

# **THE PIKES PEAK OCEAN TO OCEAN HIGHWAY**

## **THE APPIAN WAY OF AMERICA**

By  
Richard F. Weingroff

This is the story of a highway that couldn't make up its mind--the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway (PPOO), one of the early transcontinental highways of the named trail era (about 1910-1926).

### **Starting a Highway**

Formal organization of the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway Association was completed on March 18, 1914, at a meeting in St. Joseph, Missouri. The association was dedicated to promoting improvement and use of a road from New York City to San Francisco. An account of the founding appeared in the May 1914 issue of *Better Roads and Streets*:

“The Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway” is the latest development in the transcontinental route situation. The new highway was launched at a meeting in St. Joseph, Mo., on March 18, by the federation and alliance of State and interstate associations already in existence.

The course of the Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway is from New York through Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, Cumberland, Wheeling, Columbus, Dayton, Indianapolis, Springfield, Ill., Hannibal, Mo., St. Joseph, Belleville, Kans., Colorado Springs, Glenwood Springs, Salt Lake City, Reno, Sacramento and Oakland to San Francisco. The affiliating organizations are:

The Springfield-Hannibal Highway Association, through Illinois.  
The Hannibal-St. Joseph Cross State Highway Association, through Missouri.  
The Rock Island Highway Association, through Kansas.  
The Lincoln Highway Association through Colorado.  
The Utah Division of the Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway Association.

East of Illinois, a co-operative arrangement has been made with the National Old Trails Association to Washington and New York. West of Salt Lake City the route is not finally determined but temporarily the line of the national Lincoln Highway is to be used.

The entire route from ocean to ocean is passable to-day, and it is the intention through the various State divisions to push the rapid development of every section. The Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway Association is not relying on any outside aid. It announces that the road has been and will be developed by the cities, town, counties, and States through which it passes. This independent attitude on the part of its organizers, backed up by the substantial progress that has already been made by each of the State units, means that the road will not merely be passable but thoroughly practicable for the present season, and that it will be developed rapidly along such lines of road construction as may be best suited to the varying local needs and conditions.

It is claimed for this transcontinental route that it is the central and most direct across the country. On the map it follows the same latitude and appears as nearly a straight line as the contour of the country will permit. It traverses sections of great commercial activity and agricultural diversity. It touches spots of great historic interest and many of its links are the twentieth century successors of the pioneer or Indian trails. It is the line of great scenic wonders, crossing the heart of the Rockies through Colorado's most famous section. Its crossing of the continental divide by Tennessee Pass at 10,400 feet is on a four per cent grade; and an alternative route is under construction via Independence Pass . . . .

The association spelled its name without an apostrophe (Pikes), although the apostrophe was often inserted (Pike's) in articles about the route.

The PPOO Association was based in Colorado Springs, which also served as the headquarters for the Lincoln Highway Association of Colorado. According to an article in the March 16, 1912, issue of *Good Roads*, the association had been formed in February 1912 "for the purpose of promoting the construction of a transcontinental highway through central Colorado." The article explained:

The proposed route is to be known as the Pikes Peak route and will be a continuation of the Golden Belt route in Kansas. It will enter the state near Burlington, Colo., follow the general line of the Rock Island Railroad to Colorado Springs, thence west by way of Colorado City, Manitou Springs, the Ute Pass, South Park, Buena Vista, Glenwood Springs, and Grand Junction to the Utah Line. It is expected that the Utah authorities will arrange for its continuation to Salt Lake City and westward. A preliminary route will be laid out within a short time with a view to having the necessary temporary work done to make the road available for tourist travel during the coming summer season. The plans for permanent improvement will be taken up shortly by officers of the association, the county commissioners of the various counties through which the route passes, and others. It is expected that the state highway authorities will co-operate.

