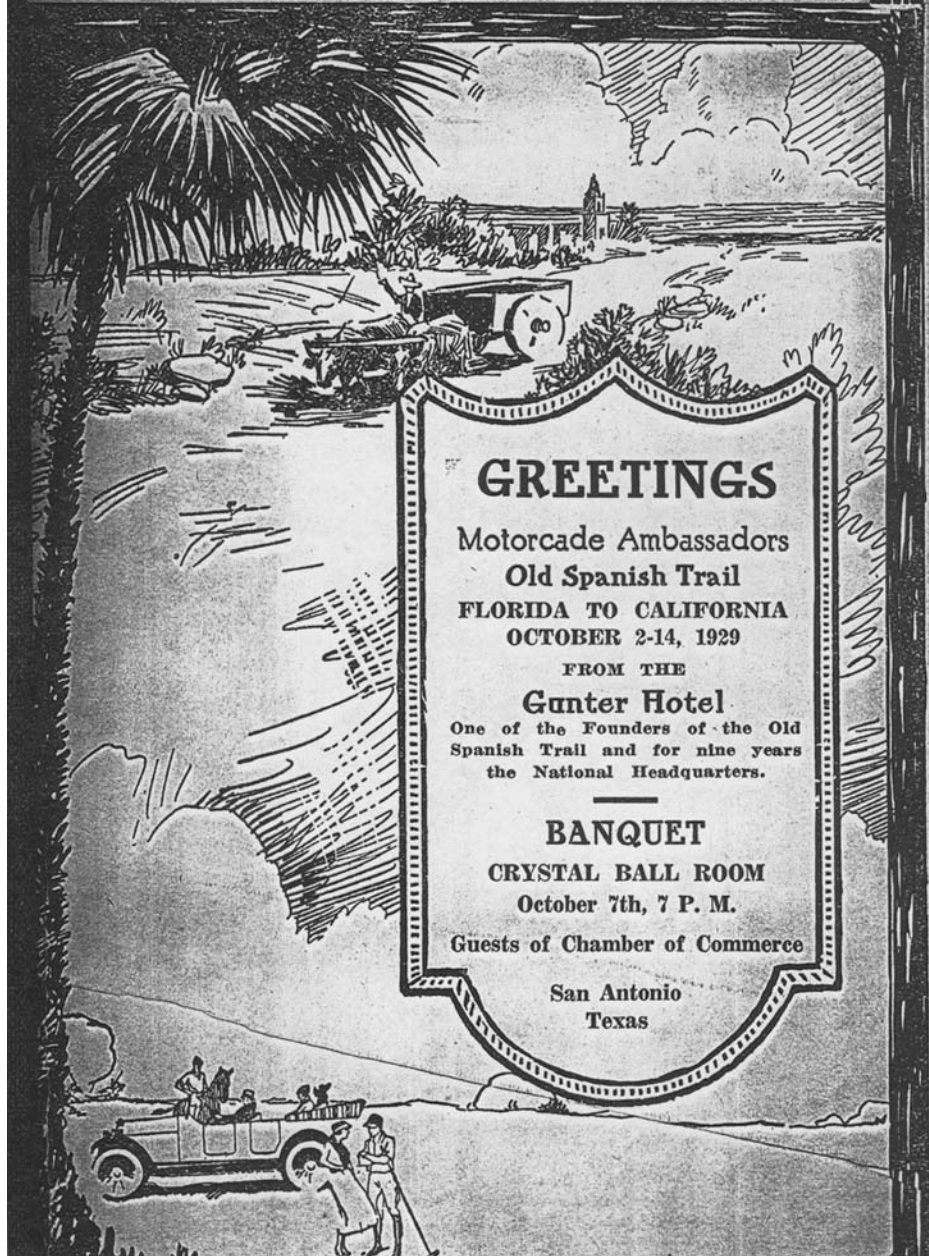


# THE STORY OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL



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Building of Old Spanish Trail as Thrilling as the Romance of its Padres  
and Conquistadores

By HARRAL AYRES, Managing Director, Old Spanish Trail

When that meeting of 419 enthusiasts met at Mobile in 1915 and organized the "Old Spanish Trail" project I doubt if any of them really comprehended the big achievements that were destined in the name of that enterprise. I have met many of those men in recent years and have learned they went to that meeting with fire and determination to open this southern country but none of them realized the financial and engineering difficulties that confronted them.

By 1928 there were \$70,000,000 of completed construction on this Old Spanish Trail. \$40,000,000 more are needed for paving and improvements, but another \$40,000,000 need not trouble men who have already battled \$70,000,00 across.

