



# 1853 NEWTON STAGECOACH ROUTE GUTHRIE COUNTY—IOWA

In 1853, Eder B. Newton was employed to lay out a stage road across Guthrie County—Iowa. The route was very similar to the trail used by previous westward travelers, like the forty-niners. In 1951, a small Guthrie County Tourism group placed homemade signs along the old stage route for the county's centennial, but by 2005 most of the signs were missing or illegible.

In 2008, William Frels, a member of Boy Scout Troop 127, researched the route, had new signs created with funding from local businesses, and installed the 19 signs along the 29.4-mile route for his Eagle Scout Project. If you are looking for an adventure,



## SIGN #1

### GPS Coordinates

41.586972, -94.241389

Elev. 1,032 ft.

The route starts at the Dallas County/Guthrie County line on 280th Road. This road links to Redfield, Iowa, and intersects with Wagon Road. The sign is on the north side of the road. Head west along 280th to continue on the stage route.

### Point of Interest

Traveling west on 280th Rd, near 280th Rd and Zero Ave, there is an old sign noting the location for the [Cummings Independent School, East Jackson District No. 1—1874-1955](#). There is also a sign noting location of the old [Union Chapel](#) on the north side of the road.



## SIGN #2

### GPS Coordinates

41.590092 -94.284569

Elev. 1,054 ft.

The sign is located on the southwest corner of 280th Rd and York Ave. Continue heading west to stay on the stage route.

*Photo of Benjamin Kunkle*

### Point of Interest

Traveling west on 280th Rd, near the intersection of 280th Rd and 280th St, there is a sign at the site of the [Kunkle Cabin, First permanent log home in Guthrie County, Iowa—1848](#). The cabin, which is no longer standing, was built by Benjamin and Barbara Kunkle, who were the first permanent settlers in Guthrie County. Their first crop was 12 acres of corn and a small patch of potatoes.



## SIGN #3

### GPS Coordinates

41.601419 -94.299361

Elev. 1,052 ft.

The sign is located on the northwest corner of 280th Rd and Walnut. Continue heading west to stay on the stage route.

*Photo of Harbor Stage Station—1855*



### Point of Interest

The farm site slightly west of this sign's location and on the south side of 280th was a stage stop, known as [Harbor Stage Station](#). Just west of this location, the first post office in the county was established. Allen P.O. was open for business on August 16, 1852 and the office was actually kept in the cabin of the postmaster, J. W. Cummins. The post office would move to Fairview (Morrisburg) in 1855 and later to Dale City.

## SIGN #4

### GPS Coordinates

41.601522 -94.318048

Elev. 1,062 ft.

The sign is located on the northeast corner of 280th Rd and Wagon Rd. To stay on stage route, turn left on Wagon Rd and head south 1 mile, then turn west on 285th St.

*Photo of Morrisburg Cemetery*



### Point of Interest

South of the sign and before turning on 285th, you will pass the ghost town of [Morrisburg](#) and the remaining cemetery. In 1855, James Moore and Jonathan Morris laid out a town with the name of Fairview. After realizing the name was already used for another town in Iowa, the name was changed to Morrisburg in 1856. By 1870, saloons were plentiful and business of all kinds was excellent but the first stroke of bad luck was made when the railroad superseded the stage lines and did not go through Morrisburg. After the disastrous tornado of 1871, the town rapidly went to pieces. Some moved to Dale City while others tore down their buildings and moved on. Thus was the sad end of Morrisburg.

## SIGN #5

### GPS Coordinates

41.597498 -94.322889 Elev. 1,059 ft.

The sign is on the northwest corner of Wagon Rd and 285th St. Head west along 285th to continue on the stage route.

