	Lincoln Hawkeye Pike.....	Jan. 22, 1918
37	Muscatine-Des Moines Short Line.....	Mar. 18, 1918
38	River to River Route.....	April 16, 1918
39	Everett Powers Highway.....	July 20, 1918
40	Wilson Highway.....	Sept. 13, 1918
41	Woodward-Ogden Cut-Off.....	Dec. 4, 1918
42	Diagonal Trail.....	Dec. 4, 1918
43	Pershing Way.....	Aug. 14, 1919
44	Golden Red Hi-Way.....	Oct. 23, 1919
45	Rainbow Trail.....	Oct. 23, 1919
46	Custer Battlefield Highway.....	Dec. 23, 1919
47	M. C. Trail.....	Dec. 6, 1919

Figure 23. List of Iowa Highway Commission's Registered Routes as of 1919. Source: State Highway Commission, 1919:12

Overall, the Good Roads Movement was part cooperation and part competition. The road associations in towns along a shared route worked together to keep the registered route well dragged and marked. At the same time, towns competed to be placed on potential routes and each road association and automobile club vied with others to get their routes placed on the state and national tourist maps. The goal for each auto trail association was "to become the traveler's route of choice, which would then result in eventual improvement of the route and local revenue generation."¹²¹ As the Muscatine Journal wrote in advance of a high-profile auto-touring inspection trip of the I.O.A. Short Line in 1912:

The Good Roads movement which has swept over Iowa during the past year has resulted in the organization of a wonderful system of roads, and during the coming season much actual road work will be done. Every foot of the official roads have been measured up by the Iowa Publishing Company's engineers in preparation of their Official Good Roads Atlas and Guides to be issued soon.

In their official trips these engineering parties have created a great enthusiast for good roads and left a train of boosters in their wake. On every trip the farmers along the line have dragged the roads in advance of the car and much friendly rivalry has been aroused between competing routes and competing sections of the same route as to which shall present the best stretch of road to the inspection party. In the towns the enthusiasm has been equally as great, and the extension of hospitality has been a source of keen rivalry.¹²²

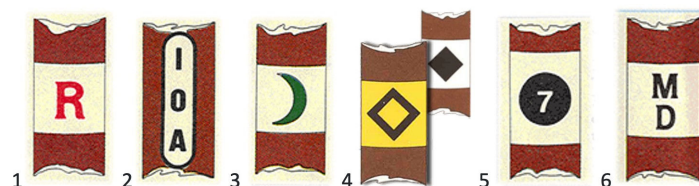


Figure 24. Muscatine County Registered Route Signs and Way Markings: 1) River-To-River Road; 2) I-O-A Short Line; 3) Green Crescent Route; 4) Diagonal Trail; 5) Whiteway-7-Highway; 6) Muscatine-Des Moines Short Line. Source: Historic Auto Trails, Iowa DOT Website (no longer active)

¹²⁰ Forward to Huebinger, *Huebinger's Guide to the River-to-River Road*.

¹²¹ "Historic Auto Trails," Iowa DOT website.

¹²² "Make Inspection of I. O. A. Short Line," *Muscatine Journal*, April 24, 1912.

The River-to-River Road began in 1909, a year of especially bad weather, when two Des Moines men decided to act on an avalanche of public complaints about Iowa's notoriously muddy roads.¹²³ A publicity writer, Lafayette Young, and a telegraph and Iowa news editor, J. W. Eichinger, decided to campaign for good roads using their promotional and writing talents and newspaper connections. They supported the River-to-River Road because it passed through Des Moines, where their newspaper was located. Soon, Young and Eichinger had captured the attention of M. Huebinger, the Iowa map-maker, who proceeded to map the new route. In 1910, *Huebinger's Map and Guide for River to River Road* was published. In the introduction to his River-to-River Road guide, Huebinger proclaimed, "Committees of businesses and professional men and farmers in each county gladly and energetically assumed the responsibility and expense of preparation of a part of this road. The King drag was brought into action, fills were made where necessary, and in so short a time that the achievement seemed little less than miraculous, an excellent highway in all weathers was prepared the width of the Hawkeye state " ¹²⁴

In Muscatine County, the River-To-River Road essentially followed the Rock Island Railroad main line through the northern tier of townships. In May 1910, the *Muscatine News Tribune* declared the River-to-River Road had "a fine route through Muscatine county. The section is thirty-three miles in length and passes through the towns of West Liberty, Atalissa, Moscow, Wilton, Durant and Walcott." A south branch was planned that would take travelers on the route from West Liberty to Muscatine and then east to the Scott County line along the Muscatine-Blue Grass Road. The newspaper said the Muscatine to West Liberty branch needs work, as "[m]uch of this portion is sand and this the Muscatine boosters plan to give a surface of clay to form a binder and make a hard surface."¹²⁵

"Huebinger's guide described the path of the River to River Road from Davenport to Council Bluffs, profiling every city, town, park, historic landmark, friendly person, and relevant gas station, and auto shop along the route." The guide started in Davenport, and from there, travels west through Walcott, Durant, and Wilton Junction, then on to Moscow and over the Moscow Wagon Bridge, then through Atalissa and West Liberty on its way to Iowa City, essentially following the old Davenport-Iowa City Road.¹²⁶ In 1911, the *Muscatine Journal* described the road as "probably the best known cross-state highway." "On a Sunday, during the motoring season, the dust is never allowed to settle along that speedway, for motoring parties or motorcyclists are seen speeding along at almost any time."¹²⁷ Although it was one of the earliest named routes of the Good Roads Movement, it was not officially registered until 1916.¹²⁸



Figure 25. The railroad-focused Commercial Hotel on Railroad Street in Wilton (nonextant) was the overnight lodging listed for auto tourists in Huebinger's *Map and Guide to the River to River Road*, 1910. Source: Full 2016

¹²³ River to River Road, "Historic Auto Trails," Iowa DOT website (no longer active).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ "The River-To-River Road Has a Fine Route Through Muscatine County," *Muscatine News Tribune*, May 3, 1910.

¹²⁶ River to River Road, "Historic Auto Trails," Iowa DOT website.

¹²⁷ "Automobiles Most Common Sight on Muscatine's Streets," *Muscatine Journal*, December 9, 1911.

¹²⁸ State Highway Commission, *Report of the State Highway Commission* (1919), 12.

Most of Muscatine County's northern towns benefitted from the River-to-River Road and subsequent registered routes that followed the same path (i.e., the Diagonal Trail; Detroit, Lincoln & Denver Highway; and Whiteway-7-Highway).¹²⁹ The River-to-River Road ran along the south border of the town of Atalissa. Huebinger found Atalissa – a town in early transition from horse-drawn to motor vehicles – not quite ready for a surge of motorists,. Its hotel was “not operating,” but “[b]oard and room can be had at private house, Mrs. Mary Davis.” The town had no service garage, but Theo Schwab, the town blacksmith, did auto repairs. Gasoline could be purchased at Wilson Lumber & Fuel Co.¹³⁰ In Wilton, the auto trail followed a less-than-straight course along 3rd, Cedar, 4th, Cypress, and 3rd streets.¹³¹ Motorists found more automobile tourist services in Wilton, which included, the Commercial Hotel (non-extant), three restaurants, and John Wacker's Filling Station and Garage (non-extant).¹³² West Liberty benefitted the most, with the auto trail routed north-south along Columbus Street to the old Davenport-Iowa City Road that bordered the northern edge of town.¹³³ Huebinger directed motorists to the railroad-focused Hise House and two nearby restaurants (non-extant) across from the railroad depot for food and accommodations, and to Ditmar, Kerrs & Co. (TR-WA-16) for gasoline and auto service. Over time, auto-oriented businesses (i.e., service stations, auto dealers, tourist camps, and motels) sprouted along and near Columbus Street and the Iowa City Road north of town. Likewise, in Wilton, 5th Street evolved into an early commercial strip catering to motorists passing through on the route with businesses offering food, gas, and lodging. The early auto routes through Wilton and West Liberty endured through the evolution of this roadway into a state highway and then federal highway.

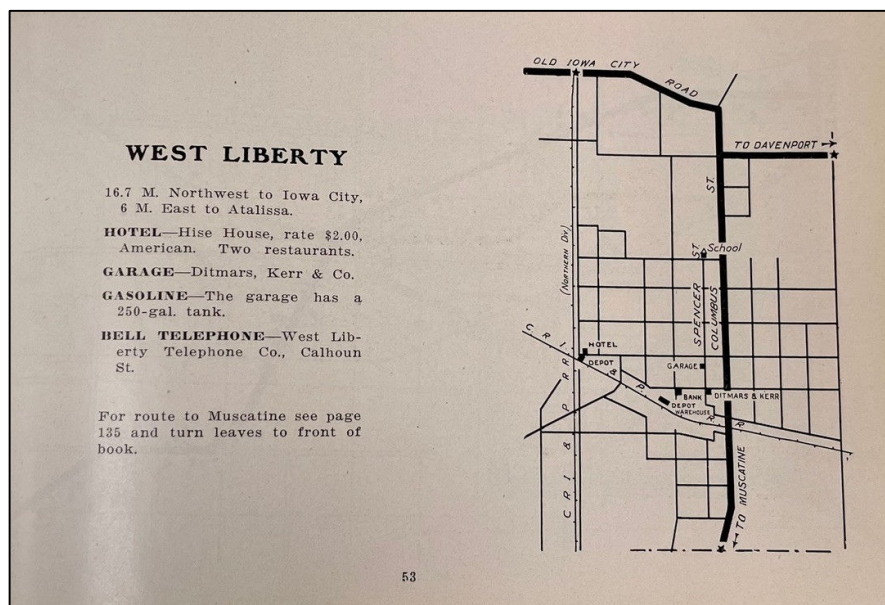


Figure 26. The River-to-River Road through West Liberty followed Columbus Street north to the “Old Iowa City Road.” In 1910, Ditmars, Kerr & Co. (TR-WA-16) was the only filling station and garage in town, and Hise House – a railroad passengers’ hotel – was the only hotel. Over time, auto-oriented business (i.e., service stations, auto dealers, tourist camps, and motels) sprouted along and near Columbus Street and the Iowa City Road north of town. Source: Huebinger 1910

Stockton, however, was bypassed in favor of Durant (just over the Cedar County line), and thus the River-to-River Road and its successors, US Highway 32 and US Highway 6, passed north of this declining railroad town.¹³⁴

Moscow benefitted initially from the Good Roads Movement, as it was located on the old Davenport-Iowa City Road and had a good wagon bridge (TR-MS-06) over the Cedar River built in 1885. Thus, the River-to-River Road was routed through Moscow, and followed River, Cedar, and Front streets. Before 1914, one block of Cedar Street

¹²⁹ Map of Iowa Registered Auto Routes, 1914-1925. Obtained at Iowa DOT Website at <https://iowadot.gov/maps/msp/pdf/historic.pdf> - 2024.

¹³⁰ Huebinger, *Huebinger's Guide to the River-to-River Road*, 51.

¹³¹ Jeff Morrison, Iowa 7, Iowa Highway Ends website at https://iowahighwayends.net/ends/1920ends/ia7_1920.html - 2024.

¹³² Huebinger, *Huebinger's Guide to the River-to-River Road*, 48.

¹³³ Huebinger, *Huebinger's Guide to the River-to-River Road*, 53.

¹³⁴ Rogers, *County Schools and Churches Survey*, 14-15; Huebinger, *Huebinger's Guide to the River-to-River Road*, 47: Huebinger marked a short road (Road “A”) leading south into Stockton, but the town was still bypassed the River-to-River Road's commercial benefits (i.e., filling stations, garages, hotels).

between River and Front streets, and a longer section of Cedar Street north of the railroad tracks were connected and part of the River-to-River Road heading out on 6th Street, but by 1914, the route stayed south of the railroad.¹³⁵ 1914 was also a “history-making year in highway construction in Iowa,” according to the *Muscatine Journal*, when a “half mile of concrete road was built this fall along the River-To-River Road near Moscow.”¹³⁶

The improvement which called for an expenditure of about \$5,000 converted a sandy waste of highway extending along the Cedar River bottom into a veritable boulevard. The application of concrete provided a magic touch which turned an almost impassable strip of arid sand hill into the finest half mile of highway on the entire cross state road. The Moscow road has a width of 18 feet and was first brought to permanent grade before the concrete top was spread. The cost of the improvement was \$1.10 per square yard, the total cost being \$4,925.20. E. L. Gochanaour was the contractor and succeeded in completing the improvement in the face of winter, Jack Frost hovering near as a menace during the several weeks required in the construction.¹³⁷

This concrete road segment is extant (TR-MS-07). The road beyond the wagon bridge, however, had too many bends, and in 1926 state and federal-aid road planners bypassed Moscow by the newly designated US Highway 32 and new Cedar River bridge south of town, leaving the town stranded.

Figure 27. Huebinger's Map Guide to the River to River Road, 1910, shows the incredible bends in the road on the west side of the Moscow Wagon Bridge, where the road rounds Risley's Lake and then navigates what the guide calls a "Bad Hill." Huebinger marks this section with a warning and advice: "DANGER: Care on winding road west of river. Use horn freely." This was the portion of the route to which federal highway engineers objected in 1919. Source: Huebinger 1910

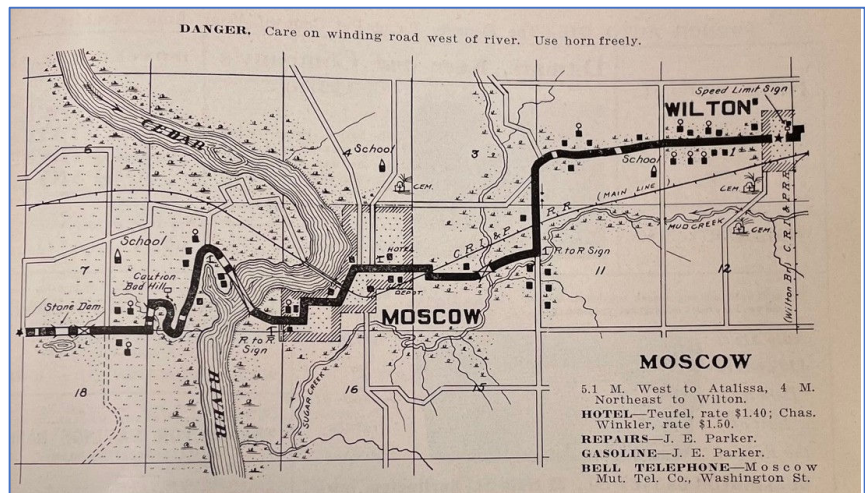


Figure 28. The concrete road segment (about four-tenths of a mile long) near Moscow along the River-To-River Road, was the first concrete-paved road in the county, and it is extant (TR-MS-07). Source: *Muscatine Journal*, December 12, 1914

¹³⁵ Jeff Morrison, Iowa 7, Iowa Highway Ends website.