To some extent, the PPOO was a response to the transcontinental Lincoln Highway, which shared the PPOO's initial end points but followed a more northerly route between them. Members of the national Lincoln Highway Association (LHA) had passed through Colorado on a summer 1913 pathfinding tour, encouraging residents to think the proposed transcontinental highway would pass through their State. However, when the Lincoln Highway was designated in September 1913, the route bypassed Colorado, taking a route to the north through Wyoming. Colorado enthusiasts quickly aligned themselves with alternatives through their State that formed in the wake of public enthusiasm for the national Lincoln Highway.

The reference in *The Road-Maker* to "not relying on any outside aid" was another example of reaction to the LHA, which proposed to pay for construction of its highway (initially estimated at \$10 million) by soliciting contributions from auto industry officials. The PPOO Association would rely on government action to improve the road.

The PPOO Association based its name on the fact that the 3,500-mile route passed within sight of Pike's Peak in Colorado. Its motto was "The Appian Way of America," a reference to the most famous road of ancient Rome. Begun in 312 B.C., the Appian Way started in Rome and ended 360 miles later at the Adriatic Sea.

One of the association's earliest activities was the Pikes Peak Reliability-Sociability Run that began at Colorado Springs on August 17, 1914. Twenty cars representing eight States left the city and headed for Salt Lake City. According to an article in the September 1914 issue of *The Road Maker*, "The schedule is not planned with the idea of establishing speed records, but the trip is arranged in easy stages, such as the average family touring party would want to make on a transcontinental journey." The average daily mileage varied from 45 to 136, with the participants expecting to reach their destination on August 24.

### **Routing the Highway**

The leaders of the association were concerned about sharing the eastern portion of their route with the National Old Trails Road. Therefore, steps were taken during the association's annual meeting in St. Joseph on February 2, 1916, to establish a separate location. Officers of the association had been exploring options for several months and gathering data on prospective routes. During the annual meeting, a committee headed by Adams was named to represent the association in negotiations with possible State partners. Two weeks later, on February 15, a conference was held in Indianapolis to pursue the goal. The March 1916 issue of *The Road-Maker* described the activities:

Through adoption of an independent alignment from Indianapolis east to the Atlantic Ocean, the Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway Association has forged another link in its great transcontinental highway. At a conference of its committee on eastern extension, held at Indianapolis on February 15<sup>th</sup>, decision was reached in favor of a route extending from Indianapolis through Richmond, Indiana; Eaton, Dayton, Springfield and Columbus, Ohio, Pittsburgh, Blairsville, Johnstown, Altoona, Huntington, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Reading, Pottstown to Philadelphia; with a connecting branch from Harrisburg to Washington, D.C., and another from Reading, Pa., to New York City. The selection of this route is subject to early organization and affiliation of state divisions in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and active steps have already been taken looking to meetings for this purpose during the month of March . . . .

The Indiana division will have a meeting at Indianapolis on March 10<sup>th</sup>, to complete its organization to the Ohio line. The Ohio committee, of which J. M. Guild of Dayton is chairman, will meet on February 28<sup>th</sup>, to formulate plans for a state organization meeting.

In Pennsylvania the highway is being organized as the "William Penn Highway," and arrangements are under way for a meeting to be held at Harrisburg in March to complete organization.

The article, basically a press release by the association, added that the road is marked with red-and-white bands between Indianapolis and Salt Lake City, with enameled steel sign markers to be placed along the route in time for the opening of the “1916 transcontinental touring season.”

During the annual convention, the association made plans “for concerted campaigns in the various states to bring about early development of a more permanent character all along the route.” In addition, the association agreed to petition Congress to provide for a “great military road from coast to coast,” with the PPOO on the 40<sup>th</sup> parallel of latitude having “logical advantages” for this purpose. Even without Federal help, the PPOO Association believed the feasibility of the PPOO had been demonstrated by official sociability and reliability runs. For example, a tour that began in Colorado Springs on April 14, 1915 “maintained an average running time of twenty-seven miles per hour between that city and Indianapolis.”

