

**GOLDEN ROADS:
THE GOOD ROAD IS
THE GOLDEN ROAD**

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Golden Roads: The Good Road is the Golden Road by Leigh H. Irvine

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LEIGH H. IRVINE

**GOLDEN ROADS:
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The National Good Roads Campaign Book. Price 20 cents.

GOLDEN ROADS

(abridged edition)

The Good Road is the Golden Road

By

LEIGH H. IRVINE

Author of: *The Struggle for Bread, The Magazine Style-code, A
Cyclopedia of English Diction, The Dictionary of Titles,
A History of California, An Affair in the South Seas,
A History of Humboldt County, The Palace of
the Sun, By Right of Sword and
other works.*



Western Edition Published by

LEIGH H. IRVINE

San Luis Obispo, Cal.

1916.

AN EXPLANATION.

THIS epitome of the original work represents **Golden Roads** as it would be seen through a diminishing glass, or as one would view a landscape by looking through the reverse end of a telescope.

Should these pages lead the reader to desire further information on the subjects treated, I shall be glad to hear from him with a view to supplying amplifications.

In sundry respects a **digest of a digest**, or an epitome of an abridgement, is certain to prove a disappointment. Being a guide-post containing somewhat explicit directions, however, it may serve a useful purpose wherever the people of a community are earnestly trying to improve city streets and country roads.

The author, who is "on the job" to forward the building of a lateral from the beautiful beaches of his own County to the great San Joaquin Valley, and who has long been engaged in good roads campaigns by tongue and pen, often "converting" hostile audiences to the cause of progress, feels that his experience in field-work enables him to say that **Golden Roads** supplies the very information the public requires. As an editor, a public speaker, and an author, the writer of **Golden Roads** feels that it is a step in the right direction.

Leigh H. Irvine,
Secretary, Chamber of Commerce
and
Secretary, Valley to Coast Highway Association.

San Luis Obispo, Cal., March, 1916.

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WHY THIS BOOK?

EVERY editor, legislator, public speaker, or other person who advocates the building of modern highways to supplant the haphazard, unimproved roads which disgrace the larger part of every state in the Union should be able to give logical reasons for the faith that is in him.

Intelligent readers and auditors, sitting as jurors who are to pass on tax levies and bond issues, demand facts. Why increase taxes? Why vote bonds? How long will the road last? What is the best type of construction for our section? What form of bond is the best? These and scores of like questions can not be evaded without danger to the good roads cause.

Talking "in the air" and writing glittering generalities will not make converts who will work for that form of community development which finds expression in the construction of modern roads.

If improved roads have helped farmers and towns, and if bad roads have retarded development, destroyed schools, and made times bad, where are the proofs? Who says this and that? and where and why did he say it? There should be a definite place for information of this character. It is at present scattered and inaccessible to the general reader.

It is impossible for a writer or speaker to convince a doubtful farmer, a hostile clientele, or an audience "from Missouri" unless he can show them just what a modern road can do for the individual and the community.

Yet it is shamefully true that many willing workers are unable to lay their hands upon the very facts so eagerly desired. The facts are hidden in many scattered volumes and reports.

It is common knowledge that whenever bond issues or like propositions affecting highways are submitted to the public there is a demand for information on almost every phase of the good roads problem. Where is this information to be found without ransacking great libraries? Nowhere. This is the regrettable reply to the call for knowledge.

There should be a popular book on good roads and why we need them. It should treat of construction, cost, maintenance, and similar features; and it should emphasize the economic, social, and educational benefits of modern highways. Concrete and convincing examples showing the value of good roads should abound in such a work. It should be a book for the average voter rather than a treatise for engineers.

I am sorry to say that twenty-five large American publishing-houses have recently refused to examine the manuscripts of just such a book, on the ground that there is not sufficient general interest in the subject to justify the expenditure of \$2,000 to publish the work.

A number of wealthy men long prominent in the general good roads campaign, including General Coleman Du Pont, who has spent thousands of dollars to educate public sentiment, express grave doubts whether the public will ever study the good roads problem as it should be studied.

In view of the fact that the problems involved in almost every page of the manuscripts referred to in the paragraph before the last are the very questions that are often referred to the voters of cities, counties, and states for final settlement the conclusion of these publishers and others is equivalent to a charge that the public has not sufficient intelligence for self-government, or that it is too lazy and indifferent to solve the fundamentals of the questions it is called upon to decide. Can this be true? I greatly fear there is more than a half-truth in the charge.

The manuscripts submitted to the publishers referred to could be so classified and indexed as to make an indispensable campaign book for everybody interested in spreading the gospel of good roads—a thoroughly indexed ready-reference manual of indisputable facts. These data have been gathered and classified by me during many patient hours of research during the last decade.