¹³⁶ “First Concrete Country Road Built in Muscatine County During Year,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 12, 1914.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

In 1916, the Diagonal Trail was established between Davenport and Iowa City, and its route through Muscatine County in many places ran co-incident with the River-to-River Road.¹³⁸ The two road associations discussed with the county engineer about cooperating with labor and costs in oiling and maintaining the road through Muscatine County.

Because of the excellent condition of the road, there will be practically no expense for grading. The only costs will be for the material and labor necessary to apply the oil. This work, it is estimated, will cost about \$150 a mile.

The section of the River-to-River trail through this section of the country, runs along the same highway in many places, as the Diagonal trail between this city and Davenport, and an improvement on the one means improvement on the other.¹³⁹

In 1922, the Great White Way Highway merged with the rival River-to-River Road (just after the latter was designated State Highway No. 7) to form the new Whiteway-7-Highway.¹⁴⁰ In 1925, the Whiteway-7-Highway was designated one of Iowa's routes to be part of the National Gold Star Highway honoring World War I veterans.¹⁴¹ One year later, the road was federalized and designated US Highway No. 32. As the *Muscatine Journal* reported:

Primary road No. 7 will lose its Iowa number next month, to become federal highway No. 32, according to word received by President John Hynes of the Whiteway route. No. 7, one of the best marked and most popular east-west routes across Iowa, is getting more paving every year and increasing in popularity, Hynes declared. The change to a federal marked route will increase its popularity, it is thought. The road now has three names. Primary No. 7, the Whiteway, and the Gold Star Memorial highway. The latter two names will continue in use, but all official communications will refer to the road as U. S. highway No. 32. ¹⁴²

In December 1931, US Highway 32 became part of US Highway 6.¹⁴³

The I.O.A. Short Line, established in 1911, was billed in Muscatine as a rival to the River-to-River Road across Iowa. In reality, it was part of another promoted road connecting Davenport and Council Bluffs. The west half was the White Pole Road, running west Des Moines to Omaha, and the I.O.A. Short Line running east to Davenport, the two uniting in Oskaloosa.¹⁴⁴ The name of the road – I, O, and A – was not an acronym; instead the letters when spoken sound like the name of the state.¹⁴⁵ In 1914, the Great White Way Association became the first to register its route with the State Highway Commission, and this road piggybacked on the I.O.A. Short Line route through Muscatine County.

In Muscatine County, the I.O.A. Short Line extended from Muscatine east-northeast on the “upper river road” (old Telegraph Road) through Pleasant Prairie to Blue Grass (Scott County) and Davenport, and extended from Muscatine southwest through Fruitland to Columbus Junction (Louisa County) and then turned west to Oskaloosa. “The Little Glidden tour,” one of the many highly publicized auto tours across the state during the 1910s, “covered a section of [the I.O.A. Short Line] and it was one of the best stretches on the entire trip.”¹⁴⁶ The I.O.A. Short Line Association sponsored the I.O.A. Short Line route, and it was being dragged, marked, and publicized by 1911, as reported by the *Muscatine Journal*:

D. P. McClure of Oskaloosa, W. M. Keeley of Washington, R. N. Smith of Washington and E. I. Ferrier of Des Moines attended a conference at the Commercial Club rooms this afternoon which was also attended by Dr. F. H. Little,

¹³⁸ “No Action Yet on Oiled Road,” *Muscatine Journal*, August 10, 1916.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Registered Routes, “Historic Auto Trails,” Iowa DOT website (no longer active).

¹⁴¹ “Road Markers to Honor Dead: Whiteway No. 7 and Jefferson Highway Designated,” *Muscatine Journal*, September 29, 1925. These two highways, one east-west, the other north-south, were to be lined with markers with the names of Iowans who died in World War I.

¹⁴² “Road No. 7 to Get New Number,” *Muscatine Journal*, July 22, 1926.

¹⁴³ Registered Routes, “Historic Auto Trails,” Iowa DOT website.

¹⁴⁴ “New Cross State Route, Rival to River-to-River Road, Is Planned,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 14, 1912.

¹⁴⁵ Registered Routes, “Historic Auto Trails,” Iowa DOT website.

¹⁴⁶ *Muscatine Journal*, December 14, 1912.

chairman of the Good Roads Committee of the club, and F. D. Throop, vice president for Muscatine county in the I-O-A Short Line Association. The visitors are prominent figures in the I-O-A Short Line project and came here to confer with the local men, regarding the line which extends through Muscatine county to Davenport.

With the exception of that part of the road extending through Louisa and Muscatine counties as well as into Scott county as far as Davenport the route has been marked, the mark which designates the proper road being a red and white stripe up and down the telephone poles extending along the route.

The I-O-A Line promises to be the finest cross state road and is also the shortest, and it is expected that with the coming year travel over that line will be greatly increased. It is the Intention of the association to keep every foot of the road in tip top shape at all seasons, and then by judicious advertising make it the popularly traveled cross state highway.

The road extends from Columbus Junction to Muscatine and then continues northeast along the upper river road to Davenport.¹⁴⁷

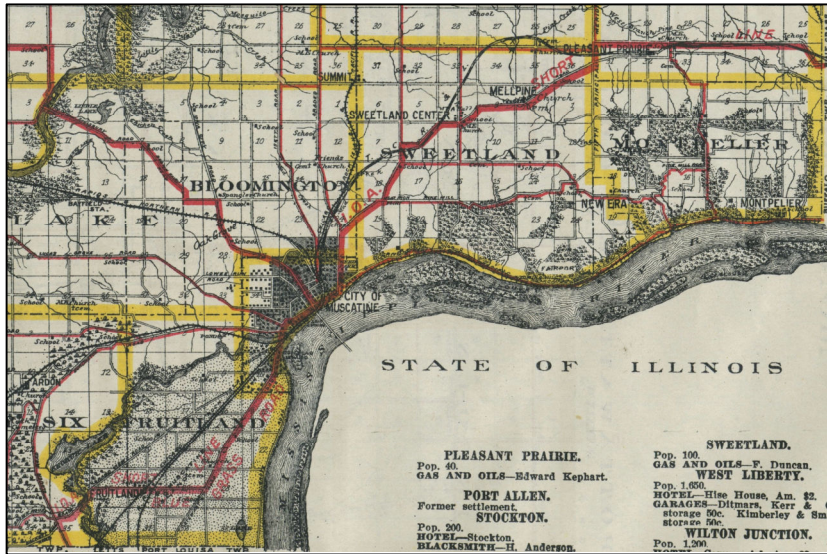


Figure 29. The I.O.A. Short Line entered Muscatine County in section 35 of Seventy-Six Township, following the same route as the Blue Grass Road into Muscatine. From Muscatine to Davenport, the I.O.A. Short Line followed the “Upper River Road,” or Muscatine-Blue Grass Road to the Scott County line. The Great White Way shared this route through Muscatine County. Source: Huebinger 1912

The I.O.A. Short Line was not officially registered with the State Highway Commission until 1924. Two years later, the segment from Muscatine to Blue Grass was designated Iowa Highway 22.¹⁴⁸ The I.O.A. Short Line shared its alignment through Muscatine County with other registered routes, including the Great White Way (the first registered route in 1914) and the Southwest Trails route.

The Great White Way, or White Pole Road, began in 1910 “as a marked promotional road between Des Moines and Atlantic.” The route markers were telephone and other poles painted with a six foot band of white. In 1910, the Great White Way extended west to Council Bluffs, and in the fall of 1912, extended east from Des Moines to Davenport. The White Pole Auto Club planned to eventually extend the route from Chicago to Denver.¹⁴⁹ In 1914, the Great White Way became the first route registered by the State Highway Commission.¹⁵⁰ The main competition of the Great White Way was the River-To-River Road and the Lincoln Highway. In Muscatine County, this route piggybacked on the I.O.A. Short Line from the east county line through Pleasant Prairie, Melpine, Sweetland Center, Muscatine, and Fruitland Township before heading southwest into Louisa County.

The Blue Grass Road was one of the first early automobile era routes mapped by Huebinger in 1912, providing an alternative cross-state highway – Burlington to Council Bluffs – to the River-to-River Road. The only section of the Blue Grass Road that extended into Muscatine County was the north diagonal section of the Muscatine Branch

¹⁴⁷ “I-O-A Short Line Men Visit City,” *Muscatine Journal*, November 21, 1911.

¹⁴⁸ Registered Routes, “Historic Auto Trails,” Iowa DOT website; Hancock, Iowa 22, Iowa Highways Page website.

¹⁴⁹ Liz Gilman, “Iowa’s Great White Way,” 7/14/2014, Transportation Matters for Iowa, Iowa DOT website at <https://www.transportationmatters.iowadot.gov/2014/07/iowas-great-white-way.html> - 2024.

¹⁵⁰ State Highway Commission, *Report of the State Highway Commission* (1919), 12.

that ran southwest from Muscatine to Columbus Junction and jogged southwestwards to New London. By 1923 the Muscatine Branch of the Blue Grass Road shared some of its alignment with other registered roads, such as the Great White Way, I.O.A. Short Line, and the Southwest Trails route. This road was abandoned as a registered route in 1927.¹⁵¹

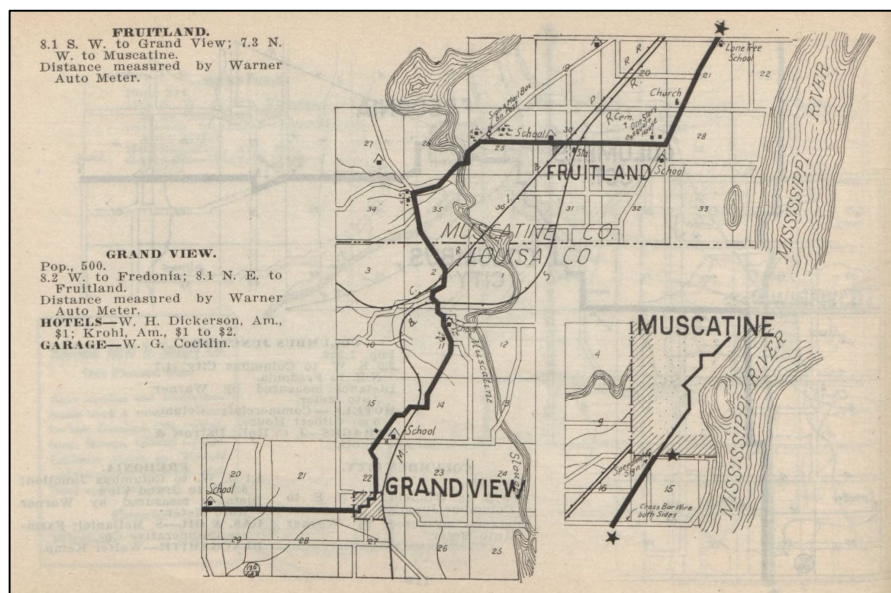


Figure 30. The map of the Muscatine Branch of the Blue Grass Road shows the road crossing tracks of both the Rock Island Southwestern Division and the Muscatine North & South Railroad in Louisa County, before entering Muscatine County in Section 35 of Seventy-Six Township, crossing Muscatine Slough in Section 26, then turning east to pass through Fruitland Township and the railroad town of Fruitland, then turning northeast to enter Muscatine. Source: Huebinger's Guide to the Blue Grass Route, 1912

The Green Crescent Route, registered in 1914, connected Muscatine with Cedar Rapids. In Muscatine County, it followed the Muscatine-West Liberty Road. West Branch organized its first auto club, in part to boost the new Green Crescent route:

West Branch automobilists have organized an auto club and will elect officers tonight. A membership of 35 is anticipated. Already 19 belong. . . The club is fostering a pair of new roads-the "Lincoln Cutoff," . . . and the Green Crescent route, linking West Branch, West Liberty, Muscatine, Oasis, Morse, Solon, Ely and Cedar Rapids. The village claims a record for towns of its size. There are more than 50 automobiles owned there approximately one for every 14 citizens.¹⁵²

In October 1914, the West Liberty Auto Club "celebrated Pole Painting Day, when practically all the roads leading to this town will be appropriately marked. . . to make it impossible for any traveler to lose his way in this vicinity."¹⁵³ The Green Crescent was to form a link with the Burlington Way that went through Conesville in the extreme southwest Muscatine County and was part of the St. Louis-St. Paul route (i.e., the Red Ball Route).¹⁵⁴

The Muscatine-Des Moines Short Line was registered with the State Highway Commission in 1917. 154 miles in length, it connected – as it name said – Muscatine and Des Moines.¹⁵⁵ The route followed the old Muscatine Western Railroad (1872) line (and the Muscatine-Nichols Road) from Muscatine through Nichols to Lone Tree in Johnson County.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Ingalls, *Iowa's Historic Automobile Roads*, 160; Map of Iowa Registered Auto Routes, 1914-1925.

¹⁵² "Iowa Autoists Wide Awake," *Davenport Daily Times*, September 22, 1914.

¹⁵³ "Auto Club to Mark West Liberty Roads," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, October 20, 1914.

¹⁵⁴ "Iowa Autoists Wide Awake," *Davenport Daily Times*, September 22, 1914.

¹⁵⁵ Muscatine-Des Moines Short Line, "Historic Auto Trails," Iowa DOT website (no longer active).

¹⁵⁶ "Promote Shortline to the Capital City," *Muscatine Journal*, August 28, 1914; "Muscatine is Terminal for Great Highway," *Muscatine News-Tribune*, November 9, 1917.

