

Pageant of Centuries Witnessed by America's Oldest Highway in Texas

THERE is one thing in San Antonio older than the city itself.

Its existence is marked by documentary evidence which is more than legend. Its diary would tell of blood, human sacrifices and wars. It has felt the tread of holy Spanish monks, whose crucifix was their sword. It has borne haughty cavaliers, settlers from the Canary Islands, St. Denis, the French trader and debaucher of native Indian tribes. Shades of the first Americans coming into Texas are as milestones upon it. The savage and boasting "Hero of Vera Cruz," Mexico's greatest tinsler, rode over it.

And the forward sweep of time has brought this oldest thing to be the bearer of agricultural, commercial and pleasure travelers from one border of the State to the other.

This oldest thing is the King's Highway, El Camino Real, the Old San Antonio Road.

Snatched from the very edge of legendary oblivion, this highway is now not only a treasure of whose love for San Antonio is rooted in its wealth of history, but the joy of the pleasure tourist and the stay of the thousands whose labors a-field are rewarded when the trail has finally led them from their rich valleys to San Antonio, the commercial capital of the territory it traverses.

Once Part of Kingdom.

El Camino Real was once part of a great system of highways the equal of the military roads of Rome and which has not yet been equaled by "more civilized" peoples of the Western Hemisphere. That great system was the work of Aztec kings who after the consummation of their triple alliance began the expansion which pushed the boundaries of their kingdom from one ocean to the other and from what is now Oklahoma to Panama. These roads emanated from Tenochtitlan, now the City of Mexico, and sought out the farthest corners of the empire. Over them the merchants of Tenochtitlan traveled, protected by the continent-wide fear of the monarch whose subjects they were. Back to the capital vast riches were borne by the merchants, and thrown at the feet of their savage god.

Bold warriors walked El Camino Real. Terrorism was the warp which knit the kingdom, and the roads were instruments of terrorism. Back over their surfaces were dragged the victims of the wars, their feet torn, their bodies faint, fit subjects for the altar from which towered rock, their mortal remains divested of their hearts, were tossed down the temple steps to leaven the feast of the successful warrior.

On such foundations of history is the King's Highway built.

Soft Treads Heard.

The music of this greatest pageant of the highways changed. Came the soft tread of devout Franciscans, pre-