The manuscripts give the cream of official and independent expert opinion. They really present in a nutshell the substance of large libraries and the wisdom of many men's experience, thereby constituting a time- and labor-saving work, pointing to volume and page of almost every authority on the subject. The contents of all Government and individual publications are "boiled down" and re-told in plain, simple language. Municipal paving problems are also analyzed and discussed; yet I have had to abandon all thought of publishing the work unless I desire to bear the entire financial risk myself, and this I decline to do.

Under these circumstances I have here curtailed the larger work, and Golden Roads (abridged) is the offering now before you. It is greatly emasculated and somewhat fragmentary, but its citations and bibliographical features alone should serve a useful purpose in guiding investigators in their search for accurate data. I have eliminated ninety per cent of the original work.

Where To Get Knowledge.

Almost all the valuable and trustworthy information obtainable about American good roads has been gathered and published during the last twenty-two years, under the direction of the old Office of Public Road Inquiries and the present Office of Public Roads. This work was first undertaken by the Federal Government in 1893, since which time it has been greatly extended, as appropriations by the Government have been increased. The Year-Books of the Department of Agriculture, large bound volumes issued annually, abound in valuable information on the subject of good roads. But—

So far as the average editor, commercial secretary, supervisor, or general reader is concerned this storehouse of valuable information—drawn from the practical and often expensive experiments and experiences of thousands of engineers and chemists, hundreds of communities and states—lies almost hopelessly buried in twenty-three gigantic volumes, hundreds of elaborate special articles, speeches, circulars, and scores of valuable bulletins compiled by experts and published by the Federal Government or in books and magazines.

Many of these priceless documents have long been out of print, and many can scarcely be found, even in the largest public libraries in the United States.

But if all these rare and scattered works were arranged in good order before the individual investigator—about 400 separate articles, volumes, and documents—he could not read them in less than 300 working days of eight hours each. It would then require months to classify and index the contents of the library he had read.

But after the student had finished this task, there would yet remain for careful consideration dozens of important private contributions to the subject of good roads—books by masters, reports of conventions, an account of experiments, and synopses of valuable discussions.

Yet, in spite of the appalling character of the task thus outlined, the fact remains that every writer and speaker, every intelligent advocate of good roads simply must obtain his information from these very inaccessible Government reports and able treatises by individuals, or from some book, speech, or person whose information came from Uncle Sam's great printing-house. In studying all these data and conclusions one is impressed that they are the indispensable foundations of all the learning extant on the subject of good roads.

Not one voter in 50,000 has access to these Government reports, few know of their existence, or where to find them, and fewer yet have either the time, patience, or inclination to read and analyze them, even though the volumes really give clear answers to almost every puzzling problem and question that the oldest Silurian, the closest Timothy Tightwad, the most patriotic board of supervisors, or the most progressive commercial secretary might propound.

It is evident that the information contained in these volumes should be freely circulated among taxpayers, students, readers, voters, and thinkers; it is exactly the knowledge that every progressive community should have at hand "in black and white."

Engineering, chemical, and practical traffic experience from hundreds of sources should interest voters in every community contemplating road improvements.

The Government publications and individual engineers' reports and books are not in any sense theoretical discussions, but records of achievement, a report on the harvest gathered from the abundant experience of the builders. Their discussions run all the way from convict labor to curves, grades, wearing surfaces, and the mathematical problems connected with taxes, bonding, and cost-accounting. They cover the entire field, dodging none of the fundamental questions asked by voters and investors, residents, taxpayers, and tourists. The entire record is really a faithful digest, abridgment, or "boiled down" exhibit of facts. Theories are discarded almost entirely. In their illuminating pages the reader beholds the lessons and profits by the wisdom acquired by Government chemists, engineers, accountants, and experts in almost every phase of swamp, mountain, valley, and city road building, road bonding, and road maintenance. Sand-clay roads, earthen or 'dirt' roads, water-bound macadam, oil-bound macadam, bituminous surfaces, brick, and concrete—all these and other questions come under careful review and analysis by the masters.

Confidence in conclusions is established when every statement, experiment, law, and fact sighted is based on a careful analysis of an accredited speech, report, bill, laboratory test, or book bearing official or academic sanction.

With the extension of automobile traffic, the building of resorts in the scenic belts of many states, and the general growth of agriculture and commerce the demand for modern roads is destined to become more intense each year. The age demands such a modification of the surface of the earth as will enable it fitly to receive and accommodate that vehicle which the civilization of the era furnishes—which is one definition of a good road, contributed by Colonel W. H. Ashby.