The proposed route is that taken by the Muscatine Western from Muscatine westerly to Thornburg and the boosters of the new route claim that the distance es from Muscatine to Des Moines is shortened by 20 miles via the new route which is the most direct from the river to the capital city.¹⁵⁷

A.E. Nissen, Secretary of the Iowa State Auto Association, was a “hearty booster” of the new route, and believed the road was “in excellent shape.” The new route was located between the River-to-River Road and the Great White Way, thus enthusiasts believed it was “sure to attract cross state travel because of the reduction of the mileage.”¹⁵⁸ This route would form the basis of State Highway 22.

The Burlington Way, like so many others, had been established prior to being registered with the State Highway Commission in 1917. It connected Burlington with Cresco (Howard County) and was part of the St. Louis – St. Paul Route. The route passed through Muscatine County in Orono Township from the Louisa County line to the south corporate line of Conesville before turning west out of the county. This road was added to the county road system in 1917, announced by the County Auditor, “to complete a part of the new State Road known as the Burlington Way.”¹⁵⁹ This road had been in use for a while at the time of its registration, since motorists could stop for lunch at the Burlington Way Cafe in 1917.¹⁶⁰ Part of this route would become State Highway 76 (70).

The Mississippi River Scenic Highway in Iowa, was organized May 8, 1916, at Clinton, Iowa, as the East Iowa Scenic Route Association, and the group began organizing all counties along Mississippi River, from Allamakee to Lee. The intention behind the creation of this route was “the belief that some of the most beautiful scenery and the best roads were not being appreciated along the Mississippi.”¹⁶¹ In 1916 A.E. Nissen, manager of the Burlington Way, appointed G.R. Titus of Muscatine as chairman of the Eastern Iowa Scenic Route Association for Muscatine County.¹⁶² The route was “recognized as part of the Lincoln Highway,” and would appear on maps of that transcontinental route.¹⁶³ As the *Muscatine News Tribune* described it:

The Eastern Iowa Scenic route is the Iowa division of the Mississippi river scenic highway, a part of the Lincoln highway, or rather one of the main scenic trails which are traveled so much by tourists enroute across the continent. The highway, is now being featured on maps published by the Lincoln Highway association. The markings are a fourteen inch white band around the telephone poles flanked by two blue bands at top and bottom with a two-inch vertical bar on each side of the pole. In counties that have not painted poles temporary signs will be erected and Mr. Nissen is making arrangements today to have this done by the Iowa posting service.¹⁶⁴

The Mississippi River Scenic Highway extended from St. Paul to St. Louis, “making all the principle river towns,” including Muscatine, “and never leaving the river more than a few miles.” James L. Giesler was appointed chairman for the scenic highway through Muscatine County, “and Fred Mucbele of Fairport and William Lowry of Montpelier were enlisted to take care of the road in the immediate vicinity of their towns.”¹⁶⁵ In 1919, a fight ensued over a plan to rename the route the “Yankee Doodle Trail,” a Minnesota plan the Muscatine delegates (as well as Burlington, Quincy, and other Iowa and Illinois river towns) campaigned against at a meeting in Quincy, even wearing ribbons inscribed “The Mississippi River Scenic Highway—We’re for It.”¹⁶⁶ The route name was not changed. In 1921, two and one-half miles of this route near Montpelier were straightened and placed north of the River Railroad tracks, eliminating 8 grade crossings.¹⁶⁷ By 1923 and 1924, the Mississippi River Scenic Highway was

¹⁵⁷ “Promote Shortline to the Capital City,” *Muscatine Journal*, August 28, 1914.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ “Notice of Road Hearing,” *Muscatine Journal*, June 18, 1917.

¹⁶⁰ *Muscatine News-Tribune*, January 12, 1917.

¹⁶¹ “Development of Scenic Road to be More Rapid,” *Muscatine News Tribune*, September 8, 1916.

¹⁶² “Titus Appointed Muscatine Head of Scenic Route,” *Muscatine News Tribune*, August 9, 1916.

¹⁶³ “Scenic Route Being Marked – ‘East Iowa Scenic Route’ Newest State Highway,” *Muscatine Journal*, August 9, 1916.

¹⁶⁴ *Muscatine News Tribune*, August 9, 1916.

¹⁶⁵ *Muscatine Journal*, August 9, 1916.

¹⁶⁶ “Make Campaign Against Change,” *Muscatine Journal*, March 12, 1919.

¹⁶⁷ “75 Years Ago,” *Muscatine Journal*, August 23, 1996.

receiving high praise from motoring magazines of the day, including *Western* and *Motor Camper and Tourist*.¹⁶⁸ Beginning in the 1950s, a movement began to develop this scenic road into a Mississippi River Scenic Parkway, known today as the Great River Road National Scenic Byway.¹⁶⁹

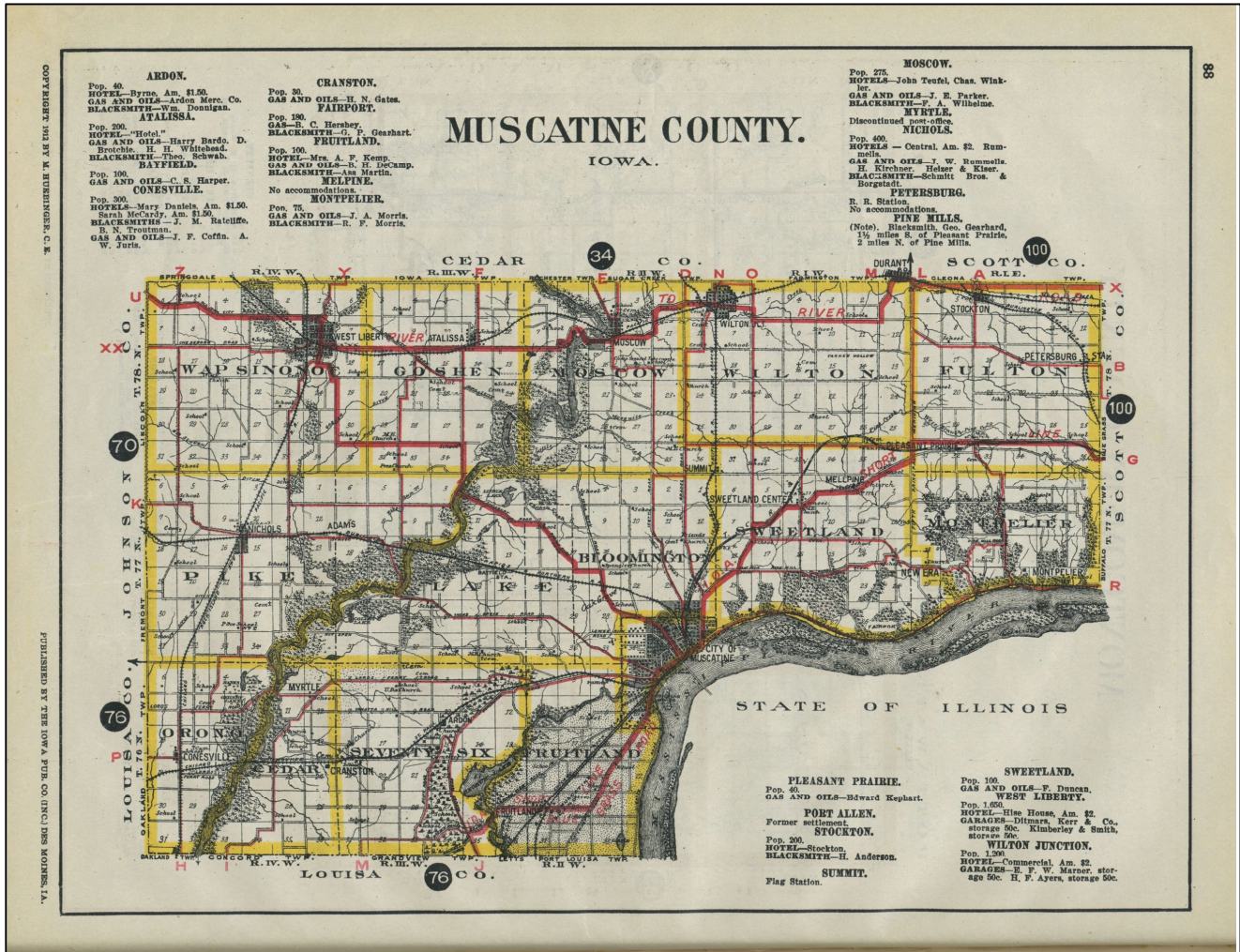


Figure 31. Map of the Registered Routes and Primary County Roads of Muscatine County, 1912. Highlighted registered routes included the River-to-River Road, the I.O.A. Short Line, and the Blue Grass Road. Primary county roads were also highlighted in red. The map also provides those driving horse-drawn vehicles and automobiles a list of roadside services (i.e. filling stations and garages, blacksmiths, and hotels) in each town, a snapshot of transportation in transition. Source: Huebinger Map Co, 1912

The Good Roads Movement and its 64 Registered Routes eventually gave way to county, state, and federal government oversight and standardization.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ "Magazine Received Here Lauds 'MRSH' Scenery On Route," *Muscatine Journal*, June 19, 1923; "Muscatine Receives Some Publicity," *Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, December 9, 1924.

¹⁶⁹ "First Section of Scenic Highway to be Dedicated," *Muscatine Journal*, July 15, 1952; "Recalls Early Days of Promoting Scenic Highway in Eastern Iowa," *Muscatine Journal*, November 14, 1960; Great River Road Scenic Byway, Travel Iowa website at <https://www.traveliowa.com/trails/great-river-road-national-scenic-byway/34/> - 2024.

¹⁷⁰ "Historic Auto Trails," Iowa DOT website: "In the years they existed, the early road associations faced many challenges including the struggle to gain recognition, financial insecurities and internal strife."

County Roads During the Good Roads Era, 1913-1930

Before 1913, Muscatine County's 745 miles of roads "were nearly all ungraded, natural soil, wagon roads." Automobile owners were few and mostly confined to cities, only taking to roads in the hot dry summers, but always fearful of rain.¹⁷¹ As longtime county engineer P.F.G. Halbfass recounted:

Nearly all the highway trails of that day consisted of two deep tracks worn into the sodden ground by steel tired wagons and horses feet. These ruts dodged from side to side of the right-of-way to dodge trees and stumps, water and sand pockets, protruding banks, and springs. Cars were built with high wheels so they could more easily straddle the high sodden centers between the winding rutted trails.¹⁷²



Figure 32. Typical condition of an unimproved road in 1928. Source: IHC Photographs Collection, Iowa DOT Historic Archives

All work done on rural roads at that time was done under the supervision of the 14 boards of township trustees. These boards "levied direct property taxes and used poll tax labor for they considered the summer needs of the roads in their individual township."¹⁷³ The Muscatine County Board of Supervisors was financially responsible for all bridge work in the county. To be considered a bridge, the structure had to have a 16-foot span. Such bridges were often constructed on township roads "where small culverts and earth fills were sufficient and cheaper, this in order to throw the financial responsibility on the county as a whole."¹⁷⁴

In 1913, the Iowa legislature enacted the 1913 road law.¹⁷⁵ This law not only created the independent State Highway Commission, it also "created the office of county engineer and made it mandatory upon the board of supervisors to employ technical help in carrying out road and bridge improvements." The law also mandated that the board of supervisors select "a county trunk road system," that equaled about 20 percent of the county's total roads, "and to begin its development by building according to a planned program under engineering

¹⁷¹ P.F.G. Halbfass, "Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System," *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

¹⁷² Halbfass, "Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System," *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.: "Charles Kincaid and Charles Winn were well known county bridge builders in those days."

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.: "It was called the Brockway-Balkema road law, the term Brockway having reference to our own Jim Brockway of Muscatine county, who was a state representative at that time from Louisa county."

supervision.”¹⁷⁶ The first layout of the county trunk road system “connected all the towns in the county and connected with roads at county lines leading to towns in adjoining counties.”¹⁷⁷

The first county engineer was J.J. Ryan, who served from 1914 to 1915. Ryan began replacing “flimsy and narrow wooden culverts” with concrete, “strengthening shaky bridges,” and “ditching the new county trunk road system.” In 1915, P.F.G. Halbfass, former employee with the Muscatine city engineer, became county engineer and held that position until his death in 1944.¹⁷⁸ Halbfass continued the concrete culvert era, building 100 by 1921. He oversaw the first gravel surfacing road project in 1915 and 1916. “Two and three-quarters miles from Muscatine to Funck hill on the Cone road were graveled by hand labor and teams,” with “farmers along the road” donating “their time as teamsters.” Also in 1916, Halbfass completed the first survey, planning, and grading of a continuous stretch of road – eight miles of the Nichols Road from Muscatine to the Cedar River.¹⁷⁹ The following year, Halbfass turned his attention to a six mile stretch from Muscatine on the West Liberty Road that included grading the very steep Boland Hill.¹⁸⁰



Figure 33. Typical Muscatine County primary road with oiled surface, location unknown, c.1920. Source: IHC Photographs Collection, Iowa DOT Historic Archives

From 1915 to 1919, Halbfass oversaw an “oil boom” on Muscatine County roads. It began near Wilton, where the town merchants and area farmers “donated teams, labor, and a city water sprinkler,” and the county furnished the oil. Three and one-half miles of the eight-foot-wide roadway on the River-To-River Road were oiled. The “Oil Boom” spread to West Liberty, Nichols, and the Nichols Road from Muscatine until the county had 12 miles of oiled dirt roads. Unfortunately, heavy traffic ruined oiled roads, making them dusty and the surface chunky and unrepairable. Oiled roads were replaced by gravel roads.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ “Surfaced Roads Supplant Old Trails,” *Muscatine Journal*, May 31, 1920.

¹⁷⁷ Halbfass, “Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

¹⁷⁸ *Muscatine Journal*, September 1, 1944.

¹⁷⁹ Halbfass, “Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939: “Two miles of this first attempt at road building were contracted to Elmer Gochenour and six miles to Ryan & Fuller. John Baker, a farmer residing along the highway, pronounced it an unbelievable accomplishment and state to me that he had never expected to see the day that such a wonderful dirt road would trespass the rural areas in Muscatine county.”

