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Ohio Method of Marking High-
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Both Number and Name on Sign the Ideal Way

THE widely heralded plan for signing
land marking a system of national
highways is not all beer and skittles. A
formidable opposition which has been
dormant, but extant, nevertheless, raised
its head out of oblivion at the Chicago
show and evoked a powerful and
attention-compelling squawk," says the
editor of Western Highways Builder.

"Highway engineers and public officials
from the Atlantic seaboard divested them-
selves of pungent excoications of the entire
plan in general and its individually
repulsive aspects in particular.
"This was to be expected. Of all the
idealistic proposals yet advanced for the
administration of highways, none can
equal this for pure imbecility. The
standardization of warning signs is the
only feature that has prevented the
project from being laughed out of court
ere this, but I fear even this passive
meritorious ramification will not be suf-
ficient to save it from complete dissolution
or radical modification," he continues.

To ask a motorist to travel from
Keosauqua, Conn., to Keokuk, Iowa,
with one eye on a signboard and the other
on a key map, is to invite him to a case of
neurotropa and a chronic megrum.

Recent surveys, conducted by such
representative bodies as the National
Automobile Chamber of Commerce and
the Bureau of Public Roads in conjunction
with the State Highway Departments of
the various states, indicate that about
15% of motor traffic on the highways is
passenger carrying automobiles. Any
signing system is naturally of very little
value to the drivers of commercial
vehicles and consequently they travel well-
defined, short routes. It is the 85% passenger
traffic which is interested in the information
that properly placed signboards will convey.
On country roads, particularly in the western
half of the United States, a large por-
tion of this passenger traffic is composed
of vacationists and tourists seeking
pleasure, health and education. While
primarily pleasure-bent, they unconsciously
absorb a vast amount of history and
geography. The romance attached to
such trips is what leaves the lasting
impression and gives to the participant a
definite, fixed and permanent element
of education, is the verdict of G. S. Hoag,
Secretary of the Lincoln Highway Ass'n.

There will always be a greater patriotic
glow in the thought of having made a trip
over a considerable portion of the Lincoln
Highway, the Yellowstone Trail, the
Ohio Highway or the Santa Fe Trail than
could ever attach to the retrospection of a
similar trek over U. S. Highway Number
11 or Number 60.

More and more each year Americans
are touring their own country and, by so
doing, spend at home what they would
otherwise annually spend in search of
pleasure in foreign lands. This is as it
should be, and every effort should be made
to encourage it, says Hoag.

The editor of the Portland, Ore. Journal
follows on the historical and important
feature of such tours and the importance
of adhering to the old established and
historic names.

"There is no Columbia River highway
on the official maps at Washington. It's
merely 'No. 20'."

"There is no Lincoln Highway. Its
official designation is a number."

The Old Oregon Trail as a designa-
tion, is officially dead, and in its place is a
couple of meaningless numerals. The
Washington bureaucrats have blotted out
from their road maps and records the
vitality meaning conveyed in those sym-
bolic words, "The Old Oregon Trail."

"The vast trek in which the caravans of
covered wagons wore down the earth until

the wheels sank to the hubs in two long
furrows from the Mississippi to the
Willamette valley is officially designated
by two numerals.

"Only a meaningless number, a hard,
cold, metallic number, like the figures in a
cash register or on a bank ledger, is used
to designate the greatest migration in all
history. The barren numerals of an
arithmetic have officially become the
symbol for the great route over which the
covered wagons and their heroic com-
panys came for the winning of the West."

"One of the glories of a great highway
system is the romance reflected in its
nomenclature. One of its lures, that will
grow stronger and stronger with time, is
its local name, which in a single word tells
of an epoch and fires the imagination at
the picture of a great historic background."



"TYPICAL of the signs placed and maintained
by the State of Ohio for the purpose of
marking its highways." This sign well illus-
trates the real value of the suggestion made by
the American Road Council.

For purposes of records and accounting
on highways built jointly by the Federal
Government and the states, the proposed
system of numbering U. S. Highways
uniformly is undoubtedly ideal. The
uniform system of warning and direction
signs to be used in all parts of the nation
is also a forward step and no word other
than of commendation can be said about
this part of the marking plan, but it takes
more than a number to fix association of
any thoroughfare in the minds of travelers.

Probably the most constructive sug-
gestion that has yet been made for mark-
ing the interstate highways, so that the
designations would be of value to the
motorist as well as to the road officials, is
contained in a resolution adopted by the
American Road Congress in session at
Chicago last January. It reads: "Be it
resolved that the Joint Board, now formu-
lating a uniform marking system for
interstate roads in the United States, be
requested as far as practicable to designate
the various routes not only by a numeral,
but with the local distinctive names."
This plan would seem to answer all
purposes and has a successful precedent in
the system for many years in vogue in Ohio.

It was the activities of various route
associations which fostered and encour-
aged the idea of motoring and seeing one's
own country, thus was developed the
demand for better highways and that
demand brought about the creation of
state and Federal units which have built
and are building the highways.

Motor touring is still a healthy activity
and always will be. It is good for the
individual life and it is good for the
national life. It should be fostered and
encouraged by all the reputable associa-
tions in any way associated with highway
construction or the automotive industry.
It is well to keep alive the popular inter-
est on the part of the nation, for it will otherwise lag without leadership.

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