

Santa Cruz Valley south of Tucson and that splendid group of missions of the Nogales--Tucson district followed. Mission efforts from that seat were extended down the Gila ~~Valley~~ River to Yuma. Thru more than two centuries mission works and explorations threaded the country from Florida to California.

In 1699 the French took possession of the Mississippi Valley by settlement at Biloxi on the Gulf of Mexico and split the Spanish dominion in two. In 1718 the French settled New Orleans; the same year the Spanish settled San Antonio. In 1762 Spain acquired the Louisiana territory by treaty and took possession in 1769 and again controlled the South and West. The same year, 1769, the occupation of California began with the mission at San Diego. Then followed that remarkable chain of missions ~~of~~ the Pacific Coast, missions no more remarkable however than those south of Tucson, Arizona and those around San Antonio, Texas. In 1776 San Francisco was settled by overland march from the Tucson district and down the Gila trail. When the thirteen states were fighting for independence Spain governed empires south and west and was peacefully building the California missions.

Florida was Spanish until 1821 except for an English period 1763--1783. Spain sold Old Louisiana back to France in 1800; Napoleon sold to the U.S. in 1803. Texas won independence in 1836 and became the Republic of Texas; Texas annexed with the U.S. in 1845. The Mexican War was 1846-47. New Mexico--Arizona--Southern California territory was ceded by Mexico in 1848. The Gadsden Purchase of remaining parts completed the southern boundary in 1853.

### The Five Great Mission Centers

Five mission and colonization ~~main~~ districts were extensively developed within the ~~United States~~ present United States--St. Augustine and northern Florida; The Rio Grande Valley, Santa Fe to El Paso; San Antonio and southeastern Texas; the Santa Cruz Valley in Mexico and ~~the~~ thru Nogales ~~in~~ Tucson; San Diego and the California Coast. Chains of missions and settlements northward thru Mexico maintained the communications with these frontiers. 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.

### The Old Trails

From Mexico northward, like the ribs of a fan, trails developed into Camino Reals (King's Highways) of the Spaniards; one north-eastward thru San Antonio, then to Nacogdoches and Natchitoches and on to Mobile and Pensacola and to St. Augustine; one thru El Paso to Santa Fe and the New Mexico territory; one thru Nogales and up the Santa Cruz Valley to Tucson and the Arizona territory, and westward thru Yuma to San Diego and California. Up the California Coast is the Camino Real of California song and story where those twenty-