The PPOO Association held its annual meeting in St. Joseph on February 15-16, 1917, with more than 100 delegates in attendance to reorganize management of the association. The organization would be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of the national officers and two delegates from each PPOO State. The Board would be responsible for publicity and promotion. To pay for the work, each State organization would be taxed \$500 for a total of \$4,000 to pay general expenses. Arrangements had been made for 1,000 markers to be delivered within 60 days and the 100 delegates left expecting the PPOO to be second to none for the 1917 season.

The Association agreed to hold a midsummer meeting at Colorado Springs in July, with sessions on Pike’s Peak, which would be the “highest good roads meeting ever held in the United States.” One of the most important matters to be decided at that time was the western extension. The association had established a committee on the western extension and it was expected to present its findings at the annual meeting. It was considering three alternatives:

- ?? The Overland Trail across northern Nevada via Elko and Lovelock into California.
- ?? The Midland Trail and the Arrowhead Trail from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles.
- ?? An entrance into California other than the Lincoln Highway or the Midland Trail.

The Overland Trail Club was conceived in January 1917 by businessmen in Lovelock to promote a highway across Nevada along the Humboldt River. The organizational meeting was held on February 25, 1917, in Reno. The Lincoln Highway’s route across the State (today’s U.S. 50) had drawn attention away from the river route to the north that the Union Pacific Railroad followed. The Club, therefore, planned to “promote a real highway cross Nevada along lines of least resistance . . . following the railroad, river, telephone, and telegraph lines, the most thickly populated part of Nevada and practically a water grade its entire length.”

The PPOO Association’s location committee, headed by A. W. Henderson of Colorado Springs, met with the Board of Directors of the Overland Trail Club during its meeting in Lovelock in June 1917. Henderson asked for data on the Overland Trail that could be presented to the PPOO Association; he then continued his trip to consider alternative routes to San Francisco and Los Angeles.

W. H. Goodin, president of the Overland Trail Club, attended the PPOO Association midsummer meeting on July 10 and 11, 1917, and explained why the Humboldt River route should be adopted from Salt Lake City to Reno. After discussing the alternatives, the association chose the Overland Trail route across Nevada.

On July 30, a conference of PPOO Association officials in San Francisco completed designation of the western extension by selecting a location through California along a northern loop known as the Feather River Route. The alignment went through Portola, Quincy, Oroville, Marysville, Sacramento, Davis, Bonicia, Martinez, Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. An article in *Good Roads* magazine on August 25, 1917, explained the choice this way:

The selection of the western extension of the highway was the result of an official inspection tour, which indicated that less than 10% of the 1,600 mi. between Colorado Springs and San Francisco was in poor condition. According to reports of the association, the road follows streams, passes through inhabited territory with a minimum mileage through desert or desolate country, and traverses many sections of unusual scenic interest. The average running time was 19 mi. an hour.

The article also discussed the progress in marking the PPOO:

The work of marking the highway is progressing as rapidly as possible. The signs consist of red and white bands, each 10 in. wide, at cross roads, forks, and at frequent intervals. These are painted on telephone poles, fence posts, trees or rocks. In addition, 1,500 enameled steel signs, 14x20 in. in size, in red and white, are to be placed on individual posts at intervals of not more than 5 mi., between New York and San Francisco.

### **The Jefferson Highway Link**

During World War I, people around the country searched for ways of honoring America's victorious soldiers. In January 1919, the PPOO Association showed its patriotism by modifying the name of its highway to "The Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway--The Pershing Transportation Route."

The new name honored General John J. Pershing, Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe and America's greatest World War I hero. The change stemmed from the fact that "Blackjack" Pershing's boyhood home was along the PPOO in Laclede, Missouri. When the Missouri Chapter of the PPOO suggested designating Missouri's portion of the route to honor the General, Adams thought the entire route—which was then promoting its route as "the military-commercial main-line across the United States"—should bear the name. The association formally adopted the new name during its annual meeting on February 11-12, 1919, in St. Joseph. General Pershing, who "somewhere in France" at the time, cabled his consent for the Missouri tribute on February 20:

Appreciate the honor Missouri pays her gallant troops in wishing to call that part of Ocean to Ocean highway, which passes through the state "The Pershing Transport Route." Am pleased to accept the compliment in their name.--Pershing.

