

## SAN ANTONIO MAN WINS DECORATION

King of Spain Sends Medal  
For Work for Old Spanish Trail

Harral Ayres, managing director of the Old Spanish Trail development, will receive a distinguished honor from the King of Spain when he receives the Condecoracion of the Royal Order of Isabel la Catolica, with title of Knight Commander at a reception and ceremony of presentation Tuesday evening at the home of Mrs. Henry Drought, 1215 North St. Mary's Street, for his work in connection with the Old Spanish Trail movement.

Officiating at the ceremony will be the Spanish Consul Pablo de Ubarri, Spanish consul for Texas and New Mexico.

In the official party conferring the decoration besides Ubarri and Mrs. Drought will be Maj. Gen. William Lassiter, commander of the Eighth Cavalry Area, and his personal staff; Enrique Santibanez, consul general of Mexico; Col. H. M. Dickmann, president of the San Antonio Automobile League; Werner N. Beckmann, a representative of the Old Spanish Trail board; Dr. Frederick Combe, T. H. Etheridge, president of the San Antonio Real Estate Board; Mayor C. M. Chambers, County Judge Perry S. Robertson, State Senator W. A. Williamson, Arnold Shanklin, former United States consul to Mexico, and Walter Walthall, president of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce.

The jewel of the order is a double-sided Spanish sunburst, two inches in diameter, suspended from a laurel wreath. On one side is the name of the order, and on the other is "La Lealtad Acrisolada," expressive of loyalty and merit.

Ayres accepted the Old Spanish Trail leadership in 1919 when there was no regular route across the Southern borderlands. Automobiles were forced to pick their own course through mud, cattle lands and deserts with undependable ferries assisting them in crossing the numerous rivers en route.

The leadership of San Antonio and constant efforts for 10 years was the thing that eventually made possible the Old Spanish Trail. Federal and State officials were slow in granting recognition to the route and failed to do so until 1922.

The Old Spanish Trail movement was organized at Mobile, Ala., to build a highway from Florida to New Orleans. Western States became interested, and the plan was changed to an Atlantic to Pacific highway. No recognition was given the work for seven years because of the cost of construction and the slow progress.

There was no recognized route across South Texas until 1921. A conference in Houston in 1919 resulted in the routing of the road through San Antonio, though Dallas had been the prevailing choice until that time. San Antonio was chosen because of its missions and historical ruins of the Spaniards.

Ayres was selected as managing director in San Antonio shortly after the Houston conference. The first step of the San Antonio group was to hold a convention in this city. More than 100 West Texans attended this meeting and pledged the completion of the route through West Texas.

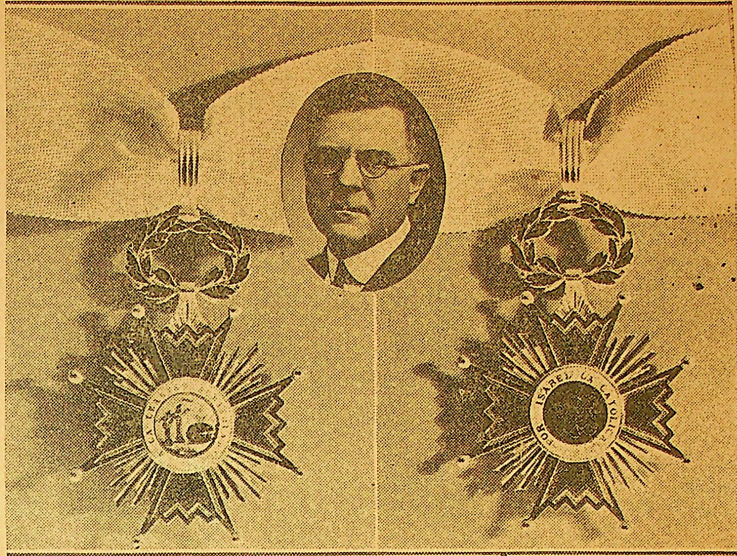
Ayres went to Washington in June, 1922, and succeeded in having a declaration signed by Senators and Congressmen that the road was a basic National need. The United States Bureau of Education sided with the road builders as did the American Automobile Association. This work in Washington took seven months, and resulted in liberal appropriations. Construction work followed within a short time.

Florida in 1923 became the first State to complete the paving of its Old Spanish Trail route.

A women's department of beautification was started in 1923 under the leadership of Mrs. F. W. Sorrell and Mrs. H. A. Moes of San Antonio to remove advertising signs and to beautify the road.

In 1925 the United States highways were designated. The Old Spanish Trail through West Texas was not recognized. Ayres again went to Washington after efforts to obtain recognition had failed because he was not present in the capital. On his arrival in Washington he opened the question and was successful in having the San Diego to St. Augustine route made wholly a United States highway.

## Old Spanish Trail Work Wins Honors



The Condecoracion of the Royal Order of Isabel la Catolica is to be given to Harral Ayres by the King of Spain in recognition of his work as leader of the Old Spanish Trail movement. Spanish Consul Pablo de Ubarri, consul for Texas and New Mexico, will officiate at the presentation Tuesday evening at the home of Mrs. Henry Drought, 1215 North St. Mary's Street.