



#10: The Moonshine Hill Road

Our Humble history is full of fascinating stories and interesting facts. But, it is also full of inaccurate claims that have been spread over the years. One of the biggest claims made in our area is that the Moonshine Hill Road is the oldest concrete road in Texas.

Today, the Moonshine Hill Road is known as 1st Street/FM 1960 Business, starting at the Old Humble Road and going to the Moonshine Hill Road. I've had many "discussions" (i.e. arguments) about the importance of the Moonshine Hill Road over the past few years. In the end, it takes a quick history lesson to explain the road's true history.

Using concrete as the base for a road was not a new idea. New York City was creating roads with a concrete base prior to 1891. The surface of the road was typically covered with Macadam or cobblestones. However, using concrete for both the base of the road AND as the wearing surface began in 1891. In that year, George Bartholomew and James C. Wonder built the first such concrete road in the United States in Bellefontaine, Ohio. 127 years later, Court Avenue, around the Logan County Court House, is the oldest concrete street still in use in the United States.

In Texas, the first such concrete street was constructed in 1914. Concrete was used for a section of the Belknap Place road, located in the Monte Vista Historic District slightly north of downtown San Antonio, Texas. This stretch of road from Dewey Place to West Agarita Ave (slightly less than a mile) is the oldest surviving concrete road in Texas.

So then, what is special about the Moonshine Hill road? Well, it was one of the first concrete roads in Harris County. Around 1915, the major roads in Harris County were either corduroy roads, or shell roads. In looking toward a permanent highway system, Harris County began construction of several miles of concrete roads in 1917. One hundred thousand dollars was devoted to construction of segments of concrete roads across precincts 1, 2, 3 and 4. The four early concrete roads in Harris County were: (1) Harrisburg Boulevard from the end of construction toward South Houston; (2) the Houston Crosby Road from the concrete bridge at Crosby south; (3) the Humble Road from Humble to Moonshine Hill; and (4) the Washington County Road from the city limits of Houston to Camp Logan.

The concrete paving of the Moonshine Hill Road began in 1917 and was completed in 1918...26 years after the first concrete road in the United States, and 3 years after the first concrete road in Texas. So, from now on we need to make sure we make the correct claim about this road: "The Moonshine Hill Road is one of the oldest concrete roads in Harris County."