During the annual meeting, the association also voted to cooperate with the Jefferson Highway Association in reciprocal services to reduce expenses. The Jefferson Highway Association (JHA) had been formed in 1915 to support a route from Winnipeg, Canada, to New Orleans. E. T. Meredith, publisher of *Successful Farming* in Des Moines, Iowa, conceived the route to honor Thomas Jefferson and commemorate his part in the 1803 Louisiana Purchase of the western land drained by the Missouri River. The JHA adopted the slogan "From Pine to Palms."

The PPOO Association was especially interested in the JHA's financing plan. The JHA considered its organization unique because it employed "the principles of Home Rule in local matters, State Rule in larger concerns, and International Rules in affairs of greatest moment." It issued a franchise to localities for the use of its pole marks, signs, name, and the benefits of publicity. In return, the localities were "to build and maintain a 365-day road and support the working organization, which is kept on the job 365 days in the year."

To support this work, the JHA charged a mileage assessment of \$9 a mile per year, a financing technique that worked through its third anniversary in November 1918. Because members felt the assessment was inequitable, the JHA adopted a new plan based on the way the Federal Government was raising funds during the war by issuing Liberty Bonds. The new plan was designed to raise \$100,000 over 5 years by selling individual \$25 memberships in the rural districts and "club membership" in the route's seven large cities. Although allotments for each locality (except the large cities) were based on population, bank resources, and Jefferson Highway mileage, many areas exceeded their allotments.

On April 3, 1919, the PPO Association's finance committee met in St. Joseph to consider a permanent finance scheme and consolidation of interests with the Jefferson Highway Association. The consolidation plan was to be ratified by the Jefferson Highway Association during its July convention. An article by J. D. Clarkson, General Manager of the Jefferson Highway Association, in the April 1920 issue of *The Road-Maker, Excavator and Grader*, explained the reason for the combination of the two associations:

The Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association, noting the success of the Jefferson [Highway Association's financing plan], concluded to adopt the same plan. As they serve entirely different territory, one extending north and south and the other east and west and were not competitive, they have pooled their publicity assets, but in every other way remain distinct. The general manager of the Jefferson has been made general manager of the Pikes Peak-Ocean-to-Ocean also and will have the direction of the affairs of the latter as well as those of the former highway. Some look upon this move as marking an epoch in modern highway promotion.

With the change, the PPOO Association's national headquarters shifted to the JHA's headquarters in St. Joseph, Missouri.

An example of the combined publicity effort can be found in the July 1920 issue of AAA's *American Motorist* magazine. The headline of the half-page ad read:

The Cross Roads of the Nation Serve all Latitudes and Longitudes  
They Intersect all North and South, East and West Transcontinental Routes

Amidst a map showing the two routes in a T format, the text described the two routes:

#### The JEFFERSON HIGHWAY

The Avenue from the Bread Basket of the World to the Land of Cotton, Palms, and Romance  
Winnipeg—2300 Miles—New Orleans

The Jefferson Highway traverses the heart of the richest country on the globe, and one filled with romance and sentiment. It connects Acadia, the Land of Evangeline, with the lake region and pine forests of the great North-land; the land which stretches away across lake and plain, through forests and over mountain tops, to the Hudson Bay country. It extends through the cotton plantations of the South and the oil districts of Louisiana and Oklahoma, across the great corn belt of the trans-Mississippi country, through the zinc mining districts of Missouri to the vast wheat fields of Minnesota and Canada.

