

state, highway departments today recognize this highway as of primary importance.

During this eastern work the Florida confusions had been cleared away. Manager Ayres attended the Dixie Highway association convention at Jacksonville, May 26-27, 1922, and there with those delegates, and with the Florida road department officials, conflicting highway promotions were reduced to an orderly understanding and Old Spanish Trail recognition across Florida to Saint Augustine was established. Two months later he was called from Washington to the dedication of the million dollar Victory bridge across the Apalachicola river. In March, 1926, he was called to Maitland, Florida, where at a statewide meeting completing the Florida paving and bridges was authorized. By 1929 Florida became the first Old Spanish Trail state to be all paved; this included seven miles of new concrete bridges. The Florida people were very active in founding the trail movement and have been leaders and friends in the development work thru all the years.

#### Redemption of Mississippi Gulf Coast

At the Mobile conference it was officially stated a first class highway could not be financed along the Gulf of Mexico. A seawall, costly pavement, and eight miles of waterways to be bridged, seemed a prohibitive cost. The Washington declarations changed this attitude and that sector was designated a primary highway. Today a completed seawall, a paved boulevard and concrete bridges along that coast represent a cost of \$7,000,000 and another \$30,000,000 have gone into resort hotels and other private developments. That Gulf of Mexico shore line is becoming a foremost resort section.

March 26-27-28, 1923, a convention was held at New Orleans with delegates present from Florida to California. That convention was planned as another rally of the forces that would have to put over the big bridges, seawalls and pavement between New Orleans and Pensacola if the highway was to connect across the continent. New Orleans to Pensacola embraced the "orphan sections" of four states. The bridges and causeways alone would exceed 30 miles in that short sector. That convention succeeded in its purpose. The New Orleans convention also included a convention of women and they started a women's auxiliary that became helpful.

The convention of the women at the New Orleans general convention in 1923 brought large and interested delegations. There the women's department of beautification was started, the first interstate movement for billboard removal and roadside beautification.

This movement gathered headway slowly for it was all pioneering work. During this period Mrs. J. T. Smith removed advertising signs, and also secured from the various state attorney generals a statement of road advertising laws (these proved few and of little value then) and a proposed law was drawn and introduced in the Texas legislature and also sent to others interested over the United States. The principles of that proposed law are today generally recognized as the basis for roadside advertising control.

Under the direction of Mrs. Henry Drought the zero stone, a prehistoric boulder, was placed at San Antonio's old Spanish center of trails and surveys near San Fernando cathedral, and this San Antonio stone started the movement at Saint Augustine that led to the monument and international celebration there, including three days of old Spanish pageantry.

Under Mrs. F. W. Sorell as national director the women's work was extended to other states. Mrs. H. A. Moos, her successor, reports today in various sections the attractive Old Spanish Trail signing, and tree planting and landscaping are in progress. Mrs. T. W. Lanier, the West Texas director, reports 1,000 more trees being planted in the El Paso valley; two years ago the first 1,000 was planted. Mrs. R. G. Rafferty, the Mississippi director, is rallying the women and the civic organizations for landscaping and planting across Mississippi. Miss Esther Banning, Alabama director, has placed informing signs and they plan to follow behind the road builders with beautification. In

Texas, Mrs. E. Clinton Murray director, Houston city and Liberty county have plans for beautifying those new boulevards.

The San Antonio women under Mrs. Sorell concentrated on the widening and beautifying of the road westward to Boerne as the first step to foster a 100 foot boulevard into the Hill country.

Many thousands of miles of traveling, at their personal expense, is to the credit of these women. Eastward to the Atlantic, westward to the Pacific, they have carried their gospel of a broad and beautiful highway, and of the revival of the old history and the preservation of the old works of the heroic pioneers of centuries ago. Their work is not complete. They have been blazing new paths for civic effort.