

From earliest days the trails between San Antonio and San Diego have been favored for travel. San Antonio was the meeting place and clearing house for the Southwest, for Mexico and for southern California. The United States established a chain of forts from San Antonio to San Diego early in history. Then came the perilous overland journeys—the little courageous groups, the mule pack trains, later the freighters with their strings of mules to a groaning wagon, then came the fast stage coach, finally the railroad and now the motor highway.

The following is a copy of an advertisement carried in 1859 in the Texas Almanac, and full of interest respecting conditions even so late as that.

(Texas Almanac, 1859)

TEXAS ADVERTISEMENTS

OVERLAND TO THE PACIFIC.



The San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line.

THIS LINE which has been in successful operation since July, 1857, is ticketing PASSENGERS through to San Diego, and also to 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 ticket to ride in Coaches, excepting the 100 miles, above stated.

Passengers Ticketed To and From San Antonio and

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| Fort Clark, | Fort Bliss, | Tucson, |
| Fort Hudson, | El Paso, | Arizona, |
| Fort Lancaster, | Fort Fillmore, | Fort Yuma, |
| Fort Davis, | La Mesilla, | San Diego. |

The Coaches of our Line leave semi-monthly from each end, on the 9th and 24th of each month, at 6 o'clock A. M.

An armed escort travels through the Indian country with each mail train, for the protection of the mails and passengers. Passengers are provided with provisions during the trip except where the Coach stops at Public Houses along the Line, at which each Passenger will pay for his own meal. Each Passenger is allowed thirty pounds of personal baggage, exclusive of blankets and arms.

Passengers coming to San Antonio can take the line of mail steamers from New Orleans twice a week to Indianola from the latter place there is a daily line of four horse mail coaches direct to this place. On the Pacific side the California Steam Navigation Company are running a first class steamer, semi-monthly, to and from San Francisco and San Diego.

Fare on This Line as Follows, Including Rations

San Antonio to San Diego, \$200	San Antonio to El Paso, \$100
" Tucson, 150	Intermediate stations 15c per mile
Extra baggage, when carried, 40 cents per pound to El Paso, and 51 per pound to San Diego.	

Passengers can obtain all necessary outfits in San Antonio. For further information, and for the purchase of tickets, apply at the office of the Company in this city, or address I. C. WOODS, Superintendent of the line, care of American Coal Company, 50 Exchange Place, New York.

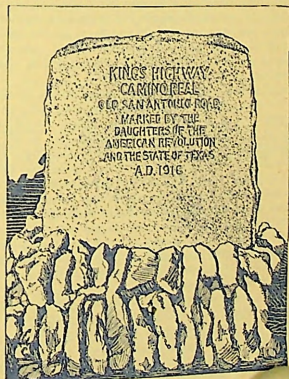
G. H. GIDDINGS,
R. E. DOYLE,
Proprietors.

A half a century earlier than the mission works in California the padres were establishing great churches and communal settlements along the San Antonio River, Texas.

Extensive irrigation systems enabled these church institutions to sustain large communities of Indian converts, grow all needed products, maintain essential industries, and to grow and feed domestic animals that ultimately numbered many thousands. So good was the engineering skill two of the aqueducts still function perfectly despite the uneven land and irrigate farms four miles from the dams. Five mission settlements including the historic Alamo were established beginning 1718 at what is now San Antonio. The ruins of these churches, granaries and other works are visited annually by thousands who marvel at these revelations of Spanish achievement two centuries ago.

A road developed from Mexico City to San Antonio, crossing the Rio Grande between Laredo and Eagle Pass. It continued from San Antonio to Nacogdoches, a Spanish outpost in East Texas, then to Natchitoches a French outpost in Louisiana, and from there by various routes connected with the eastern people. This was the King's Highway—El Camino Real in Spanish. As San Antonio grew in importance as the cross roads of the Southwest the Camino Real became known as the Old San Antonio Road. In some sections it has ceased to be the natural highway of the present day. The San Antonio missions and other old Spanish works were established along this King's Highway. The center of San Antonio today is the old San Fernando Cathedral whose iron cross is the zero point of all surveys and whose Plaza was the market and clearing house of travel and commerce as men sought to conquer this southern land. There the Zero Milestone of the Old Spanish Trail has been placed. Northward to San Pedro Park this Camino Real continues, then across to the San Antonio River at Brackenridge Park and on northward by the route now on county maps usually designated as the Nacogdoches Road. This Camino Real with its ruins and history, and its story of faith, achievement and adventure, is suffering neglect. It was one of the earliest and greatest trails of the early conquests. Monuments mark its memory but its soul is being lost to posterity.

MONUMENTS
MARKING THE
CAMINO REAL
ACROSS
TEXAS



MONUMENT AT
SAN PEDRO
PARK
SAN ANTONIO