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

From 1915 on, Halbfass and the county supervisors began noticing the toll that automobiles were taking on the county's wagon bridges. Not only were most of the county's bridges built in the last century without the benefit of the State Highway Commission's engineering expertise, most of these bridges had been built when the "principal travel was by horses and wagons." Bridges and roads intended for horse-drawn wagons and other vehicles were "totally unfitted for the swift heavy impact of the automobiles."¹⁸² After less than a decade of automobile travel, roads had been "literally cut to ribbons," and the wooden floors of bridges were torn to pieces, making them "dangerous to horses and even automobiles."¹⁸³ The county was replacing these old wagon truss bridges with temporary culverts as quickly as funds became available.¹⁸⁴

In 1917, the county engineer reported, "each of the five bridges spanning the Cedar river in Muscatine county will have witnessed reflooring in a year period when the improvement on the Tice Bridge is completed. . . Standard methods of bettering traffic conditions on these structures have been employed, with the result that all will be prepared to meet the traffic requirements when the Tice bridge is again floored, the engineer asserts. The other bridges on which this improvement has been made in recent years are, the Simpson, Moscow, McKeown and Salisbury structures."¹⁸⁵

The State Primary Road System, 1919-1940s

In 1919, Iowa adopted the Primary Road System (or State Highway System), placing certain roads under direct control of the State Highway Commission. At the time of this change, as County Engineer Halbfass explained, just 2.39 miles of the county's new primary roads were surfaced; "5.47 miles were what was then considered to be a permanent grade; and 73.89 miles were dirt."¹⁸⁶ "The remaining county trunk roads had 26.70 miles permanently graded and 2.02 miles graveled. The balance of 44.83 was ungraded earth; total, 73.55 miles. The remaining roads were all township roads, neither permanently graded, nor surfaced."¹⁸⁷

The "permanent improvement" of roads in the early 1920s involved grading and surfacing roads with gravel or a mixture of clay and gravel, but no concrete or other hard surface.¹⁸⁸ Iowans, especially rural residents, remained resistant to road paving. As historians Leah D. Rogers and Claire L. Kernick explain in *The Seedling Mile* (2004): "Even when the state was shamed by the national press by the poor condition of her roads, the Iowa legislature was slow to act. By 1922, the entire state had only 334 miles of paved road, translating into only 5% of the total road mileage." Across Iowa, "negative rural sentiment carried the day and the roads stayed dirt" until the unequal property-tax structure that placed a greater burden on the farmer "and created a general dislike for the notion of expensive, high-type roads" was finally relieved by federal funding and amending state law.¹⁸⁹

In Muscatine County, the Muscatine County Anti-Hard Roads Association campaigned against paving the county's new Primary Road system, taking out full-page ads in the newspaper, and organizing parades and marches. Their reasons for opposing paved roads centered mainly on the possibility of higher taxes, but the group also noted that cars and motorcycles traveled at higher speeds on pavement, causing more accidents, more congestion, and the

¹⁸² "How Muscatine County is Pulling Herself Out of the Mud by Standard Road Work," *Muscatine Journal*, December 10, 1915.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ "Entire Road System to Witness Improvements," *Muscatine Journal*, January 5, 1917; By 1939, longtime county engineer F.P.G. Halbfass forecasted the need to replace four Cedar River bridges within the next 25 years. These included the McKeown Bridge, the Simpson Bridge, Tice Bridge, and Moscow Bridge. See F.P.G. Halbfass, "Looking Ahead—Prospectus for Future Outlined," *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

¹⁸⁶ Halbfass, "Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System," *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ "Big Road Job is Before County," *Muscatine Journal*, September 6, 1921.

¹⁸⁹ Leah D. Rogers and Clare L. Kernick, *The Lincoln Highway Association's "Object Lesson:" The Seedling Mile in Linn County, Iowa*. Sponsored by an agreement between Linn County, Iowa, the Iowa Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the State Historical Society of Iowa. (Iowa City, IA: Technographics, 2004), 4: Through "seedling miles," like the River-To-River Road concrete section in Moscow, the State Highway Commission "sought to graphically demonstrate, in the paving of selected one-mile demonstration sections, the benefits of concrete paving to improving road travel across the nation."

need for more patrol officers.¹⁹⁰ Muscatine County would have no concrete paved roads within its borders until 1929, when US Highway 61 was paved from Muscatine to the east county line.

MUSCATINE JOURNAL AND NEWS-TRIBUNE, THURSDAY, MAY 29

PLEASE CALL AND SETTLE

See What You Buy!
If you vote for paved roads next Monday, you will enter the State Highway Commission to take \$1,250,000, plus a 12 1/2% direct assessment on the farms near the paved roads, plus interest until the bonds are paid—a grand total of almost \$2,000,000! And for that road you do not know what kind of paving you are going to get, nor do you know exactly how much paving you will get.
Even if you favor paved roads, vote NO in this election, and insist that the Board of Supervisors map out a definite paving district, with exact specifications as to the kind of paving, and have definite bids submitted. Know exactly what you're going to get and exactly what it's going to cost before you give somebody all that money to spend.

Let's Be Fair!
The proposed paving will cover only about 45 miles of road. There are about 500 miles of road in this county. 11 1/2% of our roads can't be improved at all, and we'll be burdened so heavily that the state will not permit us to issue any more bonds for any purpose whatever. 11 1/2% of our roads will have to stay unpaved for years to come until the taxes have reduced our debt. Only a very few people will benefit. Every farmer who lives west and southwest of Muscatine will be taxed, but he won't have any better roads than he now has. The Muscatine man's favorite drives will still be "road" roads. Is it fair? Vote NO!

You can't get something for nothing in this world. When you buy you must pay. Vote for hard roads, and you'll have to pay for them. You can't "beat" your tax bill! No excuses go to the County Treasurer's office. Every man, woman and child in Muscatine County will be forced to help pay for the paved roads if the proposal carries at the polls next Monday.

Taxes Will Go Up!

Public disbursements are made out of tax money collected. Increase your disbursements and you must increase your taxes to meet them.

Taxes Must Be Levied to Raise Nearly \$2,000,000--The Cost of the Paving Plus Interest On the Bonds
That isn't all! The paved roads will have to be kept in perfect repair. A paved road is worse than none unless it is in perfect condition. Maintenance costs money. Again! About 40 miles of Muscatine County's Primary Roads are not included in the paving program. But they have to be kept in repair just the same. That costs money.

The Primary Road Fund Will Be Needed For Maintenance Bonds and Interest Must Be Paid By High Taxes
And don't forget these possibilities! The Federal Aid Fund ceases to exist after 1926 unless Congress renews it. Congress has been cutting expenses wherever possible to meet the urgent need for economy. It is quite probable that there will be no Federal Aid after 1926! Neighboring states have an auto license much lower than Iowa's. Every session of the legislature witnesses a movement for lower auto license in Iowa. It's bound to come! That would make our Primary Road fund wholly inadequate and we would face

Higher Taxes To Meet the Loss From Present Federal Aid and Automobile License Funds

Here's Another Dangerous Possibility!

In some counties the income from tax was not sufficient to meet payments on principal and interest on their bonds and so the Board of Supervisors funded their county bonds. Suppose that were done with us! It would then be possible to compel us to pay even a higher rate of interest than the present paving proposal contemplates. Don't take a chance! We might have

A Tax of 8 or 10 mills, instead of 5 mills, staring us in the face! We'd have to Settle!

Paved Roads Raise Taxes in Other Ways, Too!

Read the papers! Story after story of fast driving on paved roads! Night after night of wild parties at secluded resorts on paved roads! Instantaneous evasion of city ordinances by criminals who flee in high-powered cars over paved roads! Scott County folks say that congestion on their paved roads on Sundays, holidays, and pleasant evenings is so great that accidents are numerous and driving anything but pleasant.

Expensive Patrolling is Necessary On Paved Roads. Please Call and Settle For That, Too!
It would require at least four or five officers in cars or on motorcycles to patrol the 45 miles of proposed paved roads. Their salaries plus the cost and maintenance of their cars would cost, probably, \$25,000 a year. You'll be taxed for that, too!

Can You Afford More Taxes Now?

Frankly, the farmers of this county, with their \$11,100,000 of mortgages and the low prices of their products, don't feel that they can afford a single dollar of added expense. Business men, with bad business conditions due to lowered buying power of the people, don't feel that they can pay out more for taxes. Manufacturer's can't pay the laboring man high wages for full time work, because people aren't consuming more of the manufacturer's products. It's no time to raise taxes!

Let's Vote No! Let's Not Have to Call and Settle at the Treasurer's Office! Taxes Are High Enough!

Big Parade Saturday
Muscatine County farmers will hold a parade Saturday afternoon at 2:00. They will march from Second and Pine east on Second Street to Wood Park for a "get-together" meeting. There will be decorated cars, floats, bands, and banners setting forth the farmer's side of the paved road question. It will be worth seeing. Come!

Vote No Next Monday
Even if you think you can afford to increase your own expenses, remember the thousands of folks who are trying to keep their heads above water in these trying times. Don't load them up with more debts! Let's get the whole community—farmers and city folks—together on a program of rigid economy in public affairs in order to make the whole community more prosperous. Vote NO on higher taxes now!

See Our Announcement Tomorrow Night

Muscatine County Anti-Hard Roads Association
"The Organization That Believes in Lower Taxes and Better Business"

313 Hershey Bldg. Phone 1876

Figure 34. The Muscatine County Anti-Hard Roads Association lobbied the public to reject all attempts to pave the county's roads, even taking out this full page ad in the Muscatine Journal in 1924. Across Iowa, "negative rural sentiment carried the day and the roads stayed dirt" until the unequal property-tax structure that placed a greater burden on the farmer "and created a general dislike for the notion of expensive, high-type roads" was finally relieved by federal funding and amending state law
Source: Muscatine Journal, May 29, 1924

To county residents, the most visible change resulting from the Primary Road System was a numbering system applied to the major county roads. Thus, the River-To-River Road/Whiteway Highway became Primary No. 7; the Great White Way/I.O.A. Short Line became Primary No. 2; the Muscatine-Wilton Road became Primary No. 38; and West Liberty-Cone Road became Primary No. 76. Although the new Primary Highway System resulted in the replacement of the familiar local and auto trail names and markers with new Iowa route numbers and signs, the registered route names endured unofficially for many years.¹⁹¹

The new primary road markers were similar to surrounding states, and "so far as possible interstate or national highways are numbered uniformly in all these states." County Engineer Halbfass described the new signage: "The symbol shows the outline of the state with the number of the road in the center, the word 'primary' appearing at the top, and the word 'road' appearing at the bottom. Arrows indicate the direction of all turns, and all markers placed within 300 feet of a turn or cross road have these arrows underneath them. The background of this marker

¹⁹⁰ Muscatine Journal, May 29, 1924.

¹⁹¹ "Historic Auto Trails," Iowa DOT website.

is a band of yellow paint, placed around the pole or post, and the symbol with its numeral is stenciled on in black.”¹⁹² Halbfass identified the five roads affected by this new system.¹⁹³

Five Roads in All.

Five of these roads as follows pass through Muscatine county and these have all been plainly designated with the symbols.

No. 2.-Known to motorists as the Great White Way. Runs from Davenport to Omaha, following the prescribed route of the Great White Way except where relocations have been made by the state highway commission to eliminate railroad crossings. Passes through Blue Grass, Muscatine, Grandview, Columbus Junction, Washington and onward west.

No. 7.-Follows the route of the River to River road between Davenport and Omaha, passing through Stockton, Durant, Wilton, Moscow, Atalissa and West Liberty in this county.

Two Identical in County.

No. 20.-Follows the same route as Primary road No. 2, through this county. Runs from Davenport to Keokuk, passing through Blue Grass, Muscatine, Grandview, Burlington and Fort Madison.

No. 38.-Known to county residents as the Muscatine to Wilton road. Runs from Muscatine to Anamosa, passing one mile west of Wilton, and through Tipton, north.

No. 76.-Known as West Liberty-Cone road. Begins at West Liberty. Terminates at Wapello, after passing through Nichols, Cone and Columbus¹⁹⁴

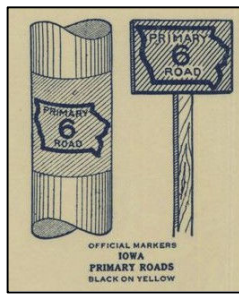


Figure 35. Official Markers for Iowa Primary Roads – Black on Yellow.
Source: Rand McNally Company, 1925 – University of Iowa Digital Collections, Iowa City, Iowa

Iowa’s first official road map was completed in 1919 (Figure 36), showing the 6,000-mile federal aid Primary Road System, as well as the “10,000-mile county system,” and the “88,000-mile township system.”¹⁹⁵ The Primary Highway system provided for states and the federal government to begin sharing highway building and improvement costs in rural areas, particularly road-paving projects, with road funds expended on transforming farm-to-market roads into highways. The first federal-aid project in the county brought to permanent grade the River-To-River Road (Primary No. 7) from the west county line to a point one-half mile east of Moscow, and the Great White Way/I.O.A. Short Line (Primary No. 2) between Muscatine and Sweetland [Center].¹⁹⁶ In 1921, the *Muscatine Journal* reported on the county’s second federal aid project, i.e. “the permanent improvement of no less than 28 miles of primary road,” and for the construction of “40 culverts and four bridges.”¹⁹⁷

It is larger by almost half than the first Federal aid contract, just completed, which eclipsed anything previously attempted in the county in the line of road building.

Two of the county's main arteries of travel, both trans-state roads, will figure in this piece of permanent road building. These are the River-to-River road, or primary road No. 7 between Moscow and Stockton, and the Great White Way, primary road No. 2, between Sweetland and the Scott county line, also across Muscatine Island.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² “Explains Plan of New State Road Marking,” *Muscatine Journal*, August 5, 1920.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Iowa DOT, *Discovering Iowa’s Transportation Milestones*, 21: “An example of the traffic rate at that time, an average of 300 vehicles per day traveled on county roads. The maps were prepared by the commission’s Women’s Drafting Department. The data used was from various government maps, and also from the collection of detailed field information. Prior to this time motorists relied on travel guides like the “blue book” published by private concerns which used their own maps and numbering systems.”