*Photo of Lonsdale Woolen Mill*



### Point of Interest

Traveling west on 285th Rd, you will pass the [Dale Valley Winery](#), which is also the new home to the Dale one-room country schoolhouse. Near 285th Rd and Victory Trail, you will enter the small, unincorporated town of Dale City and see two signs—[Post Office, Dale City, 1865-1883](#) and [Dale 1883-1922](#). In 1862, the town of Dale City was laid out. That same year, Lonsdale & Kenworthy started a store at the Lonsdale Woolen Mills. This establishment was the beginning of the decline for Morrisburg, the small town just up the road. Dale's woolen mill was in operation for many years along the South Raccoon River but finally closed in 1917, when dyes from Germany could not be obtained due to WWI, and thus, the population of Dale city began to decline. Dale City was an important stop along the Underground Railroad that passed through southern Guthrie County.

## SIGN #6

### GPS Coordinates

41.597386 -94.371132 Elev. 1,063 ft.

The sign is located on the northeast corner of 285th St and Tank Ave. Turn north on Tank Ave to stay on the stage route.

*Photo of Glendon Church*



### Alternate Route

The alternate route goes south on Tank Ave and turns west on 283rd St. Follow to Sycamore Ave and up through the ghost town of [Glendon](#). In the late part of 1880, Glendon was laid out in northeastern Beaver Township by H. N. Ross and J. Early. The following year, the town added a post office to the growing number of mercantiles, trades, such as hardware and blacksmith, and even a hotel-restaurant. The railroad "switch" from Menlo passed through Glendon. As time passed, the population of this small community began to dwindle, as did most of the buildings and houses. The charming [Glendon Church](#), which was built in the 1890's, is the only original town building still standing and has recently been restored.

## SIGN #7

### GPS Coordinates

41.608975 -94.371661 Elev. 951 ft.

The sign is located on the northwest corner of Tank Ave and 275th St. Continue heading west on 275th, which will turn into 270th St., to stay on the stage route.

### Point of Interest

If you didn't take the alternate route (above), [Glendon](#) is located 1/2 mile southwest of here.

## SIGN #8

### GPS Coordinates

41.616079 -94.420553 Elev. 1,136 ft.

The sign is located on the northwest corner of 270th St and Quarry Lane. Continue heading west on 270th to stay on the stage route.

*Photo of Main Street in Monteith—Ca. 1910*



### Point of Interest

The ghost town of [Monteith](#) is located 1 mile north of this location. In 1881, H.T. Reed laid out the town of Monteith on his land and the railroad built a depot. The Rock Island passed through Monteith several times a week. Interestingly, several of the businesses that sprung up in the town were actually moved from Leadville, a small-but-quickly-fading community that was located just a quarter of a mile south of Monteith. The original general store, seen in this photo, is now located at the Guthrie County Historical Village in Panora, Iowa.

## SIGN #9

### GPS Coordinates

41.616183, -94.435000 Elev. 1,183 ft.

The sign is located on the northwest corner of 270th St and Quail Rd. To stay on stage route continue west on 270th.

### Point of Interest

The [Monteith Cemetery](#) is located 1 mile north of this location.

## SIGN #10

### GPS Coordinates

41.616217, -94.473517 Elev. 1,252 ft.

The sign is located on the northwest corner of 270th St and Oak Ave. To stay on stage route continue west on 270th.

## SIGN #11

### GPS Coordinates

41.616183, -94.492800 Elev. 1,271 ft.

The sign is on the northwest corner of 270th St and State Hwy 25. Head west along 285th to continue on the stage route.

*Photo of Old Stage Road, Sec 3, Thompson Twp.*



### Point of Interest

At certain times of the year, the original trail is visible as a "cut" near the fence line in a field about 1/2 mile south and 1/4 mile west of this location. Guthrie Center is located 4 miles north of this point.

## SIGN #12

### GPS Coordinates

41.616183, -94.512367 Elev. 1,270 ft.

The sign is located on the west side of T-intersection of 270th St and Maple Ave. Turn south on Maple Ave to stay on the stage route.

## SIGN #13

### GPS Coordinates

41.609100, -94.512317 Elev. 1,282 ft.

The sign is located on the southwest corner of Maple Ave and 275th St. Continue heading west on 275th St to stay on the stage route.

