



12-15-1986

The Last Link

Maxine Wilhelm

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>

Recommended Citation

Wilhelm, Maxine (1986) "The Last Link," *Westview*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 2 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol6/iss2/8>

This Nonfiction is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.



The Last Link

By Maxine Wilhelm

This year, 1986, marks the thirtieth anniversary of our interstate highway system. I-40 and I-35 were the largest public works project in history.

It was fitting that President Dwight Eisenhower made authorization of the 41,000-mile network a priority aim of his administration, for the concept had its origin in 1919 when a military convoy headed by Lt. Col. Eisenhower required 62 days to travel from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco.

During May, 1975, the last 17 miles on I-40 linking approximately 330 rural mileage together, from the Texas state line west of Texola to Moffett, east to the Arkansas line, was completed.

Oklahoma was the third state in the nation to complete the rural interstate construction; Maryland and Delaware were the first two.

A ceremony was held June 2 at 3:00 p.m. at the Oklahoma Tourist Information Center east of Erick, opening the last link of the eastbound interstate lane to traffic and at the same time dedicating the Tourist Information Center.

The Oklahoma Country Music Association entertained the crowd. Pony Express riders, a wagon train and riding clubs, a horse and buggy, and old model cars dating to the Model T were there as living links to Oklahoma's past transportation system.

Among the many dignitaries attending were Lt. Gov. George Nigh, Oklahoma Highway Commissioner J. C. Kennedy, Governor David Boren, and many other important people connected with the construction of the highway and the center.

Meanwhile at the state line, workmen removed the road barriers, stretched a ribbon across the highway, and helped the State Highway Patrol reroute the cars on to the new road.

After a brief ceremony and a cutting of the ribbon, the officers waved on the drivers that had Oklahoma tags. There were quite a few cars because everyone wanted to be first and thus get the prize. Finally, a car that bore an out-of-state tag moved forward. The Highway Patrol, with sirens blaring, escorted the car to the Tourist Information Center.

The winners were introduced by Governor Boren as Mr. and Mrs. Bob Reed and children from Indiana. The Erick Chamber of Commerce gave the Reeds gift certificates for overnight lodging, free meals, gifts from merchants, as well as gifts from surrounding towns. Reed was presented an Indian headdress by Miss Oklahoma Indian Princess.

It was an exciting afternoon for all who attended, and the people from the small town of Erick felt privileged to be a part of the event. ❁

Southwest

122 E Main 393-4367

STATE BANK

SENTINEL, OKLAHOMA