¹⁹⁶ “Board Examines Project Plans,” *Muscatine Journal*, June 15, 1920.

¹⁹⁷ “Big Road Job is Before County,” *Muscatine Journal*, September 6, 1921.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

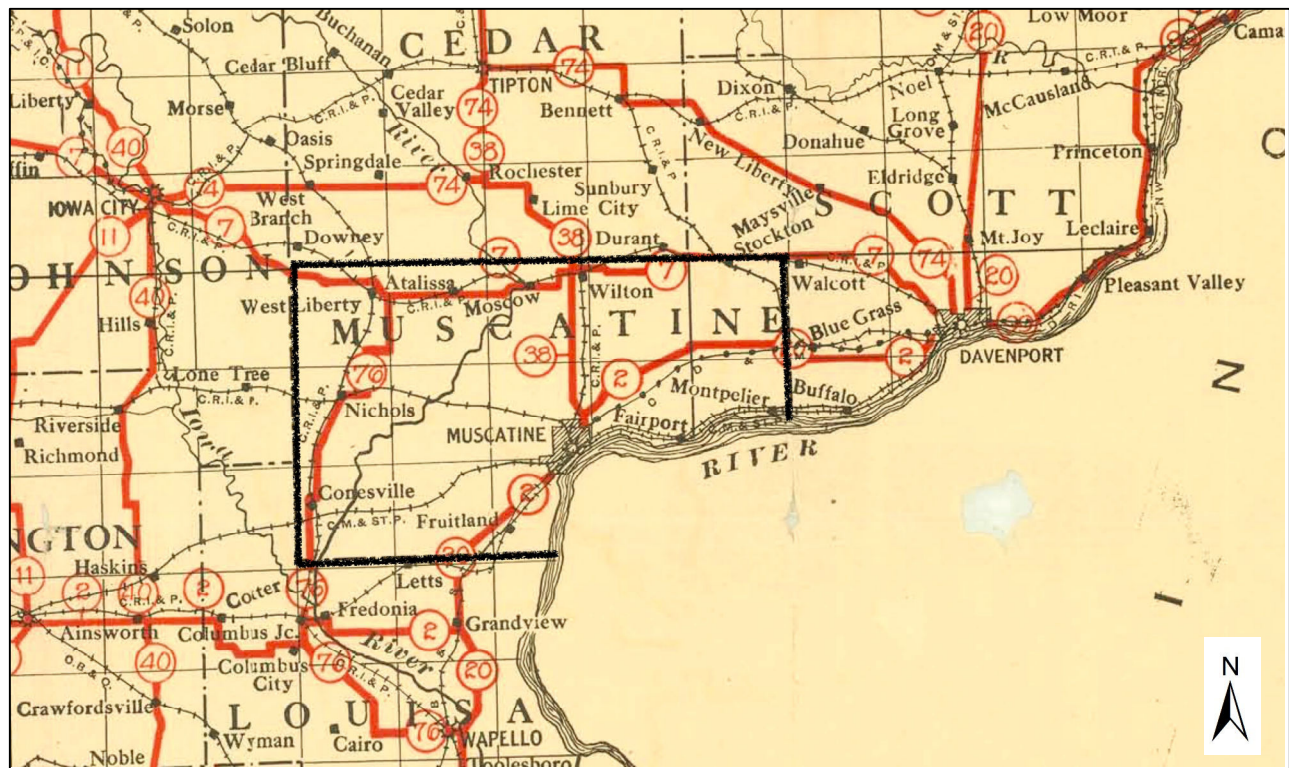


Figure 36. Official Map of Iowa's new Primary Road System, 1919, showing detail of those in Muscatine County, which were Primary Roads No. 2 (20), 7, 38, and 76. Primary roads and numbers shown in red. This was Iowa's first official road map. Source: Iowa Highway Commission 1919, Iowa DOT website

Primary Highway No. 7, designated in July 1920, was the county's first federal-aid road project administered by the State Highway Commission.¹⁹⁹ It was originally assigned to the River-to-River Road route, which ran from Council Bluffs to Davenport via Harlan, Des Moines, Newton, Grinnell, and Iowa City.²⁰⁰ The project was temporarily held up in Muscatine County by a portion of the River-to-River Road west of Moscow that federal highway engineers determined had too many bends, specifically the portion west of Moscow that rounded Risley's Lake.²⁰¹

Reject One Portion.

The federal highway engineers have approved all of the project as drawn up by the state highway engineer and county engineer, with the exception of a stretch one and one-fourth miles in length, which starts at the west end of the Cedar river bridge near Moscow. This portion of the river-to-river road goes around Risley's lake and has a number of crooks and kinks in it. This stretch will be temporarily taken from the project until an investigation for re-location around the hills and lake can be made.

Won't Halt Project.

The plans for the project will not be held up in order to include this piece of road, the county engineer said today. Temporary construction work, whatever is found to be necessary, will be done to put this tract in the best possible shape until such time as the government and the county can come to an agreement as to the straightening out of the sharp turns.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Jason Hancock, Iowa 7 (I), Iowa Highways Page at <http://www.iowahighways.org/highways/iowa1-9.html> - 2024.

²⁰⁰ Hancock, Iowa 7 (I), Iowa Highways Page.

²⁰¹ "Board Examines Project Plans - Will Return Them to Commission for Approval - One Portion of County's Federal Aid Project to be Held Up Owing to Bends in Road," *Muscatine Journal*, June 15, 1920.

²⁰² Ibid.

No portion of Primary Highway No. 7 in Muscatine County was ever paved. The entire route across Iowa was designated US Highway 32 in 1926, well before paving commenced.²⁰³

Primary Highway No. 2 (a.k.a. State Highway 22 – East of Muscatine) was designated in 1920. It was part of the former Great White Way and I.O.A. Short Line through Muscatine County. Primary Highway No. 2 was replaced by State Highway 22, designated by the State Highway Commission in 1926.²⁰⁴ The highway followed the “Upper River Road” between Muscatine and Davenport via Blue Grass, passing through Sweetland Center and Pleasant Prairie in Muscatine County. At the time of designation, the segment from the Muscatine/Scott county line from Blue Grass to Davenport was paved. Not until 1957 was this section of State Highway 22 paved, and only just before it was switched with US Highway 61 in 1958, with State Highway 22 routed along the old River Road from Muscatine through Fairport, Montpelier, and Buffalo to Davenport, a segment that had been paved since 1930.²⁰⁵

Primary Highway No. 76 was designated July 1, 1920 to extend from Wapello to West Liberty. It was routed along the West Liberty-Cone Road, some of which was part of the Burlington Way, also known as Todd’s Ferry Road through Conesville in extreme southwest Muscatine County. In 1933, it was truncated to extend from Columbus Junction to West Liberty, the same year the State Highway Commission “agreed to proceed with the grading and surfacing with gravel of primary road No. 76 from Nichols south to the Louisa county line.”²⁰⁶ In 1940, the road was resurfaced from Nichols to the junction with State Highway 22.²⁰⁷ In 1944, the road was resurfaced again from Nichols to West Liberty.²⁰⁸

Primary Highway No. 38 was designated July 1, 1920 and extended from Anamosa (Jones County) to the city of Muscatine. Through Muscatine County, it was routed along what had been known as the Muscatine-Wilton Road. In 1933, this road was paved from US Highway 6 near Wilton south to Muscatine.²⁰⁹ Once paved, this new highway made the Wilton “Plug,” a branch of the Rock Island Railroad from Wilton to Muscatine, look quaint by comparison. “The light rails of the Rock Island branch to Muscatine, wrote the Wilton Advocate in 1962, “were no competition for the concrete ribbon of Highway 38.” As a result, passenger service on the Wilton “Plug” was greatly reduced, and the once-a-day “mixed” train “became the butt of many a joke as it poked its way along through the cornfields, the ancient locomotive dragging a short string of freight cars and a single coach.”²¹⁰

Primary Highway No. 20 was designated July 1, 1920, and extended from the Minnesota state line south of Harmony, Minnesota, south to the Missouri State line and Des Moines River at Keokuk, Iowa. In August 1924, a new riverside alignment was built between Rockingham and Muscatine. In 1925, the segment from Davenport to the Scott/Muscatine county line west of Buffalo was paved. This segment of Primary Highway No. 20 was never paved as it was decommissioned October 26, 1926, and redesignated US Highway 61 (1926 to 1958).

On the eve of the creation of the Federal Highway System in 1925, Muscatine County had a few “improved” (oiled or graveled) and “graded” (dirt) roads, but all the roads in the county were still unimproved dirt, except the small concrete segment on the River-To-River Road near Moscow.

²⁰³ Hancock, Iowa 7 (I), Iowa Highways Page.

²⁰⁴ Jeff Morrison, “Muscatine Highway Chronology,” Iowa Highway Ends at <http://www.iowahighwayends.net/maps/muscatine.html> - 2024.

²⁰⁵ Jason Hancock, Iowa 22, Iowa Highways Page at <http://www.iowahighways.org/highways/iowa20-29.html#22> – 2024.

²⁰⁶ “To Speed Work on Highway 76 - State Highway Commission Pledges Body to Improve Primary Road,” *Muscatine Journal*, April 17, 1930.

²⁰⁷ “Bids for Road Surfacing Work in Area Called,” *Muscatine Journal*, April 5, 1940.

²⁰⁸ “Bids Call for Resurfacing on Highway 76,” *Muscatine Journal*, July 15, 1944.

²⁰⁹ Jeff Morrison, Iowa 38, Iowa Highway Ends at <http://www.iowahighwayends.net/ends/ia38.html> - 2024.

²¹⁰ Richard J. Anderson, “Only Spur Remains to Justify Use of ‘Junction’ in Town’s Name Now,” *Wilton Advocate*, September 6, 1962.

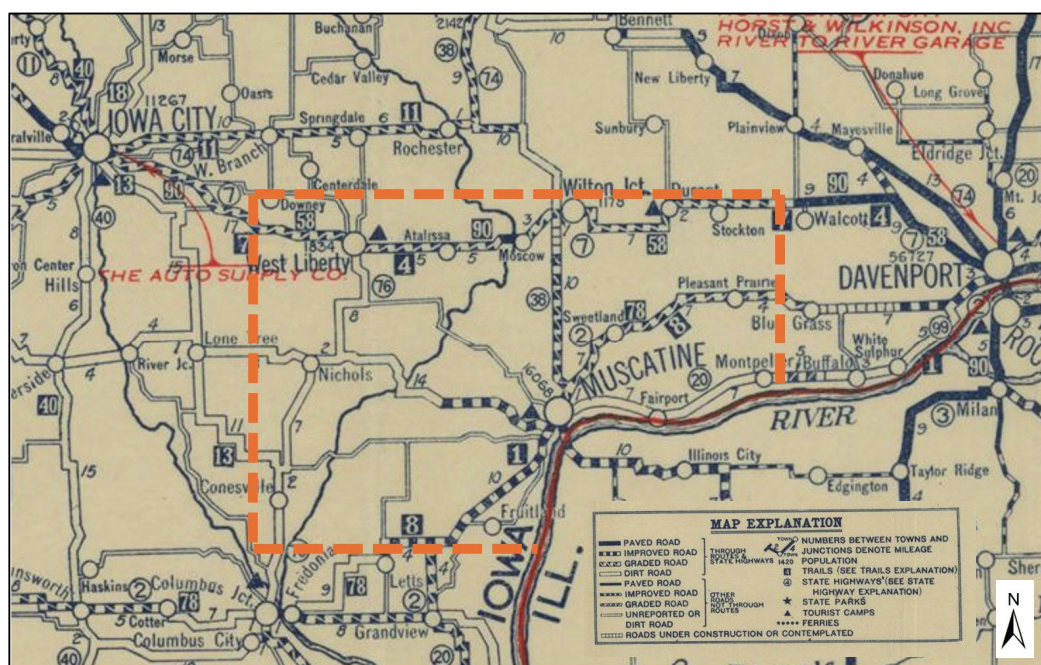


Figure 37. Detail of Rand McNally Official 1925 Auto Trails Map of Iowa, with dashed outline of Muscatine County added. Auto Trail names endured long after numbered primary roads were instituted in 1919, Source: Rand McNally Company, 1925

The Federal Highway System In Muscatine County, 1926

In 1926, the US Congress adopted the US Highway System, calling for the replacement of the variety of registered route markers displayed throughout the country on these primary roads with standardized black and white metal shields.²¹¹ Although the federal act established a numbering system and standardized the appearance of road signs, states were given the latitude of continuing to recognize established auto routes. Thomas MacDonald, chief of the federal Bureau of Public Roads and former chief engineer for the Iowa Highway Commission stated, “(there is) no question about the important automobile clubs, if the state permits, putting their monograms on the standard signs for safety, the directional signs and the cautionary signs. But this one sign I think should be protected.”²¹²

US Highway 32 (formerly Primary Road No. 7) was designated October 16, 1926, soon after the US Congress adopted the Federal Highway System.²¹³ The *Muscatine Journal* had let its readers know about the change several months earlier:

Primary road No. 7 will lose its Iowa number next month, to become federal highway No. 32, according to word received by President John Hynes of the Whiteway route. No. 7, one of the best marked and most popular east-west routes across Iowa, is getting more paving every year and increasing in popularity, Hynes declared. The change to a federal marked route will increase its popularity, it is thought. The road now has three names—Primary No. 7, the Whiteway, and the Gold Star Memorial highway. The latter two names will continue in use, but all official communications will refer to the road as U. S. highway No. 32.²¹⁴

This federal highway was the predecessor to US Highway 6, although in some towns, like Moscow, it utilized an earlier wagon-road alignment. No sections of this highway were paved in Muscatine County at the time of designation, with exception of the concrete paving of Section “N” of the River to River Road east of the Moscow Wagon Bridge.²¹⁵ In 1930 the segment from West Liberty to Durant was paved. Part of the paving on this section

²¹¹ “Historic Auto Trails,” Iowa DOT website.

²¹² Ibid.; “Statement of Thomas MacDonald,” *American Highways: American Association of State Highway Officials* (April 1928), 18.

