

# BEST ROADS OF ILLINOIS: 1920's AND 1930's

## POLE MARKINGS

The following list gives the National Trails and other posted roads with official markers  
A key letter and figure show the location of trails on the map.

|                              | KEY | MARKER |
|------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Atlantic Pacific Hy.         | J-7 |        |
| Big Four Trail               | G-7 |        |
| Bloomington Way              | E-7 |        |
| Blue Grass Road              | D-8 |        |
| Cannon Ball Trail            | D-5 |        |
| Chicago Iowa Trail           | B-5 |        |
| Chicago K. C. & Gulf Hy      | B-5 |        |
| Detroit Lincoln Denver       | C-5 |        |
| Dixie Highway                | D-8 |        |
| Dunes Highway                | C-9 |        |
| Egyptian Trail               | H-7 |        |
| Grant Highway                | A-5 |        |
| Havana Linc. & Cham. Tr.     | F-7 |        |
| Illinois Corn Belt Route     | E-7 |        |
| Illinois Valley Way          | E-6 |        |
| Keyway Trail                 | C-5 |        |
| Lincoln Highway              | B-4 |        |
| Logan-Lee Highway            | D-5 |        |
| Lone Star Route              | C-7 |        |
| Meridian Trail               | J-6 |        |
| Mississippi River Scenic Hy. | F-3 |        |
| Mississippi Valley Hy.       | D-7 |        |
| Nat'l Old Trails Road        | G-9 |        |
| Nat'l Roosevelt Mid. Tr.     | J-7 |        |
| National White Way           | E-3 |        |
| Okaw Trail                   | J-7 |        |
| Péo. Pekin Hav. & Jack. Tr.  | F-5 |        |
| Pikes Peak O. to O. Hy.      | F-7 |        |
| Sheridan Road                | A-8 |        |
| South West Trail             | C-5 |        |
| Univ. of Illinois Trail      | E-8 |        |
| Victory Highway              | H-8 |        |
| Wabash Trail                 | G-6 |        |
| White Way 7                  | G-7 |        |
| Wonderland Way               | K-7 |        |

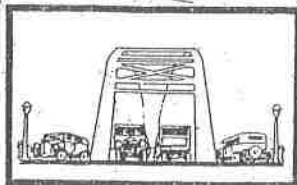


## MCKINLEY BRIDGE



**NEW LOW  
TOLL  
RATES**

Car and Driver ..... **20c**



Separate Roadways for Trucks and Passenger Cars

# BEST ROADS OF ILLINOIS: 1920s-1930s

The H. N. Lund Coal Company in Chicago sponsored a "Mileage Map of the Best Roads of Illinois" about 1926, the same time as the official state highway map in the last focus map. In addition to highlighting the paved roads and numbering them according to the state system, the coal company's version provided distances between towns and then named the auto trails that crossed Illinois. A chart next to the state map pictured the signs, which were attached to utility poles along the way. This list is reprinted on the left-hand side of Map 28.

These named trails were replaced several years later by the numbered system of U. S. highways. The most famous such route in Illinois, Route 66, extended from the shore of Lake Michigan to Los Angeles. In Illinois the celebrated highway went from Chicago to Joliet, through Bloomington and Springfield, to St. Louis. Route 66 largely followed the old Mississippi Valley Highway, marked from Chicago to Springfield and the Lone Star Highway, which started in Springfield and led to St. Louis.

1. Draw the marker for Egyptian Trail Route.
2. Which town is between Elkart and Lincoln?
3. How old is the Mileage Map of the Best Roads of Illinois?
4. What river does the McKinley bride cross and how much is the toll?
5. What 3 old highways did Route 66 follow?
6. Why would a traveler us the McKinley Bridge?
7. Draw the marker for Chicago Iowa Trail.
8. 66 went from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
9. What song refers to prairies and trails?
10. Explain you would get from Elwood to Peoria, include compass directions.

The second panel traces Route 66 through Illinois in the 1930s at the time when it was becoming one of the best-known highways in the nation. This particular graphic was one of four insets that accompanied an "Auto Trails Map of Central United States" issued by the McKinley Bridge in St. Louis. As a toll bridge, the McKinley depended on a constant flow of traffic to pay its bills. The advertising on the map pointed out that this "optional U. S. 66" saved five miles, avoided the traffic congestion of downtown St. Louis, and was much safer than the main route through town.

## Reading the Map

A glance at the thirty-five named highway routes in Illinois used before the numbering of U.S. system will indicate how complicated the old "auto trails" program had become. It challenged motorists to remember a variety of symbols, and it certainly would make a confusing map if these symbols were used on the map. Numbering the U.S. routes and placing them in a "federal shield" to distinguish the U.S. setup from state markers simplified things a great deal. So did the growing use of strip maps like the one issued by the McKinley Bridge.

A strip map follows one particular route and cuts out the details on either side. In this case we can follow Route 66 from town to town. Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River are the only features that run across the whole strip. A popular song about the "Main Street of America" referred to that "ribbon of highway" that stretched across the prairies and plains. Maps like this were also called ribbon maps because they were long and thin. The maps of the "Proposed Route for the Illinois and Michigan Canal" (Map 18) and of the Illinois Waterway (Map 20) are two good examples of ribbon maps issued in sections.