#### PIKES PEAK OCEAN TO OCEAN HIGHWAY

The Street from Hell's Gate to the Golden Gate  
New York—3564 Miles—San Francisco

The Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway is the superlative scenic route. Leading to places of beauty and grandeur, it gives expression to the "See America" idea. But it is more than a sight-seer's road—it binds together the work shops of the industrial centers with the treasure chests of the mountains. It is an artery of travel that gives life to the commercial, industrial, agricultural and mining districts of the first magnitude.

### **The Western End**

The western end of the PPOO had been a problem from the start because of the poor connection west of Salt Lake City into Nevada. The same problem had plagued the Lincoln Highway, which took motorists along an undeveloped route between Salt Lake City and Ely. The LHA had selected Ely, a city that was an equal distance from Los Angeles and San Francisco, so motorists could stay on the Lincoln Highway regardless of which city they were visiting. The LHA believed it had a commitment from Utah officials to improve its alignment, but the State did not do so.

Utah preferred to split the motorists, rather than give them a moreorless direct route to Ely, where they could head to Los Angeles or San Francisco. Instead, Utah preferred direct Los Angeles-bound motorists to the Arrowhead Trail. The State promoted this trail for economic reasons. The Arrowhead Trail, in comparison with the Lincoln Highway, took a southwestern route through Utah, keeping motorists bound for Los Angeles in the State for several hundred extra miles after

they left Salt Lake City. Utah benefited from the extra mileage each time motorists purchased such services as gas, food, and lodging to these motorists.

In 1919, the Victory Highway was established with the same termini as the Lincoln Highway but an alternative routing. The highway chose a routing across the Great Salt Lake Desert via Wendover into Nevada, where it connected with the Overland Trail.

The longstanding dispute between the LHA and Utah crystallized after the Federal Highway Act of 1921 restricted Federal-aid highway funds to a limited system of roads. The U.S. Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), acting at the State's request, adopted the Great Salt Lake Desert route as the link into Nevada that would be included in the Federal-aid highway system. This decision left the Lincoln Highway route via Ely ineligible for improvement with Federal-aid highway funds. The LHA appealed the BPR's decision to Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace during a hearing in Washington on May 14, 1923. On June 6, he ruled in favor of Utah. He said that he could accept or reject Utah's proposal, but did not have the statutory authority to adopt an alternative, namely the Lincoln Highway route. (In effect, Secretary Wallace's decision determined the location of U.S. 40 and I-80.)

### **A Change of Direction**

In 1924, the PPOO Association changed the route's western terminus to Los Angeles, following the Arrowhead Trail. After the switch, an article in the *Reno Evening Gazette* (reprinted in *Nevada Highway News*, March 29, 1924) summarized the views of those along the Overland Trail:

The Directors of the Pike's Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association, which once invaded this section with a crowd of boomers soliciting memberships under the guise of routing a national roadway across the continent, have abandoned their road through Northern Nevada and Northern California and henceforth will reach the Pacific Coast by way of Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. That means Northern Nevada will probably not be invaded by this flock of highway promoters in the future . . . .

The Pike's Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association's campaigners made their first dash through Nevada some six or seven years ago. They were flamboyantly advertised in advance, were entertained by commercial clubs and good roads' organizations, and after a noisy procession through the country they solemnly proceeded to map a transcontinental highway that was to be traveled by oceans of tourists that would spend oceans of money in the towns located upon the route. The incidental matter of taking up subscriptions from members admitted into the "association" was not overlooked.

In Nevada the route followed the Humboldt and Truckee rivers, struck north from Reno and proceeded down the Feather river canyon to the Coast. Before long it was decorated with gorgeous tin signs and thereafter the members were called upon to renew their dues. Now they have left us. Northern Nevada and Northern California evidently proved to be unproductive fields. There are probably better opportunities, higher appreciation, perhaps more money in the warmer climate of the sunny southland. At least that territory is to be patronized hereafter.



The highway part of the Pike's Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association will never be missed. The roads which it so gratuitously adopted and emblazoned with glittering legends were there before it was organized. They are there yet, none the better, none the worse for the promoters who splashed them upon their colored maps. The men and women who cross the country in motor cars will ride over them, just the same, regardless of the signs tacked up or taken down by the Pike's Peak promoters.