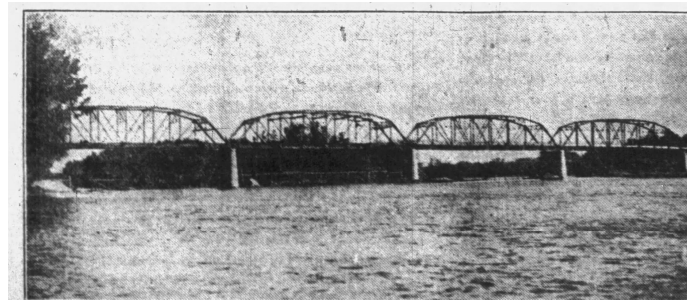
²¹³ Jason Hancock, US 32, Iowa Highways Page at <http://www.iowahighways.org/highways/otherus.html#32> – 2024.

²¹⁴ “Road No. 7 to Get New Number - Will Become Federal Route No. 32 Next Month,” *Muscatine Journal*, July 22, 1926.

²¹⁵ “Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors,” *Muscatine Journal*, September 26, 1914.

was on a new alignment through Wilton and between Moscow and Atalissa, with Moscow bypassed altogether and a new Cedar River bridge to the south of the old Moscow Wagon Bridge. According to the Muscatine Journal, the bridge “was finished in record time by bridge crews . . . Practically all the cost of the bridge was saved through the shortening of the distance to be paved several miles by relocating the highway in a more direct line between Atalissa and Wilton.” It was completed just one year before the US Highway 6 designation in 1931.²¹⁶

Figure 38. The new steel Camelback through truss bridge that was built to carry the new alignment of US Highway 32 south of Moscow, was completed in 1930 by the State Highway Commission. One year later, US Highway 32 was designated US Highway 6. Source: *Muscatine Journal*, December 31, 1930



US Highway 6 was designated December 1, 1931, replacing the former US Highway 32 across Iowa, and although much of US Highway 6 was paved at the time of its designation.²¹⁷ The highway stretched through Wapsinonoc, Goshen, Moscow, and Wilton Townships before heading north and northeast across the county line to Durant (Cedar County). The original route of US Highway 6 mostly followed what was originally the River-to-River Road, registered auto trails of the Good Roads Movement that connected Council Bluffs and Davenport. Then it was designated Primary Highway No. 7. When the Federal Highway System was created in 1926, the highway was designated US Highway 32. A bypass to Moscow was created in 1930 along with a new Cedar River bridge. One year later, US Highway 32 was renumbered as US 6, and was extended to the west coast. In the 1960s, the construction of Interstate 80 reduced the use of US Highway 6. “The least-traveled sections of the route were moved onto I-80 and control of the vacated sections of highway was given to local jurisdictions.”²¹⁸

This highway was routed through Wilton and West Liberty, and followed the south corporate limit of Atalissa. As with the River-To-River Road, US Highway 6 was routed through West Liberty on N. Columbus Street and on the old Davenport-Iowa City Road, resulting in commercial roadside businesses continuing to located along and near this route. These included Roy Misel & Sons Sinclair Service Station and other service and filling stations; the Morris Kaiser-Frazer Showroom and Service Garage and other automobile dealers, and the North Point Tourist Court (nonextant). In Wilton, US Highway 6 ran along 5th Street, and this became the “commercial strip” of that town, including the Rock Garden Tourist Home, Pirkey’s Motel, and the Wilton Dairy Queen.



Figure 39. Early paved section of US Highway 32 west of West Liberty, probably 1928 when paving from the Johnson County line east to West Liberty was completed. Source: IHC Photographs Collection, Iowa DOT Historic Archives

²¹⁶ Hancock, US 32, Iowa Highways Page.

²¹⁷ US Route 6 Iowa website at <http://usroute6iowa.org/about-route-6-iowa/> - 2024.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

US Highway 61 was designated October 16, 1926, replacing State Highway 20 and Primary Road No. 2 northeast and southwest of Muscatine. It was paved from the Scott/Muscatine county line to the city of Muscatine in 1929, the first segment of highway to be paved with concrete in the county.²¹⁹ This paved US highway attracted commercial roadside businesses, including the Mississippi Courts Tourist Camp, which opened in 1936. In 1930, the segment from Muscatine to the Louisa County line was paved.²²⁰ Just one year after this highway was designated, an airfield was established southwest of Muscatine that would become several years later the Muscatine Municipal Airport, and near the Louisa County line, Moran's Service Station opened on this paved federal highway around 1935.

On October 23, 1958, US Highway 61 and State Highway 22 switched routes between Davenport and Muscatine. US Highway 61 followed the general route of the old Muscatine-Blue Grass Road, the I.O.A. Short Line, and Great White Way. This section had been paved in 1957. State Highway 22 followed the old River Road along the Mississippi River. Both highways continue on these same alignments today.²²¹

Muscatine County's Trunk and Local Road System (Post-1926)

By 1926, the year the Federal Highway System was created, the primary roads in Muscatine County had about 16 miles of gravel surface and "the same old four-tenths of a mile paved in 1914" near Moscow. The county trunk system had added 4.44 miles of graveled roads and 7.95 miles of sand-clay surfaced roads. The rest of the county's roads were "natural soil or earth."²²² The county made plans to start a paving boom, and "modern paved highway construction was started in earnest" after Muscatine County citizens overwhelmingly "voted bonds to assist in paving some of the important state routes." The bonds also covered "graveled the remaining state roads," and grading the county trunk roads, "with the goal of ridding the county of dirt roads."²²³



Figure 40. Typical improved graveled-surface road, 1925.
Source: Musser Public Library, Muscatine, Iowa

The county adopted and completed a five-year plan for paving Muscatine County's highways. By 1930, Muscatine County had 140 miles of "high type paved and graveled roads." Primary highways No. 6 (formerly No. 32), 61, and 38 still had graveled portions. With better roads, traffic increased just as the county's Anti-Hard Roads Association

²¹⁹ Jason Hancock, US61, Iowa Highways Page at <http://www.iowahighways.org/highways/us61.html> - 2024.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Halbfass, "Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System," *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

²²³ Ibid.

had predicted in 1924, and the graveled portions of these heavily traveled highways became increasingly impossible to maintain.²²⁴ Local communities banded together to pull their local farm-to-market roads out of the mud with gravel, of which Muscatine County had a cheap source within the Muscatine city limits.²²⁵

In 1928, two years after the federal-aid highways adopted a uniform numbering system, Muscatine County adopted uniform markings for its important “trunk roads,” assigning each a letter initial. Thus, the Conesville Road became County Road C, the Saulsbury Road became County Road W, the Nichols Road became County Road M, and the West Liberty Road became County Road W, as shown on the 1928 Map of Muscatine County (Figure 41).²²⁶

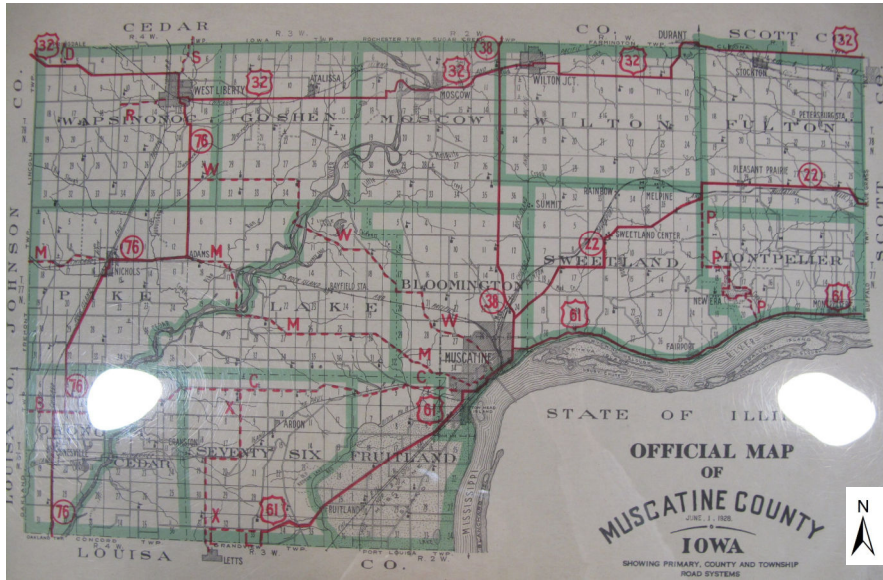


Figure 41. 1928 map of the new county trunk road uniform “initial” marking system. Source: Muscatine County Roads Department, Muscatine, Iowa

Iowa’s Bergman Road Law, 1929

In 1929, the state legislature passed the Bergman Road Law, or Secondary Road Act, which merged county trunk roads, secondary roads, and township roads into one county unit overseen by the county board of supervisors, and gave exclusive control of the state primary highways to the State Highway Commission.²²⁷ Prior to this law, “about 6.5 percent of the public highways of the state were included in the primary road system, under control and jurisdiction of the Highway Commission; 13.5 percent were included in the county road system under jurisdiction of county supervisors whereas the remaining 80 percent were classified as township roads under control of 1,640 township boards of trustees.”²²⁸ As the *Muscatine Journal* reported:

Hailed as one of the outstanding laws passed by the last general assembly, the Bergman Secondary road law puts township and county highways into county wide units, and eliminates former “township” roads.

²²⁴ Ibid.; *Muscatine Journal*, May 29, 1924.

²²⁵ Halbfass, “Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939: “Muscatine county has made available a cheap source of gravel for the public, from a natural dry deposit near Muscatine on the Sinnett farm. Various communities, then, while the gravel lasted, organized local donation graveling projects. They would raise a cash fund in their community and nearby city or town, combine their money with appropriations from their township trustee boards, and gravel surface their dirt roads. Unfortunately, for lack of funds, they could pay but little attention to the graded condition of the roads, and so today we must realize that before long some of these older donation graveled local roads will have to be considered for reconstruction. Most this local road surfacing was done in Lake, Bloomington and Sweetland townships, because the haul was short from the only natural county owned pit.”

²²⁶ “Start Marking County System,” *Muscatine Journal*, November 22, 1928; See Iowa State Highway Commission, *Official Map of Muscatine County, Showing Primary, County and Township Road Systems*, 1928; Iowa adopted its present county road numbering system in the late 1960s, featuring alpha numeric numbers on what were originally green squares, but were switched to blue pentagon signs. See Jason Hancock, *County Roads Of Iowa*, Iowa Highways Page at <http://www.iowahighways.org/highways/countryrd.html> - 2024.

²²⁷ “Passage of Bergman Road Act Merges County and Township Roads Into One County Unit,” *Muscatine Journal*, April 25, 1929.

²²⁸ Thompson, *Transportation in Iowa*, 75.

Under the terms of the bill, the roads now known as county roads are to be known as county trunk roads, and all other roads of the secondary system as local county roads.²²⁹

The township boards of trustees remained as advisory bodies to the county board of supervisors, aiding in the selection of local roads to be improved each year.²³⁰ County engineer Halbfass called this “a splendid feature of the law and all our county boards, I am sure, have appreciated this cooperative feature.”²³¹ The new law reduced “the number of secondary road supervisory units from about 5,500 to 400. Supervisors controlled a secondary system of 12,377 miles of county and 84,246 miles of township roads.”²³² The law also facilitated “the voting of county bonds for primary road improvement and raised the limit of indebtedness from three to four and one-half percent of the assessed valuation of property in the county.”²³³

Iowa’s Bergman Road Law centralized and standardized modern road administration as it is today. As Iowa transportation historian William H. Thompson notes: “Responsibilities had been transferred from many independent civil units to the centralized structure of state government. Authority for road construction and maintenance was clearly defined between the state and the counties, with general supervision over all roads and direct control over the state’s primary highways exercised by the highway commission.”²³⁴

By 1939, the progress facilitated by the Bergman Road Law was obvious, and county engineer Halbfass enumerated Muscatine County’s record of improvements:.

The county trunk system has been increased to 70 miles, to catch all very heavy traffic routes, and this system is all well graded and surfaced. The remaining local roads, totaling now 570 miles, have 211 miles well built, graded and surfaced; and 69 miles not very graded, but at least surfaced. This total of 280 miles of local roads out of the mud is almost 50 per cent [sic], compared with 8.3 per cent [sic] just ten years ago.”

Also in 1939, the Iowa legislature passed the Farm-to-Market Road Law, which provided matching federal funds designated for improvements to farm-to-market roads in each of Iowa’s counties. This law began a funding system for secondary roads not part of the county trunk road system.²³⁵



Figure 42. State of Iowa Map, 1940, showing the progress Muscatine County had made in paving (heavy black lines) the state and federal highways within its borders (red lines). Only State Highways 22 and 76 remained gravel-surfaced (segmented lines). Source: Iowa DOT Historic Maps

²²⁹ “Passage of Bergman Road Act Merges County and Township Roads Into One County Unit,” *Muscatine Journal*, April 25, 1929.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Halbfass, “Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

²³² Thompson, *Transportation in Iowa*, 75.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Halbfass, “Quarter-Century Sees Big Change in County Road System,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

Mid-Century Road Improvements, 1940s-1970s

County engineer Halbfass declared in 1940 that “[v]ast improvements have been made in construction design to meet the evolution in automobile industry, and today roads are safer, smoother, straighter, and better located and drained — as Muscatine county keeps step with the general march of progress.”²³⁶

The decades of the mid-twentieth century were a time of experimentation with road building methods and new machinery, new surfacing materials, and bridge engineering led by the State Highway Research Board in Ames in cooperation with the Muscatine County Engineer. In 1939, county engineer Halbfass was testing three types of road surfacing materials on the county’s trunk roads: 1) “a light bituminous black top wearing surface on a constructed stabilized base;” 2) “a stabilized and compacted 2 inch wearing crust surface treated with calcium chloride;” and 3) “surface consolidation of existing road materials treated with calcium chloride.” Road machinery included road graders and pneumatic tire rollers. In addition to research conducted by the State Highway Research Board, cement company engineers “promoted bases successfully built by mixing cement with natural road soil.” Asphalt association engineers predicted “success by mixing asphalt with natural road soils.” Calcium chloride interests “claimed success in many states by the same methods used” in Muscatine County, “i.e. scientifically mixing certain clays, gravel, sand and calcium chloride.” National organizations were “giving special attention to stabilized earth sub-grades and surfaces, highway economies, and road design from the standpoint of safety.”²³⁷ All of these modern methods were employed in building the new State Highway 92 and State Highway 22.



