



When America saw the advantage of shipping massive amounts of goods via trucks, the roads suffered under the heavy loads.



CHAPTER EIGHT

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Attacking Asphalt with Tank and Truck

"Unclassable, almost impassable, scarcely jackassable!"

MAKING LIGHT OF BAD SITUATIONS, activists at the turn of the 20th century sang and joked about the conditions found on the nation's highways. Later, however, when Americans went to war in 1917, passing over rural highways wasn't a luxury but a necessity, and the jokes stopped. It was difficult to determine which suffered most—the roads, the trucks, or the truck drivers.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Americans began shipping goods by truck, taking deliveries by truck, and building highways with trucks. By the 1920s, trucking had come to stay, creating a new industry that improved the quality of life for Americans by speeding up deliveries, reducing shipping costs, and creating a competitive alternative to the railroad industry. The truck, alongside the tank, was a new weapon in the nation's armory. Trucks and the emerging trucking industry were another reason roads needed to be built. Trucks became a central issue in the campaign to strengthen the nation's network of roads.

Since the 13th century, trucking has meant the act of swapping, giving, bartering, exchanging, or trafficking in goods. The truck as an object was anything from a single-wheeled barrow or a two-wheeled pushcart to a small-wheeled gun carriage,

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