The article concluded: "In nine cases out of ten these transcontinental highway associations are common nuisances and nothing else."

## **June 1924**

An article appeared in the June 1924 Citizens Good Roads Association magazine about the PPOO. It was a promotional piece in the continuing work of the PPOO Association. In that respect, the article is typical of the incentives the PPOO Association believed would attract motorists to its route. The article began:

With the call of the road, ever present in the heart of the motor car owner (for he wouldn't be a motor car owner unless this was true) the coming of spring and summer brings the ever pertinent question, "Where to go and how to get there." In years of dealing with the touring public, this has ever been paramount to any other condition in the minds of the majority of motor car owners, and the quicker these owners find out about these highways, and places of interest on them, just so soon will every trip be full of joy and pleasure, instead of a mixture of that with disappointments. Even with this suggestion made, it is not probable that it will be taken seriously—until you want to take a trip. Then will come the usual scramble for information, with the result that it's a toss-up whether you go where you want to, and get there over the best and most convenient route.

Everyone, the article noted, is familiar with "the main steam roads and . . . generally where they go." That was not the case with the main highways. To provide information on "the central scenic route of the United States," the PPOO Association highlighted what it believed would be of greatest interest to motorists:

The Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway is the shortest transcontinental highway in the United States. Roughly, it follows the fortieth parallel. Starting at New York City, the highway runs westward in almost a straight line, except where the country makes that impossible, to Los Angeles, California.

When the highway association was organized and the route first laid out in 1913, the principal cities in the central part of the United States were included on this route. The cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; Denver, Colorado, and Salt Lake City, Utah, were among those cities. Within a few years after, none of these cities were included on this highway. The demand of the tourist that he be given a route eliminating the larger cities, because of delays, traffic ordinances, etc., caused this change. So that today, in addition to being the shortest transcontinental highway, the Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean route is also located so that the tourist can make the best time to the territory where he wants to spend his vacation, instead of spending his vacation in

getting there. Another feature that is all important in the work of this highway association, is that the highway has been selected so that the grades are easy, and even in the mountainous district, the Pikes Peak Highway is routed so that it is the “high gear” way.

One of the first things that an Easterner asks about, is the amount of improved highway, while the Westerner never thinks much about this, but expects mud. In order to answer the first question, it can be stated that 98 percent of the Pikes Peak route from New York City to the Mississippi River is improved, and ninety-six percent of the entire highway is federal aid road. This does not mean that you won’t find dirt roads west of the Mississippi River, for you will, regardless of which route you take on your trip. However, well kept dirt roads are as nice to ride over, and less severe on the car, than are hard-surface roads. The only disagreeable difference being during a rainy period . . . .

Along the Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway are hundreds of camps for the tourists who wish to make the trip a real outing. In many of these every conceivable convenience is offered the visitors, while in others, they are offered only the necessities and really have to “rough it.”

The cities along the route are large enough to provide the best kind of accommodations in the way of hotels, garages and places to obtain meals, and along this highway the business men cater to the tourists, and do so on only a fair business basis.

To aid the tourists, the Pikes Peak Highway is well marked throughout the United States. The red and white markers, with the black letters, “P.P.O.O” set out the fact that you are on this route, it is quite usual to hear the expression, “You can’t get lost on the Pikes Peak Highway.” This literally is true, for the trail is kept well marked, and this is handled so well, you can’t leave the highway unless you want to do so.

As the Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association has more than 6000 members in more than 200 cities along this route, who look out to see that the highway is maintained as it should be, and the tourists get the best of attention, the visitors on this route are assured of a friendly feeling from coast to coast, with every town and village along the highway cooperating to do its share to make your trip a success.