Figure 43. Spreading calcium chloride to help prevent freeze damage, c.1940. Source: Muscatine County Highway Department, Muscatine, Iowa



Figure 44. Heavy equipment spreading calcium chloride to help prevent freeze damage, c.1940. Source: Muscatine County Highway Department, Muscatine, Iowa

²³⁶ “Surfaced Roads Supplant Old Trails,” *Muscatine Journal*, Centennial Edition, May 31, 1940.

²³⁷ Halbfass, “Looking Ahead – Prospectus for Future Outlined,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.



Figure 45. Widening a narrow uphill grade in Muscatine County, c.1940. Sources: Muscatine County Highway Department, Muscatine, Iowa



Figure 46. Compacting road surface with the pneumatic tire roller, c.1940. Source: Muscatine County Highway Department, Muscatine, Iowa



Figure 47. Examining an experimental soil cement stabilized base on State Highway 22 in 1947. Source: IHC Photographs Collection, Iowa DOT Historic Archives

The slip-form paver makes it possible...

county roads in Iowa are built of modern concrete at lower costs than ever!

Slip-form paving project in Decatur County.

Today, county engineers are using the slip form paver to convert more and more secondary roads into modern, smooth-riding concrete highways. To date, more than 2,100 miles of county roads have been built in Iowa.

The modern slip-form paver constructs a continuous concrete road at approximately six feet per minute. A mile or more of two-lane pavement a day is not unusual. To take full advantage of such construction efficiency, these new pavers are now used in over 40 states to build all classes of pavements.

Along with efficiency goes economy. Savings are two-fold. First, contractors need just one machine instead of three, thus *reducing the initial investment*. Second, with no forms or form setting, smaller crews, and only one machine to maintain, *operating costs are far less*. These reduced costs mean big savings for taxpayers.

The savings *continue*. With concrete, maintenance costs *stay low*. It's a solid investment in lasting driving pleasure and safety... and a permanent solution to county road budget problems.

PORTLAND CEMENT ASSOCIATION
619 Savings and Loan Bldg., Des Moines, Iowa 50309

An organization of cement manufacturers to improve and extend the uses of portland cement and concrete.

**MODERN
concrete**

Figure 48. One of Iowa's most important contributions to modern road construction was the "slip-form paver," introduced in 1949. As this ad from 1969 states, the slip-form paver "constructs a continuous concrete road at approximately six feet per minute. A mile or more of two-lane pavement a day is not unusual." Source: *Muscatine Journal*, November 4, 1969

State Highway No. 22 - West of Muscatine was not designated until 1931, however, it continued to be a generally unimproved road until 1939.²³⁸ That year, Fred White, chief engineer of the State Highway Commission, reported that “steps were being taken to secure right-of-way for the proposed new paved highway No. 22 in Muscatine County.”²³⁹ This new state highway had been part of the Muscatine-Des Moines Short Line route in western Muscatine County that had followed the old Muscatine-Nichols Road. The new highway was to be built from Muscatine to the junction with State Highway No. 76, west of the Cedar River and east of Nichols. As the *Muscatine Journal* wrote: “The original Highway 22 was one of the oldest gravel roads from point of service in Muscatine county, and the new route followed over the old road bed only to a minor extent.”²⁴⁰

Instead, it swung straight and true as the flight of an airliner to its destination. Out of Muscatine, it followed Cedar street, cutting a new route past the county farm and moving across Lowe Run on a high fills. Eliminated was the former dangerous angling curve which snaked over the ravine and around the hills like a corkscrew.

Past Lowe Run, the new broad highway joined again with the old road for a time as workmen threw up additional feet of earth to add to its width and to provide for greater safety.

Only three curves in all are to be found along the entire course of the new road. One is a gradual, easy curve at the outskirts of the city, a second a veer a short distance past Lowe Run and the third a more abrupt turn which sends the new road scampering on an arrow-flight course across the Cedar river bottomlands.

Like the huge swath left by a giant reaper, the highway was cut through the tree-studded territory just west of the Cedar river and a high fill thrown up so that flood waters would not overrun the surface.

Across the Cedar, just a short distance above the old No. 22 bridge, a new steel and concrete structure was constructed [by Jensen Construction Co., Des Moines] during the year, with the work being completed by late summer.²⁴¹

A new type of surfacing material was used to finish the highway: “A mixture of gravel and clay with calcium chloride and other ingredients.” This mixture was prepared at a central mixing station on Cedar River, and then dumped along the highway bed by trucks, and later “spread and packed by maintainers.”²⁴² The new surfacing material was “expected to give a hard road surface freer from dust and less apt to become “chucky.”²⁴³ It was hoped that funds might be available in a few years to pave the new highway with concrete, however, it was late 1950s before this highway was paved with concrete.²⁴⁴



Figure 49. The *Muscatine Journal* waxed poetic about the newly built State Highway No. 22, which was finished with a new type of surfacing material of gravel mixed with clay and calcium chloride. The newspaper described the straightened route as ‘scampering on an arrow-flight course across the Cedar river bottomlands.’ Source: *Muscatine Journal*, December 30, 1940

²³⁸ Morrison, “Muscatine Highway Chronology,” Iowa Highway Ends.

²³⁹ *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

²⁴⁰ “Quarter Million Expended On New Road In County,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 30, 1940.

²⁴¹ *Muscatine Journal*, December 30, 1940.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

State Highway 92 was designated in February 1, 1939, 20 years after Iowa's Primary Highway System was created. Iowa's newest state highway extended across three states – Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska – and in Iowa, the highway extended from the Mississippi River at Muscatine west to the Missouri River at Council Bluffs.²⁴⁵ Advertisements for the “New Route 92” as the “Fastest—Shortest—Safest” highway across Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska, harkens back to Good Roads Registered Route promotions.²⁴⁶ State Highway 92 became a major cross-state route in the years before Interstate 80.

NEW ROUTE 92
Direct Route Across
ILLINOIS, IOWA and NEBRASKA
NEW ROAD — NOW OPENED
Illinois 92 — Iowa 92 — Nebraska 92
Fastest—Shortest—Safest
Less Curves — Less Slow Orders — Less Miles
Long Sweeping Curves Built for Modern Vehicles

Uniform numbering recently installed and elimination of gravel stretches make this shortest and best road now convenient to the public for through travel.

An analysis has recently been made of No. 92 from Joliet to Omaha (using Illinois 69-52-34 from Joliet to La Moine) comparing it with the two next shortest routes, which intersect at Joliet and at Omaha. The result is as follows:

Route	Miles	Curves	Slow Orders
No. 92	462.4	267	36.5
Next shortest U. S. 8	471.8	417	83.4
Next shortest U. S. 30	489.1	384	74.7

Combination of U. S. 34 and 92 from Chicago to Council Bluffs compared with two next best routes shows:

Route	Miles	Curves	Slow Orders
34-92	496	352	56.1
Next shortest state 64	487	387	78.4
Next shortest U. S. 30	500	424	84.6

It will be noted on comparing the routes above that the mere idea of mileage alone is not the controlling factor in drawing a comparison, but that curves, and especially sharp curves, and slow orders through towns where one must slow down to 25 to 35 miles per hour as a legal requirement, are factors in the comparison which makes No. 92 by far the preferable route. It will be noted in comparing Routes 30, 6 and 92 that regarding the mileage, curves and slow orders that No. 92 is 9.4 miles shorter, has 150 less curves and 46.9 less miles of slow orders than No. 6. In comparing No. 92 with Route No. 30, it will be noted that No. 92 is 26.7 miles shorter, has 117 less curves and 38.2 less miles of slow orders. This is the reason that it is 2½ hours faster from either Chicago or Joliet to Omaha and therefore it helps all traffic east and west.

Follow one number across the states of Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska. Distance isn't the only factor to consider when choosing your route. Number and character of curves, number of slow orders through towns where one must slow down to 25 miles per hour—the by-passing of cities—all these factors combined go to make the perfect modern highway for the modern vehicle.

Number 92, designed by highway engineers for the newest type of cars, meets all requirements. It's the **SHORTEST**, the **FASTEST** and the **SAFEST** highway across the north central west.

Figure 50. State Highway 92 was designated and open to traffic in 1939. This advertisement for the “New Route 92” as the “Fastest—Shortest—Safest” highway across Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska harkens back to Good Roads Registered Route promotions. Source: *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939

Road improvement projects were continuously being planned. In 1947, the county was planning \$100,000 in a road improvement program for 1948, including new bridges, culverts, and grading project.²⁴⁷ In 1951, along with a new Cedar River Bridge (a.k.a. McKeown Bridge) on County Road C, 11 farm-to-market road improvements were completed.²⁴⁸ In 1954, during James Dougherty's early tenure as county engineer, the Iowa Highway Research Board approved “the blacktopping of 2.9 miles of the experimental road on County Road C” (formerly Muscatine-Cone Road) “as a farm-to-market project.” This permission was needed since funds for the surfacing of the road were allotted by the research board in order that the wearing qualities of different types of road construction could be observed.” The location of the experimental section started “about a half mile east of the county X (a.k.a. Cranston Road) intersection” and extended “west for 2.9 miles.”²⁴⁹

This portion of the road received only a chloride treatment in the experimental work and now is badly in need of a blacktop surface.

In addition to this 2.9 strip, another strip of 1.8 mile at the west end of the road, not involved in the experiment, also will be blacktopped with the aid of farm-to-market funds this summer. The contract will be let by the State Highway commission at Ames. The county engineer said surfacing of these two gaps will give a continuous blacktop road from Muscatine to highway 76.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Jason Hancock, Iowa 92, Iowa Highways Page at <http://www.iowahighways.org/highways/iowa90-99.html> - 2024.

²⁴⁶ “New Route 92,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 29, 1939.

²⁴⁷ “Plan \$100,000 Road Improvement Program in County,” *Muscatine Journal*, December 30, 1947.

²⁴⁸ “Mulberry Avenue Included in County Paving Projects,” *Muscatine Journal*, January 17, 1950.

²⁴⁹ “Research Board Okays Blacktop on 2.9 Miles of C,” *Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, April 4, 1954.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

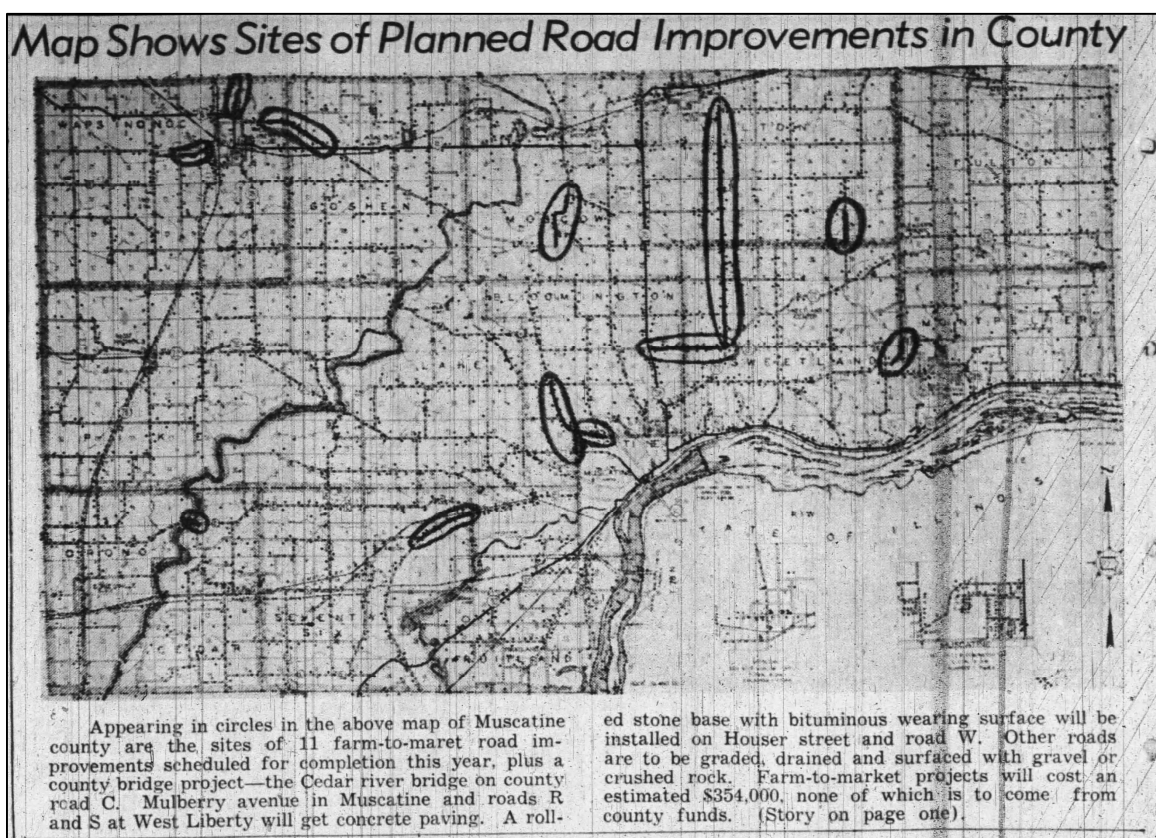


Figure 51. Planned Improvements on 11 farm-to-market roads, 1950. Source: *Muscatine Journal*, January 17, 1950

In 1955, the segment from Nichols east to the split with State Highway 76 was paved. In 1958, the segment from a point north of Lone Tree (Johnson County) to Nichols was paved. After the paving of Iowa Highway 22 west of Muscatine was completed in 1958, the Iowa Highway Commission determined Ijem Avenue needed to be widened as part of an overall improvement and resurfacing program to accommodate more automobile and truck traffic along the highway. A snag in the Iowa Highway Commission's plans developed when a Nichols councilman, who owned the DX Filling Station in the southeast corner of the Mills Motor Co Building (TR-PI-05) on Ijem Avenue objected to moving the gas tanks/pumps.²⁵¹ After more weeks of negotiating, councilman Victor Mills, owner of the DX station and Mills Motor Company, eventually acquiesced to the highway commission. He tore down the two-story Schmitt building on the corner of Ijem Avenue and Main Street and moved the underground tanks, gas pumps, and DX sign off of Ijem Avenue and onto the newly paved corner lot.²⁵² Also in 1955, the entire length of State Highway 76 highway, from US Highway 6 in West Liberty south to Columbus Junction, was paved. The highway was decommissioned in 1969, when it was redesignated as State Highway 70.²⁵³

²⁵¹ "Nichols Faces Paving Loss," *Muscatine Journal*, June 30, 1960: "The town of Nichols in Muscatine county faces the loss of a resurfacing job on its main street because it wants to permit a gas station to service cars on the street. The Iowa Highway Commission has set up about a 6-mile resurfacing project on route 22 and 76 to Nichols, but in order for the portion of the project in Nichols to be done the commission required some gas pumps to be set back farther from the street line. Commission Engineer C.B. Anderson said one of the city's councilmen owns a filling station on the 2 routes. He has operated the pumps in the street on route 22. The city council refused to accept a compromise offer which would have reduced the curb distance from 10 feet to 7 feet, Anderson said. Anderson said he had told the council "it seemed wrong to deprive the town of the improvement because they wanted to permit one individual to use the street for business purposes." The commission ruled that unless the city accepted the commission proposal by noon Tuesday the 750 feet of the highway in the town would not be resurfaced."