### Point of Interest

Traveling west on 275th St, you will see the sign [Site of Gopher Station, 1854](#). Built by [John Betts](#) located near the Ivan Larson farmstead.

## SIGN #14

### GPS Coordinates

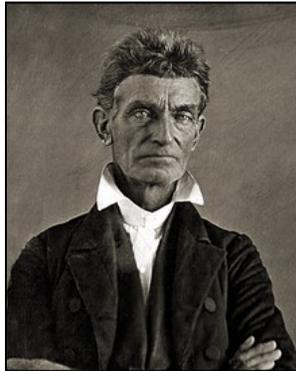
41.586850, -94.548350 Elev. 1,335 ft.

The sign is located on the northwest corner of Lock Trail and Koala Ave. Continue heading west on Lock Trail to stay on the stage route.

*Photo of John Brown—Ca. 1856*

### Point of Interest

The ghost town of [Dalmanutha](#) and the Dalmanutha Cemetery are just west of this sign on Lock Trail. You will see signs [Dalmanutha, Post Office, 1863](#) and [1855 Site of Dalmanutha on Newton Stage Trail, 1870](#). The Porter Hotel, once located in Dalmanutha, was a well-known stop along the Underground Railroad and it is believed that the famous abolitionist, John Brown, stopped there on his way to Harper's Ferry.



## SIGN #15

### GPS Coordinates

41.583200, -94.567800 Elev. 1,325 ft.

The sign is located on the northwest corner of Lock Trail/295th St and Juniper. To stay on stage route continue west on 295th St. Looking west you can see the windmills.

## SIGN #16

### GPS Coordinates

41.583183, -94.585950 Elev. 1,298 ft.

The sign is located on the northeast corner of 295th St and Indigo Ave. To stay on stage route, turn north on Indigo and follow around the corner. Road will turn into 287th St; continue west.

## SIGN #17

### GPS Coordinates

41.594150, -94.604933 Elev. 1,363 ft.

The sign is located on the northeast corner of 287th St and Hickory Ave. To stay on stage route, follow Hickory Ave on around to 280th St and continue west.

## SIGN #18

### GPS Coordinates

41.602150, -94.644050 Elev. 1,446 ft.

The sign is on the northwest corner of 280th St and Frontier Rd/"Adair Blacktop." To stay on trail, continue west on 280th St.

*Photo of Bear Grove Cemetery*



### Point of Interest

Town of Adair is 6 miles south of this location. Old town site of [Bear Grove](#) is located 3 miles NE of this location. Bear Grove, established in 1854, received its name from the numerous bear that lived in the adjoining woods. The town was located in a beautiful portion of Bear Grove township, known for its abundance of timber and fine prairie at hand, and was also a stop on the stage coach. At one time, the town was also known as "Huddleville" because of the numerous families that had arrived but were destitute in means so they had "huddled" together. Eventually, the stage coach was replaced by train and no tracks went to Bear Grove leading to the eventual end.

## SIGN #19

### GPS Coordinates

41.602200, -94.700750 Elev. 1,474 ft.

The sign is located on the north side of T-intersection of 280th St and Union Ave. Stage route travels into Audubon County. Go west and turn north on Bowman Ave to head to Hwy 44.

*Photo of Bear Grove #4*



### Point of Interest

Ghost town of [North Branch](#) is located 3 miles N of this location. North Branch was established in 1873. Its name, which was taken from the "north branch" of Troublesome Creek, was proposed by Stephen Shoemith and voted upon and accepted at Sunday-school. The post office was established in 1874 and the town also had several stores. Bear Grove #4, or the North Branch school, closed in 1956 and stood majestically in a field just to the west of where the town was once located up until 2014. Now it is a field with no signs that any school ever existed.

## Would you like a full-sized map of Guthrie County?

Send us your name and your mailing address and we'll mail you a free map of Guthrie County, which includes the Newton Stage Coach trail locations, Ghost Towns, Barn Quilt locations, and many other areas in our county.

**Contact us: (641)755-2989 or [gchv@netins.net](mailto:gchv@netins.net)**