## **Replacing the Promoters**

By the mid-1920's, the named trails had become a confusing jumble of overlapping routes, with locations often chosen on the basis of the willingness of communities to pay dues, not on the basis of sound engineering judgment. Some trail associations were fly-by-night operations intended to benefit the promoters rather than the road or the communities it passed through. In 1925, the State highway agencies and the BPR joined to create a new national marking system, the U.S. numbered highways. In November 1926, the States approved the plan and began installing the U.S. shields.

When State and BPR officials numbered the highways, the transcontinental and other major named trails were intentionally divided among several numbers. Like many of the named trail associations, the PPOO Association protested the split numbering, and the absence of some

segments of the trail from the U.S. numbering plan. For example, on December 24, 1925, H. D. Judson, General Manager of the PPOO Association, wrote to E. W. James, an official of the BPR and one of the system's creators:

Although no official map of the system of interstate highways, which are to be marked with numbers, through the cooperation of your department with the various state highway departments, has been received at this office, there have been numerous newspaper stories relative to the roads and their numbers and a few maps have been published by newspapers and magazines depicting the exact route of the highways to be numbered.

We assume that what the newspapers have published is only partly correct, and that when your official map appears, it will present an entirely different picture, hence we are writing in the hope that there may yet be time for and disposition, on the part of those in authority, to change the numbering which will affect the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway in the western part of the country, providing, of course, there is found to be good reason for the suggested changes.

James provided the same response he provided to most such inquiries at the time, namely that any changes in the numbering would have to be approved by the Executive Committee of the American Association of State Highway Officials.

With adoption of the system in 1926, interest in the named trails dwindled because motorists preferred to follow a single number across country. The trail associations had outlived their usefulness. In their heyday, before significant government funding was available, they were an important part of the movement to improve the Nation's roads. By the mid-1920's, the Federal Government had a well-funded Federal-aid highway program, each State had a highway agency, and the private named trail promoters were obsolete.

Nevertheless, the PPOO Association continued to promote its highway for several years. The February 1927 issue of *The Appian Way of America*, the PPOO Association's magazine, contained an editorial criticizing the U.S. numbering plan because it had not prevented the organization of new and questionable "trails" organizations:

When the Federal marking system was decided upon, one of the outstanding things the plan proposed to accomplish was to prevent new and worthless trails schemes from being launched. Since the adoption of this program, however, it seems that more new trails organizations have sprung up than during any previous period of like extent. Every few days one reads in the newspapers of some new trail association. Practically all of these plan to function for almost their entire distance over existing well established routes.

The editorial stated that although hundreds "of worthless trails organizations" had disappeared, strong associations such as the LHA and the PPOO Association "have continued unperturbed:

When this association was formed back in 1911 [sic], its purpose was to aid in every possible manner the construction of this highway as a continuous hard-surfaced route from New York

to Los Angeles [sic] . . . . This great transcontinental highway was laid out many years ago and has many advantages over other transcontinental routes. Because of its directness, freedom from congestion of large cities, its excellent alignment, easy grades and, in the west, unsurpassed scenic attractions, it is destined to become one of America's great transcontinental main streets.

The LHA would cease its active promotional work in September 1928. The end of one of the earliest and strongest of the trail associations was a sign that the PPOO Association's days were numbered. The evidence of the coming end can be found in the PPOO Association's 1927 map guide, which provided detailed "strip" maps of the PPOO—with the U.S. numbered routes also shown: U.S. 22 (Pennsylvania) , U.S. 36 (Illinois to Kansas), U.S. 40 (Kansas to Colorado), U.S. 50 (Colorado to Utah), U.S. 89 (Utah), U.S. 91 (Utah to California), U.S. 66. Ominously, segments not included in a U.S. highway were shown only with their State route listing.

### **The Path of Friendship**

By 1927, the PPOO Association was still adjusting its route. The Advisory Board and State Divisions met in St. Joseph on February 21 to make needed adjustments. These included three adjustments of the route, plus adoption of a branch route. An article in the March 1927 issue of *The Appian Way of America* described the adjustments:

The short route between Las Vegas, Nevada, and Daggett, California, which for several years has been shown as an optional route of the P.P.O.O Highway, was adopted as the main route. This route, much of which has been improved, shortens the length of the highway ninety-five miles. The new route is a great advantage over the former one, since it enables the traveler to cross the Mojave Desert easily in one day's drive.