The paving program eastward is now so well advanced San Antonio will be connected by pavement with all points on the Atlantic seaboard from Main to Florida by the end of 1931.

The secret of course is that never has this Old Spanish Trail project been a promoter's plaything. It was organized and has been directed by the people of the south.

Somehow it has seemed as though the spirit of the *padres* and the *conquistadores* flamed again in the soul of these Anglo-Saxon pioneers. We read the story of the Spaniards of those three centuries from St. Augustine to San Diego and marvel at their fortitude in the face of such hardships. We view the evidences of their works and marvel at their achievements. We who have watched these modern men from Florida to California rise to the demand of this southern highway construction are proud that the soul of the crusaders is not dead.

Two illustration, one from California and one from Florida, will show the enthusiasms of the early efforts, and of the pluck with which the groups fought their battles when they found that enthusiasm alone was not sufficient.

One of the first "triumphs" was celebrated in Florida with bands and barbecue when \$55,000 was gotten together for a vital bridge. That bridge, over the Apalachicola River, was not opened until many years later, and then the cost stood at over \$800,000. In passing let me say that many eastern bridges and causeways were "financed" early for sums that seemed fabulous, and were completed five to seven years later at costs that ran into the millions.

San Diego had those sand hills and the Mountain Springs trail. When San Diegans carried lumber to those hills and build that plank road back in the early days they too were welding enthusiasms and pluck into a spirit that could not be defeated. So also when they passed the hat in San Diego to blast a trail through

granite mountains, and again to help build east of Yuma, Arizona. They kept the way open and held fast until their primitive trails were paved by skilled engineers and an open corridor permanently laid to San Diego's doors.

It was this crusading spirit in a half of the counties across the continent that has now opened this automobile artery along the trail and through the lands of the Spanish crusaders of past centuries.

May I say that California leaders need now to watch lest the leaders in the East who have opened the new world around the Gulf of Mexico and down into Old Mexico do not command and hold the travel stream that now heading that way.

I am not one of the pioneers of this Old Spanish Trail. I did not come into it until 1919. Those pioneers already glow with pride as they contemplate the fruits of their hardships and struggles. I believe there has been behind this Old Spanish Trail something of that omnipotence that at times raises up men and drives them to conquer and achieve.

Two-thirds the drainage water of the United States crosses Old Spanish Trail country. Bridging these rivers and basins has been a mighty task. In the west are vast ranches, deserts and mountains and few people. Yet the highway was build by a pioneer people across the continent despite obstacles and cost. A people that can do that are a people to tie to for future achievement. This Old Spanish Trail country will become the greatest frontier of the American Nation.

Not alone do these construction achievements make one reverent of the conquering spirit of men but some prescience guided those men in the East when they called their dream child the "Old Spanish Trail." From many nations come letters that show the spell the mane carries, from students, editors, librarians, lecturers and publicists. And from travelers we hear of the same spell. As we develop the old history we are continually impressed with the truth of the name. It begins with the ancient Spanish story of San Diego. Whenever the traveler picks up the highway or its territory the Spanish atmosphere greets him. St Augustine, Tallahassee, Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans, San Antonio, El Paso, Las Cruces, Yuma, San Diego! East or west, desert, mountains or gulf, the marks of the *padres* and the *conquistadores* are there to make men pause and try to peer into that courageous past.

At first the project was a dream to connect New Orleans, La., with Miami, Fl. The Spanish atmosphere East is not so pronounced as in the West. It lies buried under a mass of modern ideas. Why didn't they give their little project some commonplace name, some Main Street thought? I have asked often who thought of the name? What vision prompted it? I do not know. The minds of these men are hazy on this. It was several years before the dream child

spanned the continent. When it did and the wealth of the Spanish history and romance in the Southwest enveloped it, the Old Spanish Trail was found so appropriately named no one will ever come in response to its lure and find its history lacking.

The Old Spanish Trail country will become the Nation's playground. Florida and California have long been the popular retreats of the people. The country lying between, the Gulf of Mexico Country and the Mexican Border country are as alluring, and now they are opened. The travel movement is already changing for travelers are learning they can head due south and find travel comforts and the benediction of a sunshiny climate all winter.

In the East the people are capitalizing the Old Spanish Trail name. They know people will be drawn by that name. In the West they are still toying with a medley of names or a colorless highway number. Yet the Old Spanish atmosphere of the West is one of its glories.

