

South and West Texas

SOUTHERN TEXAS is a vast, undeveloped empire with scenery so varied its own people never lose interest in their travels, and the distances are so great few Texans ever learn to really know their State. God and Nature have been so prodigal men with their industry are just beginning to make headway in development. When Texans undertook to deliver an improved highway across the State for the Old Spanish Trail they assumed responsibility for more than one-third the distance across the continent, and because they live and move in a big country they accepted their task as a matter of course.

Varied Scenery

In the east are the plains where 150,000 acres of rice are grown and herds of cattle graze. This is the Gulf area with a heavy rainfall and sunshine for luxuriant growth. Around the Gulf is a five-hundred-mile coast line of primitive wildness for fishing, hunting and relaxation. Between Houston and San Antonio the low foothills begin and the rolling country is attractive and thickly set with prosperous farms. Numerous rivers carrying the waters of the northern country to the Gulf are crossed in East Texas.

San Antonio is the beginning of the Hill Country. It is beyond the Gulf rainfall influence and in the trade wind area. Clear, spring-water rivers now greet you, fed from the reservoirs that form under the western rocky plateaus. The hills rise to one and two thousand feet. They vary from gentle slopes and fertile well-farmed valleys to the rugged rocky types where herds of goats, sheep and cattle range in wild seclusion. The spring-water country extends beyond Junction and Del Rio. Then come the rocky plateau that extend for 450 mi. to El Paso, and where a cattle ranch will embrace a quarter million acres.

East Texas grows the pine and the magnolia; west of Houston the live oak and the pecan begin; the mesquite and the cedar commence around San Antonio, soon followed by mesquite alone except in river bottoms where cypress, pecan and other big timber grow. There is little tree growth in the dry areas of far West Texas.

Highlands and Springs of West Texas

The Hill Country, San Antonio and westward, is the only area in the South combining with an equable river climate, good drinking water, clear spring-fed rivers, pleasant elevations, and a dry constant sunshine to vitalize the atmosphere.

From reservoirs and streams beneath this rugged hill country numerous great springs and rivers have their origin, and thru ages past interesting canyons and geological formations have been fashioned. The San Antonio River starts from large springs in Brackenridge Park and at San Pedro Park are other big springs—it was these in centuries past that drew the Spanish padres and caballeros to establish the works and settlements that grew into the metropolis of Texas. West of San Antonio 30 mi. are the clear waters of Medina, Lake and River. North at New Braunfels and at San Marcos the rivers break thru the rocks. West along the Old Spanish Trail from Comfort to Ingram are the Guadalupe River and branches threading among the hills; in the Junction-Roosevelt country are the Llano hills and rivers—all clear spring-fed streams.

In the area south of Junction are the Seven-Hundred Springs, the Rock Springs country, and also the Frio Canyons whose strange formations are often pictured. The many bottoms of the canyons carry the film of waters from roadways, and the people use these watery floors for dwellings. In that area also is old Ft. Clark (Brackettville) located by Las Moras Springs in the old pioneer days, and still maintained as an important military base.

North of the Old Spanish Trail near Menard are the old mission ruins of the days when the Spaniards mined for

silver—the Lost Mine of legend and history and apparently one of the quests of Coronado in 1541.

South on the Rio Grande is Eagle Pass, an entrance to Mexico. Del Rio is at San Felipe Springs near the Rio Grande. Devil's River, rightly named, is near by. Beyond is the vast primitiveness "West of the Pecos."

In West Texas 400 mi. from San Antonio are the Davis Mountains with peaks rising to 8100 ft. and canyons to hold you in reverent awe. Hereford cattle range the valleys and plateaus. A clear sunshine implants the glow of health. At Ft. Stockton and at Balmorhea, near the mountains, are springs of great flow that irrigate the country. Texas has a majesty and a mystery all its own!

Rich Cultivated Sections

South of San Antonio toward the Rio Grande lie areas of gentle hills and extensive valleys where miracles in production no longer awaken surprise. In the Winter Garden District irrigation from artesian wells is spreading fertility over several counties and their products are reaching the northern tables in midwinter. Farmers are drawing rich dividends from the Green Gold, as the products are now termed. South on the Rio Grande is the Laredo District where Bermuda onions and other truck cover large areas in midwinter.

Southeastward toward the Gulf is the Black Land Country where fields of cotton are supplanting mesquite and chaparral and laying five and ten millions a year in the lap of single counties.

Lower Rio Grande Valley

Where the Rio Grande approaches the Gulf of Mexico is the southernmost land within the United States. That valley is becoming a land of orchards and gardens, of many prosperous cities, of concrete roads, schools, colleges and enlightened improvements—it's people have come from all over the United States and in less than a generation have transformed the country. They speak of it as the Magic Valley for citrus fruit, cotton and early truck and other products grow all the year under a perennial sunshine from the fertility and irrigation of the Rio Grande Trainload shipments are now a practice in that country.

Oil and Minerals

The oil fields of southern Texas are a world-known story. New fields rise until the story of Aladdin's Lamp seems a reality. At Beaumont, Port Arthur and Houston are some of the biggest oil refineries in the world, properties of the Gulf, the Texas, the Sinclair and the Humble companies. Now San Antonio is becoming an oil capital.

Natural gas is supplying the cities and encouraging new industry. Minerals show a wide range from sulphur in East Texas to rock asphalt near San Antonio and quicksilver in southwest Texas.

The Growth of Cities

The census tables of the Old Spanish Trail cities of Orange, Beaumont, Port Arthur, Houston, San Antonio and El Paso will reflect the development in progress while yet the traveler views a vast undeveloped country. San Antonio's growth will illustrate the growth of each of them 1890, 37,674; 1900, 53,321; 1910, 96,641; 1920, 161,379. It is 927 mi. from Orange to El Paso.

Texas Welcomes

The Indian word, Tejas, means friendly. The vast realm of undeveloped country are an invitation to explore and rest and grow strong. Overhead is the sunshine that makes the winters a pleasure; in summer are the breezes, the hills, the mountains and the gulf shores; in the back-grounds are the romance and history of the Spanish conquests and of the later history of that heroic period when the Texas patriots fought to the death in the Alamo and the other Texas immortals wrested the empire north of the Rio Grande from Spanish and Mexican dominion.