

Topeka Journal, March 28, 1916

ROCK ROAD THERE

Bourbon County Sets Pace for Other Counties in Kansas.

50 Miles Built—50 Miles More Asked by Petitions.

Fort Scott, Kan., March 28.—One day last week Mr. S. J. Delano, of Fulton, who has been managing the rock road petitions for the nine mile stretch north of Fort Scott to extend the present rock road north to the Linn county line, completed the work of securing 50 per cent of the land and 60 per cent of the land owners and it is now only a matter of formality of having the county commissioners approve the petition and the next step will be the contract for the rock road.

The rock road petition southwest of Fort Scott through Pawnee to the Crawford county line north of Girard had been granted by the county commissioners several weeks ago. This completes the rock road across the county along the proposed Jefferson highway. With the five miles already built on each side of Fort Scott and the contracts for the balance of the twenty miles to be let soon, insures Bourbon county its part of the big highway in the shortest time of any county in Kansas and so far as known any of the counties in any of the eleven states through which the Jefferson highway passes.

Bourbon county now has fifty miles of rock road already built extending in eight directions from Fort Scott. There are now about fifty miles of rock road petitions under the Hodges law either granted or assured which will give that county 100 miles of rock roads. This will stand as the high mark of any county in Kansas in the matter of rock roads.

How and Why It Was Done.

Education along the lines of the benefits alike to farmers and merchants is the one big element in the success of this record for good roads. About ten years ago a special act of the Kansas legislature made Fort Scott and Scott township a special road district and made the mayor and township trustee the road commission to carry out the terms of the law. It levied a one mill tax which produced \$16,000 each year and this fund was to be expended in building rock roads out from Fort Scott to the township line in eight directions. Last year the work was completed, giving Fort Scott and Scott township fifty miles of rock roads and streets.

At the same time the township of Scott built at a cost of about \$16,500.00 18 miles of rock paved streets which added to the 18 miles of rock roads gave the people of that town and county a system of 36 miles of hard roads and streets. Every farmer coming into Fort Scott had a chance to see the difference between rock roads and mud roads. They received the lesson and the practical demonstration every time they went to Fort Scott.

Every farmer who lived on the rock road and helped to pay the extra tax found that the road was worth many times what it cost. He became a booster for rock roads. He told his neighbors who lived on mud roads what a benefit and what a saving the rock roads were over mud roads.

The good roads boosters decided last November to extend the rock roads beyond the boundary lines of Scott township. The so-called Hodges law was their only hope. At first it looked hard. The farmers balked for a time at themselves and the township paying 75% of the cost. But when the matter was fully understood and the tax was spread out over a district four miles wide it was found that \$1.00 per acre would meet the expense and they could have ten years in which to pay the tax or only 10 cents per acre for ten years.

Average Cost of Rock Roads.

The average cost of the rock roads in Bourbon county, and they are splendid macadam roads, was \$3,720 per mile. The township pays 25% of the cost. And in some counties the commissioners do all the grading and build all of the culverts and bridges. In other counties the commissioners pay 25% of the cost out of the general funds. In a district four miles wide there are 2,560 acres and if the township pays 25% or \$853.00 and the land \$1.00 per acre it will make a fund of \$3,413 or practically enough to build the rock road.

The campaign for rock roads in Bourbon county has been enthusiastically supported by the two daily newspapers, all of the merchants and business men, by all of the farmers now on rock roads and with numerous meetings and general discussions the people all over the county have learned the value of rock roads and are ready to build them. A group of farmers living out from Fort Scott circulated petitions recently for six miles of rock road and completed it in just two days.

Bourbon county should be an example and an inspiration to all other Kansas counties in the matter of hard roads. It means education and demonstration and then the people, in town and country, are ready to invest in 365-day roads. Every man who believes in rock roads or hard roads should be willing to stand up and advocate their construction for the day will soon come when the pioneers in the good roads movement will be called blessed by every man, woman and child in the land.