

The same day your letter was written I received a letter from the secretary of one of the best known transcontinental trail associations in which he says;

"We are being bombarded from all directions with requests that we send letters and telegrams, etc., to Congressmen and Senators protesting against the removal of trail markers from U. S. highways. Our attitude has always been that the question of whether markers of highway and trail associations shall be allowed to stand, rests with the individual States. Our impression has been that the Bureau of Public Roads would not attempt to take any definite stand and that the matter was one that could not properly come before the national law makers."

This is an exact statement of the fact. Not only was the matter of perpetuation of the names of highways left to the individual States, but it was informally agreed by the members of the Board that should the States desire to carry the names of the highways on the same standards carrying the numbers adopted for interstate highways as recommended by the Board, that the Board would make no objection. This in fact is the practice in some States now, i.e., to carry the State number and on the same standard a neat sign giving the name of the highway.

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Whatever representations have been made to you are either by misinformed persons who honestly think that some injustice will be done to the old established named trails or through a wilful attempt for purely selfish purposes to misrepresent the situation to the Senators and Congressmen.

We found that there were in existence more than 250 so called trail organizations. Of these a very few had earned the right to a continuing existence. These few had kept faith with the public. They had succeeded in obtaining recognition for certain highways and worked with a definite purpose to put up markers, secure the interest of the people along the way in the improvement of their particular routes, and had built up pride in the communities in the improvement and care of the routes.

You have adequately described the situation in your reference to the Lincoln Highway, Jefferson Highway and others, and you also refer to the pride in the name which the towns along these routes have. The members of the Joint Board are all very familiar with these facts. There has been no act of the Board to interfere with the continuance of these names, and representation to the contrary is false. On the other hand the Association of State Highway Officials is determined if possible to wipe out the promoter of trails whose numbers and activities in collecting funds from the public have been increasing rapidly.

You know how urgent is the demand for improved roads, and how great the desire to hasten their actual accomplishment. It is this fact that has encouraged promoters to go into the field with representation that by contributing to some new trail association, Federal or State funds or both would become available and the improvement desired hastened. Needless to say, these promoters have not been in the position to control the application of one dollar of public funds. I do not criticize the civic organizations and individuals who have supported such individuals because they have been driven by the very laudable motive of doing anything possible to secure the improvement needed.