The real Capitalization of the Old Spanish Trail now confronts us. The most fascinating lands of the American continent are now linked together by the golden band of a historical travelway---Florida, Mobile and her bay, the Mississippi Coast, New Orleans and Louisiana, South Texas, Old Mexico, southern New Mexico, Arizona and California. This is America's oldest frontier. It is the last frontier for homeseekers, and the wealth of a great nation is already pouring into it. When highway numbers shall have passed into oblivion the Old Spanish Trail will be luring people to its land as its founders dreamed.

# THE BAKER HOTELS

OPERATING

THE BAKER, DALLAS, 700 ROOMS 700 BATHS

THE TEXAS, FORT WORTH, 600 ROOMS 600 BATHS

THE GALVEZ, GALVESTON, 250 ROOMS 250 BATHS

THE GUNTER, SAN ANTONIO, 550 ROOMS 550 BATHS

THE MENGER, SAN ANTONIO, 200 ROOMS 200 BATHS

THE STEPHEN F. AUSTIN, AT AUSTIN, 250 ROOMS 250 BATHS

THE THOMAS JEFFERSON, BIRMINGHAM, ALA., 350 ROOMS 350 BATHS

THE BAKER, MINERAL WELLS, 300 ROOMS 300 BATHS

THE EDSON, BEAUMONT, 350 ROOMS 350 BATHS

## Banquet

Compliments of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

Crystal Ball Room, Gunter Hotel

7:00 P. M.



Fresh Fruit Cocktail Supreme

Hearts of Celery

Ripe Olives

Tomato Bouillon Rossa

Wafers

Filet Mignon, Fresh Mushroom Sauce

Rissolle Potatoes

Green String Beans

Old Spanish Trail Salad

Cheese Straws

Peach Parfait

Cakes

Demi Tasse

# PIONEER DAYS ON THE TRAIL

## San Antonio's Old Time Importance

Trails from early times have existed between San Antonio and San Diego. San Antonio was the meeting place and clearing house for the North and East and Mexico and California. The San Fernando Cathedral plaza at San Antonio was the terminal and changing point for all the trails. The Old Spanish Trail monument now stands by the Cathedral.

In 1772 the King of Spain ordered a chain of missions and presidios from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of California with San Antonio, Texas and Santa Fe, New Mexico as the northern outposts. After the Mexican War, 1846-47, the United States established a chain of forts as indicated in the old advertisement below. Then came the perilous overland journeys—the little courageous groups, the mule pack-trains, later the freighters with their strings of mules and groaning wagons, then the fast stagecoach, then the railroad and now the motor highway.

(Reproduced by Old Spanish Trail from Texas Almanac of 1859)

## OVERLAND TO THE PACIFIC



## The San Antonio and San Diego Mail-Line

**T**HIS LINE which has been in successful operation since July, 1857, is ticketing PASSENGERS, through to San Diego, and also to all intermediate stations. Passengers and Express matter forwarded in NEW COACHES drawn by six mules over the entire length of our Line, excepting the Colorado Desert, of 100 miles, which we cross on mule back. Passengers guaranteed in their tickets to ride in Coaches, excepting the 100 miles, above stated.

### PASSENGERS TICKETED TO AND FROM SAN ANTONIO AND

Fort Clark,	Fort Bliss,	Tucson,
Fort Hudson,	El Paso,	Arizona,
Fort Lancaster,	Fort Fillmore,	Fort Yuma,
Fort Davis,	La Mesilla,	San Diego

The Coaches of our Line leave semi-monthly from each end, on the 9th and 24th of each month, at 6 o'clock, A. M.

An armed escort travels through the Indian country with each mail train, for the protection of the mails and passengers.

Passengers are provided with provisions during the trip except where the Coach stops at Public Houses along the Line, at which each Passenger will pay for his own meal.

Each Passenger is allowed thirty pounds of personal baggage, exclusive of blankets and arms.

Passengers coming to San Antonio can take the line of mail steamers from New Orleans twice a week to Indianola, from the latter place there is a daily line of four horse mail coaches direct to this place.

On the Pacific side the California Steam Navigation Company are running a first class steamer, semi-monthly, to and from San Francisco and San Diego.

### FARE ON THIS LINE AS FOLLOWS, INCLUDING RATIO'S

San Antonio to San Diego, \$200	San Antonio to El Paso, \$100
“ Tucson, 150	Intermediate stations 15c per mile

Extra baggage, when carried, 40 cents per pound to El Paso, and \$1 per pound to San Diego.

Passengers can obtain all necessary outfits in San Antonio.

For farther information, and for the purchase of tickets, apply at the office of the Company in this city, or address I. C. WOODS, Superintendent of the line, care of American Coal Company, 50 Exchange Place, New York.

**G. H. GIDDINGS**

**R. E. DOYLE,**

Proprietors.