

4. Keep in mind that the highways should be constructed and maintained so as to provide a free flow of traffic at a reasonable speed, so as to keep the drivers in an agreeable state of mind, and so as not to surprise or frighten them.

Most accidents happen when the driver is in a highly emotional state, the most common, I believe, being that of fear. Therefore, anything that can be done to keep the surprise from the highway and the resulting emotion from the driver is certainly a safety device.

A RURAL DIRECTORY*

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There is a growing demand for a simple system that will give rural homes an address that will make them as easy to locate as homes in the city. Improved facilities for travel have caused the lengthening of the RFD mail routes until they now cover wide areas. To locate a rural home is now more difficult than in the days of horse-drawn vehicles.

A rural directory system has been devised that gives every rural home a definite address (Fig. 1). The rural directory plan, as here outlined, would make every farm home in the United States easy to find, even on by-ways and winding roads. With such a system in use, a farm home might be spared from burning, or a life might be saved in an emergency.

Road intersections and houses would be numbered according to their relative positions with reference to a standard, known, central point. The numbers are self-explanatory and no mathematical calculations are necessary to locate any point in the county. Generally the county seat is the logical center point from which to start the numbering system, since in most counties it is the most prominent place in the county. If the county seat is not centrally located, it would have no effect on the working of the system.

The United States land-survey section lines that intersect nearest the central part of the county seat would be used as the east-west and the north-south base lines of the system. Each mile in any direction from either base line is numbered in units of 100.

HOW IT WORKS

A road $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of the north-south base line would be marked 250-E, meaning 2.50 miles east. A sign post bear-

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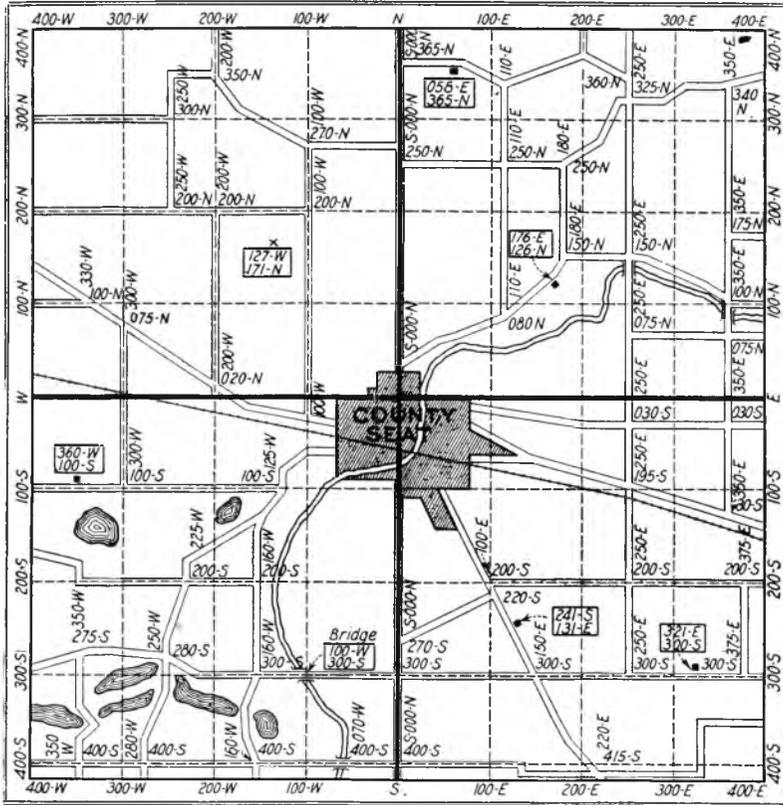


Fig. 1. How rural numbers can be laid out.

ing the numbers 250-E and 300-S would indicate its position as $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east and 3 miles south.

Houses would be numbered to the nearest .01 mile with the even numbers on the right and the odd on the left side of the road as the driver goes away from the county seat. Angling or winding roads would make no difference in the way the system worked, since the relative position of any farm house would be indicated in exactly the same manner as if the roads followed the section lines.

Suppose, for example, that you are at some point within the county and want to go to the county seat. You know the county seat is the origin of the numbering system; so when the sign at the first road intersection reads 350-E, 340-N, you immediately know that you are 3.5 miles east and 3.4 miles north of the county seat. Now which is north and south and east and west? This is very easily solved at the first house number. If you are on an east-west road and the first house

number is 325-E, 340-N, then you know you have traveled from east to west $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, because you have moved from 350-E to 325-E. You would confirm this by noting that the house number 325-E is an odd number and the house is on your right. This illustrates that you are traveling toward the county seat, which would be west of you in this example.

Suppose, further, that you want to call on someone whose mailing address is RFD 4 of a certain town and state. It is quite simple to find the town on the marked state highway; but unless a house numbering system is in use, finding a farm on RFD 4 is another matter.

But with such a numbering system in use, you find the person you want to call on listed in a county directory or a telephone directory. The address is, say, 321-E, 300-S. You know at once that the general direction is southeast and the house is on the left side of the road traveling away from the county seat, because the number is odd. You will travel south on the road leading southeasterly until you reach the road intersection marked 300-S, then you travel east, observing the road intersections and the house numbers as you go, until you reach 321-E, 300-S, where the numbers should be prominently displayed on the house or at the farm entrance along the road.

This plan will also work in counties that have not been laid out in sections one mile square. The county map could be divided in one mile squares and the bearing numbers for the road intersections determined from the map and then established. The system would then be operated in exactly the same way as in counties where sections have been established.

County bridges can be given numbers in accordance with this plan and would fit in with a system of keeping records of the structures. The structure number would indicate its exact position. Rural electric service can also make use of the system for its records and maintenance of properties; and many other uses can be made of the system.