²⁵² Hixon, ed., *Nichols: A History of Our Town*, 2; 142-143. See also "Nichols Council to Consider Highway Commission Ultimatum on Resurfacing," *Muscatine Journal*, June 30, 1960; "Nichols Council Given Another Time Extension," *Muscatine Journal*, July 6, 1960; and "Nichols Council Concedes to State Highway Demands," *Muscatine Journal*, July 7, 1960.

²⁵³ Jason Hancock, Iowa 70, Iowa Highways Page at <http://www.iowahighways.org/highways/iowa70-79.html> - 2024.



Figure 52. View west-northwest of Ijem Avenue (formerly Ijam's Road) through the Nichols commercial district, 1966, which was also the route of State Highway 22. Ijem Avenue was widened in 1960 to accommodate increasing car and truck traffic on State Highways 22 and 70. Prior to widening Ijem Avenue, the corner building was torn down (far left) and the gas pumps for the DX Station in the Mills Motor Company building (TR-PI-05) were moved off Ijem Avenue to empty corner lot. Source: *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, September 28, 1966

Between 1960 and 1964, Interstate 80 was built just north of the Muscatine-Cedar County Line, eventually syphoning most of the cross-state traffic from US Highway 6. Eventually, “over one third of the original Iowa alignment of US Highway 6 was straightened, or realigned on to Interstate 80, bypassing over 16 of the its original 40 plus communities,” including Wilton, Atalissa, and West Liberty in Muscatine County.²⁵⁴

In 1968, all county roads in the state, including those in Muscatine County, were renumbered according to a grid system. And in 1985, a uniform rural road identification system was being promoted by Muscatine County Disaster Services. The system would name roads running north and south “avenues,” and roads running east and west “numbered streets.” “The names would begin at the western edge of the county, alphabetically. Streets would begin on the northern boundary with 100th and increase from north to south. This was eventually adopted by Muscatine County and is in use today.²⁵⁵

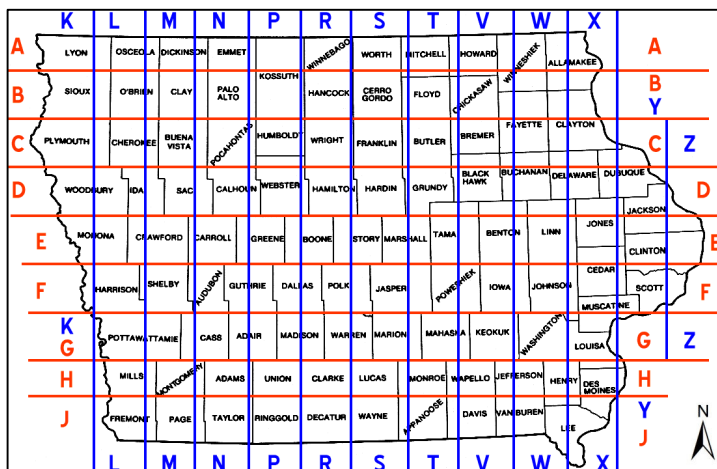


Figure 53. In 1968, Iowa adopted its current county road numbering system, featuring alphanumeric route numbers on the blue pentagon signs (originally on green squares). Source: Hancock 2024

²⁵⁴ “Route Description,” US Route 6 Iowa. Accessed at <http://usroute6iowa.org/route-description/> - 2024. Travelers can still find the pre-interstate alignment of US 6 in Muscatine County: From I-280, take County Road F58 to the junction of current US 6 at IA 38/US 6, west of Wilton. “Historic 6 will run concurrent with current US 6 to a point past West Liberty, until the junction with American Legion Road/CR F46. (Pre 1958 US 6 alignment.)”

²⁵⁵ “Road Identification System Sought,” *Muscatine Journal*, January 24, 1985.

Replacing Old Wagon Bridges over the Cedar River, 1930-1968

By 1925, all five Cedar River bridges (i.e., Moscow, Tice, Saulsbury, Simpson, and McKeown bridges) had been built as wagon bridges in the previous century. All were showing much wear and tear from more than a decade of automobile and early truck traffic for which none were designed to accommodate. This historic period of Cedar River bridge replacement began in 1930 and ended in 1966.



Figure 54. Moscow Wagon Bridge was bypassed in 1930, when the new US Highway 32 bridge was completed on a new alignment south of Moscow. The bridge continued as a secondary road bridge only. It was closed and abandoned in 1941, and dismantled in 1942, after years automobile traffic on a bridge built in 1885 for horse-drawn vehicles had caused considerable damage. Source: Muscatine County Highway Department, Muscatine Iowa

US Highway 32/US Highway 6 Bridge, 1930 – This four-span Camelback through truss bridge was built in 1930 to carry US Highway 32 over the Cedar River (Figure 38).²⁵⁶ One year after it was completed, US Highway 32 was redesignated as US Highway 6. It was designed by the State Highway Commission and constructed by A. Olson Construction Co. of Waterloo, Iowa. This bridge was replaced in 1972.

McKeown Bridge, 1951 - By 1946, it was apparent that the 1879 McKeown Bridge – the first permanent bridge over the Cedar River – needed to be replaced, and voters approved a bond issue to do just that the same year.²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, a serious shortage of steel and labor after World War II meant deferring of the construction of the new bridge until 1950, when the contract was awarded to A.M. Cohron and Sons of Des Moines. This would be A.M. Cohron's last bridge contract; he fell into the river and drowned during construction.²⁵⁸

The design of the second McKeown Bridge mostly reflects the bridge standards of the time, with the exception of it being two feet wider than the mid-twentieth-century standard of 20 feet. It is 682 feet long and 22 feet wide. It is a continuous steel beam plate deck girder bridge with haunched steel girders and shaped concrete piers. The bridge carried County Road C (formerly the Muscatine-Cone Road) over the Cedar River.²⁵⁹ Just 15 years later, the bridge design was outdated, as standards for highway bridges grew from 20 feet to 24 feet.²⁶⁰ The bridge's narrow width and load limits prompted a new bridge to be built just upstream in 1997. After the new G-28 Bridge was completed and the road realigned, the second McKeown Bridge was closed to vehicle traffic.²⁶¹ Today, the 1951

²⁵⁶ The 1930 bridge replaced the old Moscow Wagon Bridge, built in 1885, which was relegated to carrying a local road over the Cedar River after the federal highway was relocated south of Moscow. Weathered and beaten by years of automobile traffic, the old Moscow Wagon Bridge was closed in 1941 and dismantled in 1942.

²⁵⁷ "Engineer Explains Need for New Bridge over County Road C; Issue Before Voters," *Muscatine Journal*, October 30, 1946.

²⁵⁸ "McKeown Bridge, One of the Oldest in Muscatine County, Will be Replaced by New Span at Cost of \$181,378.36," *Muscatine Journal*, March 31, 1950; "70-Year-Old McKeown Bridge to be Replaced," *Muscatine Journal*, April 1, 1950; "Des Moines Firm Making Progress on Cedar Bridge," *Muscatine Journal*, June 6, 1950; "New Bridge Crossing Cedar Heads List of Improvements to County Roads During '51 Year," *Muscatine Journal*, December 28, 1951; "County's Newest Bridges Show Trends in Road Development and Costs," *Muscatine Journal*, January 26, 1966.

²⁵⁹ *Muscatine Journal*, April 1, 1950; Jennifer A. Price, *Sioux City's Grand Avenue Viaduct, 1936-2010*. Publication sponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, 2010, 7.

²⁶⁰ *Muscatine Journal*, January 26, 1966.

²⁶¹ "Load Limits on Trucks Placed on G-28 Bridge," *Muscatine Journal*, September 28, 1990; "County Get Grant for New G-28 Bridge," *Muscatine Journal*, January 13, 1994.

McKeown Bridge serves as a pedestrian bridge from which the former Lord's Ferry crossing and the stone masonry piers of the 1879 McKeown Bridge can be seen just downstream, making this ferry location with its historic bridge resources a potential historic district.

Figure 55. McKeown Bridge, 2012, a haunched steel girder bridge over the Cedar River on the former alignment of 231st Street. It was completed in 1951 to replace the 1879 McKeown Bridge, the first permanent bridge over the Cedar River. It is now a pedestrian-only bridge.
Photo by Lynn Pruitt, Muscatine County HPC



State Highway 22 Bridge, 1941 – This five-span Camelback through truss bridge replaced the Simpson Wagon Bridge, built in 1894 and strengthened and lengthened in 1928 after the Cedar River channel had changed.²⁶² State Highway 22 west of Muscatine was essentially a new state highway in 1939, when it being graded and improved and straightened. The highway was slightly relocated to the north where it crossed the Cedar River, and this bridge was built upstream from the old Simpson Bridge. This 1941 bridge was replaced in 1987.²⁶³



Figure 56. Left – Looking east from the west bank at the Simpson Bridge, built 1895, a Pratt through truss bridge, carried the Simpson Road, part of the Muscatine-Nichols Road, over the Cedar River. Right – The Iowa Highway 22 Bridge over the Cedar River. This Camelback through truss bridge replaced the Simpson Bridge in 1941. It was replaced again in 1987. Sources: Left - Musser Public Library. Part of the E. L. Graham Collection; Right – *Muscatine Journal*, December 30, 1940

²⁶² "Lengthen Bridge on Nichols Road," *Muscatine Journal*, April 17 1928.

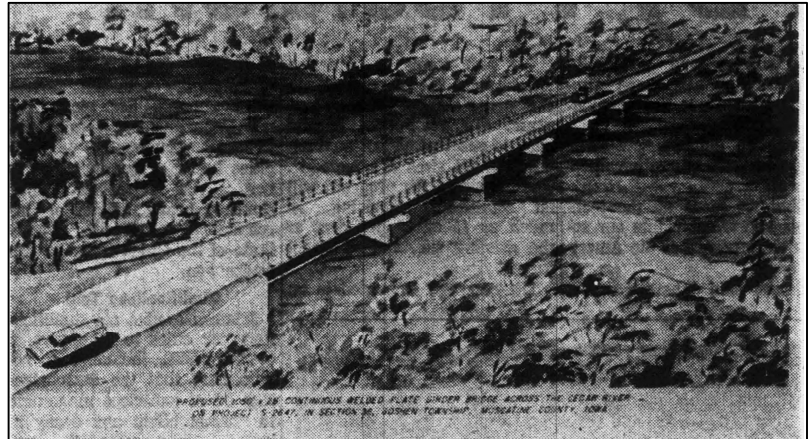
²⁶³ "Replacement of Bridges Looms in Five-Year Plan," *Muscatine Journal*, December 26, 1984; "Highway Nearly Finished – 22 Could Reopen by Thanksgiving," *Muscatine Journal*, November 18, 1987.



Figure 57. Looking upstream at State Highway 22 Bridge over the Cedar River was a five-span Camelback through truss bridge completed in 1941. Source: IHC Photographs Collection, Iowa DOT Historic Archives

Dougherty Bridge, 1968 – In 1963, the county board of supervisors and county engineer James R. Dougherty began the first stages of building a new farm-to-market road that would culminate in the construction of a new Cedar River bridge to replace both the aging Tice Bridge (built 1899) and the Saulsbury Bridge (built 1880, and lengthened in 1935). The site selected was in extreme southeast corner of Goshen Township, about midway between the two old bridges. Plans for the new bridge were done by the county highway department. The use of farm-to-market funds made a bond issue unnecessary.²⁶⁴ Just prior to the completion of the new bridge, county engineer James R. Dougherty died, and the board of supervisors decided to name the new bridge in his honor.²⁶⁵

Figure 58. Artist's rendering of J.R. Dougherty Bridge, 1966, a steel stringer bridge carrying County Road F70/155th Street over Cedar River was built in 1966. The road was a new farm-to-market road built at the same time as the bridge. Source: *Muscatine Journal*, January 26, 1966



After the bridge was completed in 1966, complaints about the road to the bridge began, just as when the Saulsbury Bridge was completed in 1880. By 1969, the new blacktop road was finished, giving the county its only bridged road over the Cedar River between U.S. Highway 6 and State Highway 22.²⁶⁶ The old Saulsbury Bridge was closed to traffic, but remained open to pedestrians and fisherman. It became the focal point of the Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area in 1976. In 1977, a fire destroyed the west and central spans of the bridge. The east end remains intact and open to pedestrians today.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ "Supervisors Program \$642,000 Road, Bridge Building Projects," *Muscatine Journal*, November 5, 1963.

²⁶⁵ "'Dougherty' Bridge to Replace Two Old Structures over Cedar River," *Muscatine Journal*, December 30, 1965.

²⁶⁶ "Blacktop Completing Traffic Link Over Dougherty Bridge," *Muscatine Journal*, September 25, 1969.

²⁶⁷ "Saulsbury Bridge," *Muscatine Journal*, July 9, 1976.