

# THE TENSAS GAZETTE

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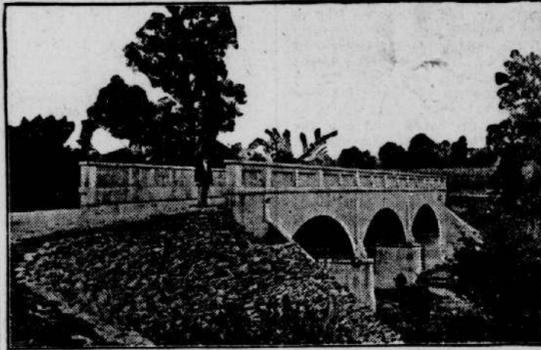
**Hugo Jereslaw,**

NEWELLTON, LOUISIANA

## Maintaining Bond-Built Roads

Make Ample Provision for Upkeep—Analysis  
of State Highway Reports on  
Cost of Maintenance

(Prepared by the U. S. Department of Agriculture)



Cedar Creek Concrete Bridge, Louisville, Ky.

The problem of maintaining highways constructed with borrowed money should be given as much consideration as is devoted to the more permanent features of the roadbed. It has not been customary for officials to face frankly the cost of the maintenance and repair of bond-built highways at the time the bonds are issued and before construction begins. As a matter of fact, investigations made by the department show that in the majority of cases where bonds have been issued by local authorities there has been no provision whatever for maintaining the roads when built. This is perhaps the greatest defect in the method of building highways by issuing bonds.

Maintenance is necessary in order to insure to the community the maximum economic service by the road, and also to preserve the investment. The cost of maintenance and repairs must, therefore, be studied at the outset. In the absence of general data, the reports on maintenance from states which have highway departments should be of interest to county officers preparing to issue road-building bonds.

**Cost of Maintenance.**  
The following opinions as to maintenance cost represent the results of careful analyses of state highway reports, as well as much first-hand information gathered by the department's specialists:

Well-constructed gravel roads will sometimes sustain several years of farm traffic without showing marked deterioration, even when there has been no maintenance. Such roads sometimes actually improve during the second season; more frequently, however, they show ruts or chuck holes. It cannot be expected that the average life of a gravel surface will be greater than that of a macadam surface, which in the New England and eastern states is between six and seven years. If a sum equal to two-thirds of the original cost of the gravel surface itself is provided for renewals at six-year intervals, it should be estimated at from \$150 to \$250 per mile per year. If \$30 is then allowed for annual dragging and small repairs, the total annual cost of repair and maintenance for gravel roads would be from \$180 to \$280 per mile. The annual cost of maintenance alone is sometimes below \$30. In Bennington county, Vt., during 1912, 175 miles of gravel roads were maintained at a cost of \$20.70 per mile. The annual cost of maintenance and repair on sand-clay roads, including all necessary resurfacing at periodic intervals, should not be fixed at less than 10 per cent of the original cost.

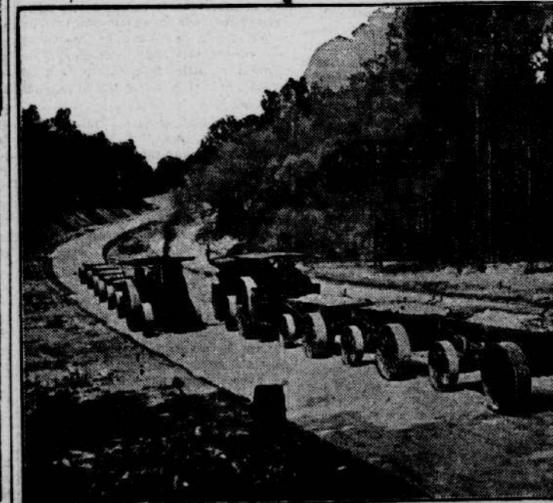
**What Figures Show.**  
The cost of repair and maintenance for water-bound macadam roads has been determined with considerable exactness from Massachusetts figures and checked by resurfacing charges in other states and in Germany. Prior to 1913, from \$100 to \$125 per year ordinarily paid for necessary small

repairs, such as patching, cleaning culverts, etc., and from \$400 to \$425 per year was the necessary annual charge in order to resurface at periods varying from six to seven years. The sum of \$525 per mile, on an average, should therefore maintain macadam roads if changes and increases of traffic are not excessive. It must be understood, however, that in many instances where macadam sufficed for the volume and character of traffic prior to 1906, it will not withstand the action of the motor vehicle traffic which has developed since that time.

Many miles of ordinary or water-bound macadam road have been resurfaced with bituminous materials, and many miles of new bituminous-macadam have been constructed. The logical maintenance of such highways is a surface treatment with bituminous material and rock screenings, clean gravel, or sharp sand. The cost of such surface treatment is from 4 to 12 cents per square yard, and it may be expected to last from one to three years, according to the density of traffic and the success of the application. Theoretically, perfect surface treatment would constitute absolute maintenance for a bituminous-macadam road. Such maintenance is seldom or never realized and bituminous-macadam roads doubtless require resurfacing at intervals. The cost of such resurfacing is not yet known.

**Repair and Maintenance.**  
The average cost for repair and maintenance of 7,300 miles of highway in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island, for the year 1912, was about \$800 per mile. A large part of this money was expended for bituminous resurfacing and bituminous surface treatment. There is some question whether the expenditure correctly measures the average cost of repairing and maintaining bituminous-macadam roads. In the state of New York, however, for the years 1911 and 1912 the average cost for repair and maintenance was \$724 per mile upon a total average of 2,861 miles. The annual cost of repair and maintenance on Massachusetts state roads for the years 1910, 1911 and 1912 was, respectively, \$642, \$647 and \$676 per mile for about 850 miles. For the most part these figures for New York and Massachusetts represent the cost per mile of resurfacing with bituminous material and of maintaining bituminous-macadam and water-bound macadam roads by surface treatment with bituminous material. It is clear, therefore, that for heavy traffic trunk line roads \$700 per mile is not an excessive estimate at present for the annual cost of all repair and maintenance on bituminous-macadam roads.

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St. Joseph, La., May 12, 1915.

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