

The Descriptive Log

This information is carefully prepared. Hotels, garages, camps and service stations are selected with the purpose to build up good service. Houses that have their rated stations are printed in black face type; they and the membership make this travelog service possible for you.

Villages and hamlets are not included, as a rule. They are numerous along the way, so also garages, service stations and camping places. Many hotels fill early. New hotels are being continually built or old ones remodeled. Service improves all the time, for this is an important travelway.

*Indicates county seats. Inf., Information Headquarters.

FLORIDA—435 MILES

Road Conditions

All State and Federal standard road and all being rapidly paved. At present most of the pavement is laid.

No ferries. Maintenance is good, detours during paving construction well maintained. The Florida sector is one of the best examples of highway construction on the Old Spanish Trail.

Description of Country

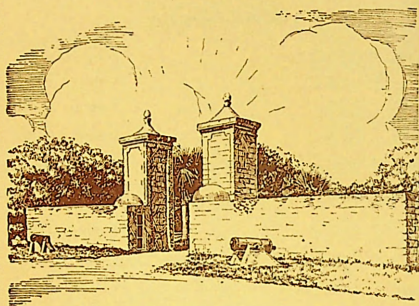
The eastern coastal section, palmetto plains and pine lands. This zone gives way to rolling hills with live oak and other fine trees. Elevations reach 263 ft. at De Funiak Springs. There are rich farming sections, truck raising, pecan and satsuma orange orchards, shade tobacco and poultry and poultry. The little orange groves are very attractive. The Florida sector is very good. In the western part pine lands again occur and lumbering has been a basic industry. Now homesteaders are flocking in and finding the Florida Old Spanish Trail territory good.

Old History

San Agustin was settled in 1565, the oldest city in the United States. Ponce de Leon discovered and named Florida in 1512. The De Narvaez expedition landed at Tampa Bay in 1528 and De Soto in 1539, and both fought their way around westward in Old Spanish Trail territory to the Tallahassee country where De Narvaez turned south to escape by sea and De Soto turned north and wandered thru the south and west. De Soto's body was buried in the Mississippi River. De Narvaez was lost in the Gulf of Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca, De Narvaez' treasurer and three others, were the only survivors to reach Mexico and their story is told under "The El Paso Valley." Battered survivors of the De Soto expedition years later escaped down the Mississippi River and to Mexico.

There are records of 38 missions established out of St. Augustine, westward to Tallahassee and up into Georgia. They were probably of wood for no ruins are known except some of oyster shell cement north of Brunswick, Ga. De Luna landed at Pensacola Bay in 1559 with the largest expedition of them all, but finding enemy soon drove him back to Yera Cruz. While the Spaniards were exploring the Floridas other remarkable expeditions were moving northward from Mexico into Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. Santa Fe became the second oldest city in the U. S., while others lay claim to existence back in the dim past. When the thirteen states were fighting for independence Spain controlled an empire south and west, and was building the California missions. Florida was Spanish until 1821, except for an English period 1763-1783; France sold Old Louisiana back to France in 1800; France sold to the U. S. in 1803; Texas independence was won in 1836 and that territory was annexed by the U. S. in 1845. The Mexican War was 1846-47. The New Mexico-Arizona-Southern California territory was ceded to the U. S. by Mexico in 1848. The Gadsden Purchase of part of southern New Mexico and Arizona was in 1853.

The five great centers of mission and colonization effort of the Spaniards are along the Old Spanish Trail—St. Augustine, San Antonio, Tex., El Paso—Santa Fe, Tucson—Nogales, Ariz., San Diego and the California coast. The Old Spanish Trail of today is a wind blinding together for all time the old Spanish history and legend of three and four centuries past. In these lands the padres sought riches to lay up in heaven and the conquistadores sought riches for personal glory and often found disaster for their vain but romantic search. Now a new race is finding riches in the crucibles of industry.



ANCIENT SPANISH GATES AT ST. AUGUSTINE

The Old Spanish Gates at St. Augustine. Around the walls was a moat filled with water and a hedge of Spanish bayonet plants. A description in 1783 says entrance was by a draw-bridge over the moat and thru the gate. The sentry boxes are visible at the gate. Near by is old Fort San Marcos (Pt. Marion now) an interesting example of medieval castle and fort, living quarters, barracks and dungeons.



OLDEST HOUSE IN THE UNITED STATES, ST. AUGUSTINE

The Oldest House in the United States from a picture in a booklet of 1888. This is now a part of the property of the St. Augustine Historical Society and houses many ancient relics. The Society library of old Spanish history is housed in a new structure on the property. The Oldest House apparently dates from 1571. The Society historical collections are a rare pleasure to the traveler seeking information of that ancient, perilous and romantic period. In the garden is the "Wishing Well" and there, the oldest story in the world, still finds romance at the oldest setting in this new country. And when you finish your journey over the Old Spanish Trail you will find the "Wishing Well" at the old Spanish settlement at San Diego, the mother colony of California, and there again love's renewals may be mirrored in the waters of the well.

Just north of St. Augustine is the Fountain of Youth that Ponce de Leon journeyed so romantically to find. Research has apparently established its claim. The legend of that spring will mellow the hearts of mortals thru all the ages.