

A County Engineer's One Year Accomplishments

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My seventeenth year (1951) as Surveyor of Tippecanoe County was one of the most interesting if not the best of my span of service as a public servant. The experiences and accomplishments of the year were both good and bad. Fortunately the former exceeded the latter.

As 1951 began, we had three ditches under contract and being constructed. Because of severe weather, the largest project was closed down some 90 days at start of year. The second deputy in my office (my son, Richard), was called into military service in February and we worked short-handed until July 1 when he secured his medical discharge.

In January and February I participated in a 25-day ditch trial on remonstrances against the viewer and surveyor's report, in which I was on the witness stand for two and one-half days and acted as technical adviser to petitioners attorney when not on the stand. The court ruled against the tile project and set it aside on the basis that the proposed benefits as calculated by the remonstrators were less than the proposed cost of the project. This is one of several drainage sheds that still need drainage badly in Tippecanoe county. Some 200 acres of rich farm land can't be cultivated for lack of drainage.

In the spring, the fourth project was started. Following our usual practice, my deputies and I acted as inspectors as well as setting line and grade stakes and spent considerable time on these projects. The ditches involved an expenditure of \$104,543. Two were paid in full during the construction period, by the assessed landowners. On the other two, all but 25 per cent accepted the full payment plan and the county auditor got an emergency appropriation passed by the county council to cover payments over a 5-year period with six per cent interest after the county commissioners failed to establish a bond issue plan which they had agreed to do before contracts were let. This year, we will have \$75,000 in a ditch fund raised from a 5-cent tax levy.

The completed projects included the Brose ditch in Shelby township, our county, and in Round Grove township, White county, involving 8,400 feet of tile drain, ranging in sizes from 8 to 18 inches and benefiting three-fourths mile of county line highway, 168 acres in White county and 297 acres in Tippecanoe county. The landowners voluntarily paid their assessments and the projects were completed without court costs. I served as engineer and a group elected a president and secretary-treasurer who collected money and paid off the contractors. This ditch was completed in May.

The second project completed was the E. Eugene Johnson drain in Lauramie township under the jurisdiction of the Tippecanoe county superior court. This project drains 1,321 acres of valuable farm land and three and one-fourth miles of county roads and consisted of 3,450 feet of open ditch and 6,450 feet of tile, 12 to 20 inches in size. It also involved jacking 40 feet of 36-inch pipe through the Nickel Plate Railroad right-of-way which was paid in full by the railroad as their portion of benefits.

The third project completed in September was the Andrew P. Brown ditch, also under the jurisdiction of the Tippecanoe county superior court. It drains six and three-fourths miles of county roads, 1,611 acres of valuable Tippecanoe township land and 387.2 acres of Prairie township, White county land. This project has 8,751 feet of open drain and 11,484 feet of tile ranging in size from 8 to 22 inches. The contractor on this project was Sam V. Funk of Winamac, Indiana. An interesting side light on this project was the draining of a 12-acre pond that has never been dry while I have been in office. As the pond drained off, Conservation officials secured about 20 five-gallon milk cans of fingerling and minnow fish to stock nearby creeks and ponds. Then the farmers of the vicinity caught numerous mud cat fish and other species. The largest reported to me was an 18-inch black sucker by Mr. Brown, whose name the ditch will bear. Some 5,000 more, mostly fingerlings, dominated by mud cat specie, died as the water drained out and were buried in back filling.

The fourth project was completed in November and was the largest project of the year. This is the Jesse B. Anderson drain also in Lauramie township and under jurisdiction of the superior court. Most drainage procedures are through the superior court in Tippecanoe county. This ditch is the outlet for all drainage in the town of Clarks Hill, and some 2,532 acres of valuable farm land. Besides the streets of Clarks Hill and town property, the right of way of two railroads (the Big Four and the Cloverleaf) 2.1 miles

of state roads 28 and 52, and 5.3 miles of county roads receive benefits. The project cost, \$48,877. The boring of 54 feet of 18-inch corrugated metal pipe under the double tracks of the Big Four Railroad was paid for entirely by the railroad. The boring was started by the Hogan-Spears Company of Ohio, but after two unsuccessful attempts with 18-inch pipe they threw up the job and the railroad company secured the Armco Company of South Bend to do the work. They put a 24-inch pipe and auger through in three days, then they placed an 18-inch, coated, corrugated iron pipe inside.

The project consisted of 12,300 feet of open drain and 17,100 feet of tile in sizes of 8-inch to 33-inch. This project is the rebuilding of the outlet and some three and one-half miles of tile of a 26-mile tile system built originally some 50 years ago.

Repairs to the extent of some \$1,100 were made under the surveyors supervision on some of the 480 miles of court ditches of the county with repairs exceeding \$100 on two projects and amounting to \$657 being assessed according to original assessments and turned over to county auditor for collection.

During the year we designed and supervised construction of a new filtering bed for the County Old Peoples Home, figured numerous drainage sheds for highway supervisor for pipe culverts, and made contour and grade survey of bridge site on Wea Creek where the 60-year old 100-foot span was wrecked by a skidding automobile last October.

We also made some 20 private land and lot surveys throughout the year. There are two engineers following private survey work in this county. When my client was not a personal friend or the work was urgent, I recommended one of these men for the job.

We revised four township drainage maps, bringing landowners and new land divisions up to date on maps we had made some 12 to 14 years before.

There is still some territory in the 504 square miles comprising Tippecanoe county that we have not hunted, looked for mushrooms or picnicked. But if the voters see fit to make it "twenty years or more" we will try to do as efficient work in the future as in the past.