



Overland to the Pacific

W. F. Hutson, resident engineer of Kinney county, has sent the Bulletin an interesting letter relative to some first continental transportation in Texas. Along with the letter was attached copy of an old advertisement of the "Overland to the Pacific Stage Coach Line." The San Antonio and San Diego Line. The line according to the advertisement, had been in successful operation since July 1857, ticketing passengers through to San Diego and 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 except the 100 miles above stated."

The fare on the old line, as advertised, was San Antonio to San Diego, \$200, San Antonio to El Paso, \$100, intermediate stations, 15 cents per mile." It further stated, that passengers are provided with provisions during the trip, except where the Coach stops at public eating houses along the line, at which each passenger pays for his own meal." "Each passenger is allowed thirty pounds of personal baggage exclusive of blankets and arms."

The old advertisement offers food for thought, especially the reference to the blankets and arms, along with a line which appears in the course of the advertisement stating that "an armed guide escorts travelers through the Indian country with each mail train for the protection of mails and passengers."

The old forts mentioned as points along the line, from which passengers were ticketed, were Fort Clark, Fort Hudson, Fort Lancaster, Fort Davis, Fort Bliss, Fort Fillmore, La Mesilla and Fort Yuma. Major Hutson, the Kinney County Engineer writing of the old stage coach lines says:

"As near as I can ascertain, this route crossed the Medina River at Castroville, the Sabinal River where Water Hole" near the head of the West Fork of the where No. 3 now is. From the Nueces crossing the new location for Highway No. 3, now under construction, follows very closely the location of this old stage line, long since abandoned as a public highway.

From Ft. Clark, with its wonderful Las Moras Spring, the route turned due north along the old McKenzie Trail, reaching the first permanent water at the Kickapoo Springs, 3 miles north and the next at the "Black State Highway No. 3 now crosses and the Nueces also Nueces River.

Then it struck across the Edwards Plateau for Ft. Lancaster on the Pecos. Later, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, while still an Engineer officer in the army, surveyed a better route west from Fort Clark to a crossing of Devil's River, some 12 miles northwest of the present town of Del Rio. In fact, I believe that it is his crossing which is now in use by Highway No. 3. I have followed this old abandoned road for miles, and often wondered, before I knew its history, at the skill shown in taking advantage of every favorable feature of the topography.

From Fort Lancaster the line went by way of Fort Stockton, not built at the time this advertisement was printed, the Barilla Spring, Fort Davis, and Van Horn Wells, to Fort Quitman on the Rio Grande. From there it followed the river up to El Paso.

It is a striking one of the excellent location of this old route that, after forty-seven years of operation, the Southern Pacific Lines have prepared plans for abandoning more than fifty miles of their main line and rebuilding on the general line of this old road down Quitman Canyon to the Rio Grande and thence up the river."