In Colorado the Eleven Mile Canyon route was adopted between Hartsel and Florissant. There is no saving in mileage here, but the new route does away with a considerable grade and is much more scenic. The Eleven Mile Canyon route follows along the Platte River in Colorado on the roadbed of the old Midland Railroad.

The third change in route was between Dover, New Jersey, and New York City, a distance of about forty-five miles. The route formerly extended through Newark, New Jersey, and entered New York City by way of the Weehawken Ferry. Traffic congestion has grown to be so great in Newark within the past few years that it has presented a real problem to this organization. The newly adopted route is a short distance north of the former highway and extends through Paterson and Hackensack and enters New York City via the 130<sup>th</sup> Street Ferry.

The article added that in eliminating Newark, the PPOO Association was following its policy of "avoiding all large cities where traffic congestion retards the progress of the through motorist."

The new branch, known as the Grand Canyon National Park Branch, extended from the PPOO at Sevier, Utah, and took motorists to the north rim of the Grand Canyon. Although the Grand Canyon was the objective, the article pointed out that Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon and Cedar

Breaks were “but short trips from the branch route.” The PPOO also had a Mesa Verde National Park Branch in Colorado.

The April-May 1927 issue described the PPOO Association’s advertising program. During May and June, “distinctive and attractive” advertisements were planned for Sunday newspapers around the country. The association also planned to advertise in quality magazines such as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper’s*, and *Scribner’s*. The cost of this direct advertising over the previous 7 years was estimated at more than \$150,000. In addition, the association distributed several hundred thousand free maps and booklets at touring bureaus, hotels, garages, and other businesses along the highway.

On July 18, 1927, the association sponsored an Official Survey and Publicity Tour of the PPOO. The tour was designed to direct nationwide attention to the highway, show how much time an average tourist would need to make the trip, and gather exact information on road mileage and condition. The official party included William L. Robinson of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, who was President of the association, and General Manager Judson. Robinson, because of an illness in his family, left the tour at Delaware, Ohio. However, at a banquet, he described the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway as a long “Path of Friendship,” with the towns along the way vying with their neighbors in entertaining and doing honor to the official party.

The group left New York City on Monday morning, July 18, and reached Los Angeles on Thursday afternoon, August 11. Total driving time was 106 hours over 3,286 miles, which the official report of the tour noted is “the shortest route between New York City and Los Angeles.” The trip averaged 31 miles an hour. The highway, the party found, was “continuously hard surfaced” from New York City to a point 50 miles west of Hannibal, Missouri (1,218 miles). Surface types, described as “hard surfaced road,” encountered:

Concrete, 664 miles
Bituminous macadam, 486 miles
Bituminous concrete, 94 miles
Brick, 130 miles
<u>Gravel, 1,242 miles</u>
Total: 2,616 miles

In all, only 670 miles had yet to be surfaced, but the association expected half of that mileage to be under construction for hard surfacing within the next year. The association estimated that over \$45 million had been spent on permanent construction of the PPOO over the past 7 years, with another \$5 million planned.

The PPOO Association continued its promotional work into the 1930’s. For example, it participated in the opening of the last paved section of the highway in Missouri on November 14, 1931. Governor Henry S. Caulfield participated in the event, which was held in Macon, the hometown of Theodore Gary, the first chairman of the State Highway Commission who is known as “The Father of the Missouri Road System.”

With completion of the Missouri section, the association stated that the PPOO was “paved from terminal to terminal, except for a 300-mile stretch in Kansas, and work is now in progress there.”

Still, the era of the named trail was over. The PPOO was gradually disappearing from national road maps. The highway that couldn’t make up its mind would soon disappear from national awareness.