

Unpaved Streets and Alleys

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The city of Peru, with a population of approximately 15,000, did not have too many paved streets before the depression days of the early thirties. The main streets running the long way of the city and main laterals had been paved. Under WPA from 1935 to 1940, many streets were black-topped. The property owners paid for the material and WPA furnished the labor. However, we still have many streets unpaved. Several half-block streets were paved, leaving an equal number unpaved, which are hard to grade and keep in good condition.

Peru is fortunate in having plenty of good street gravel near the city limits. In fact, the main part of the city is over a large bed of good gravel. Gravel must be constantly added to these streets and grading kept up regularly. In the summertime many complaints come in because of dust. Where the property owner pays for the calcium chloride, the street department applies this material to keep down the dust. I have been thinking of getting a carload of approximately 10,000 gallons of road oil and applying this material with a distributor to our gravel streets this summer.

Although unpaved streets create a problem, those streets that were paved under WPA are beginning to present bigger problems. They are beginning to go bad, and much repair work is necessary to keep them in good condition. West Canal Street, approximately ten blocks long, was black-topped within a year after an interceptor sewer was put in. During the 1943 flood practically the whole street settled to a depth of two or three feet. This street is now unpaved. Water Street, approximately the same length, was black-topped on a base of muck and cinders, and today is full of waves and is a typical washboard street. Any repair work on this street will not help the condition longer than a period of one year. I cannot foresee black-topping of many unpaved streets in our city until the price of labor and material is greatly decreased.

UNPAVED ALLEYS

All alleys in our business district are paved with brick. Many of these brick alleys were relaid by WPA labor in the late thirties. However, settling because of sewers, water main taps, gas connections, etc.,

has given us much repair work. Practically all the other alleys in the city are unpaved. These are principally cinder alleys. From the Wabash Railroad we get very good cinders to keep these alleys in repair. In 1943, because gasoline was rationed and no private trucks were for hire, our street department engaged in a program of ash and trash removal for the citizens. Our alleys today are the cleanest they have been in years. It has added quite an extra burden to our street department duties, but it has given the citizens of Peru at least \$20,000 worth of free service.

So far this has been a bad winter to try to keep our alleys in good condition. Frequent freezing and thawing and the constant use of alleys by large trucks has given us much trouble.