Road Building by Counties

	Total Aid Allotted.	Aid Paid to Date.	Aid Project Completed.	Under Construction.	Bonds Voted From 1917 to 1921, Inclusive.
Aransas	\$ 64,819.00	\$ 60,624.23	10	...	\$ 200,000
Atascosa	161,865.26	147,757.16	10.5	...	375,000
Bandera	239,670.00	43,534.56	2.2	8.7	330,000
Bastrop	486,000.00	34,600.00	...	39.6	605,000
Bee	300,382.65	115,079.48	5.3	36.7	60,000
Bell	462,390.80	189,507.13	25.4	27.3	1,500,000
Bexar	70,000.00	...	...	19.5	75,000
Blanco	60,626.39	50,615.12	10.3	...	70,000
Brazos	118,500.00	75,499.10	31.8	...	100,000
Brooks	34,897.57	9,774.73	...	10.0	70,000
Burnet	128,946.17	115,748.00	31.6	...	250,000
Caldwell	69,728.10	20,186.85	...	...	275,000
Calhoun	272,919.18	227,539.51	12.7	...	300,000
Cameron	263,953.00	...	...	...	1,400,000
Coleman	150,816.61	144,152.19	37.0	3.8	...
Colorado	136,027.09	85,643.71	19.8	...	175,000
Comal	153,893.43	151,736.41	78.8	...	...
Culberson	37,500.00	...	...	10.3	40,000
Dewitt	18,500.00	...	...	...	400,000
Edwards	353,358.00	165,286.76	15.5	53.5	800,000
El Paso	95,149.99	57,240.26	1.8	7.0	650,000
Falls	453,550.22	32,756.54	7.4	18.6	525,000
Fayette	300,000.00	...	...	...	...
Frio	182,131.51	95,014.06	27.6	16.9	200,000
Gillespie	281,222.25	177,625.55	26.7	12.0	553,000
Gonzales	126,904.00	83,404.00	42.0	19.9	415,000
Hays	412,376.45	6,930.94	...	33.9	1,250,000
Hidalgo	161,539.24	38,065.78	10.0	34.0	40,000
Hudspeth	18,917.25	...	...	7.2	200,000
Jackson	150,000.00	...	...	...	25,000
Jeff Davis	22,967.00	20,957.00	5.3	...	300,000
Jim Hogg	135,000.00	...	...	...	212,000
Karnes	130,891.31	91,323.71	34.0	...	280,000
Kendall	305,000.00	222,948.47	...	31.2	150,000
Kerr	6,000.00	...	...	...	350,000
Kimble	34,130.00	34,024.82	11.8	...	200,000
Kleberg	102,500.00	63,105.00	...	24.8	200,000
Lavaca	29,558.64	...	...	7.2	...
Lee	6,707.75	5,506.98	...	1.5	...
Live Oak	328,887.00	...	...	12.5	800,000
Mason	239,727.30	108,229.40	25.2	13.9	615,000
Matagorda	300,000.00	109,653.00	...	...	405,000
McClulloch	279,126.69	3,857.81	...	57.1	2,000,000
Medina	155,963.54	94,792.21	18.0	...	225,000
Menard	127,214.46	92,214.44	60.4	...	280,000
Milam	250,493.45	113,475.45	...	...	150,000
Morris	115,000.00	34,734.52	...	11.4	115,000
Newton	...	...	...	...	350,000
Oldham	...	...	...	...	125,000
Orange	...	...	...	...	600,000
Patton	394,750.00	177,517.49	26.5	10.0	250,000
Pecos	338,046.14	107,753.87	19.9	15.2	500,000
Reeves	...	...	...	...	635,000
Refugio	...	...	...	...	450,000
Robertson	...	...	...	...	400,000
Russell	...	...	...	...	1,500,000
San Antonio	...	...	...	...	300,000
Schleicher	...	...	...	...	2,120,000
Sutton	...	...	...	...	1,500,000
Tarrant	...	...	...	...	...
Terrell	...	...	...	...	...
Tom Green	...	...	...	...	...
Travis	...	...	...	...	...
Uvalde	...	...	...	...	...
Val Verde	...	...	...	...	...
Washington	...	...	...	...	...
Webb	...	...	...	...	...
Wharton	...	...	...	...	...
Williamson	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	\$10,939,623.94	\$3,889,336.61	678.6	1,301.8	\$17,012,000

ing their Creator as they went. It was a message of peace they brought of blood-washing of a different kind. Along this highway their song stretched and the mysteries of Christianity were patiently explained to the Indians. They went first to the far end of the highway and near what is now Nacogdoches built their first settlement in Texas.

But the founding spirit of the road would not down. Even the greatest faith and charity was not proof against

the spirit of savagery which was the highway's inspiration. They returned to their capital, but returned again to select the better site near San Antonio, where soon five missions and two settlements were to mark civilization's advance into Texas.

Peace and plenty lined the roadway for half a century.

Then man's great enemy, lack of wisdom entered the highway, stalking straight from Madrid by way of the City of Mexico. Unwise rulers disease

and adverse conditions turned the more important of the road's vistas from the south to the north.

From that direction came St. Denis, magnate of Louisiana, French merchant supreme. With him he brought trinkets to beguile the peaceful Indians of the missions, and liquor to debauch them. Firearms were distributed and again blood sprinkled the highway's dust. And history's great levy was exacted here as wherever passions gain dominance, and decay followed.

Greater Spirits Appear.

But the highway founded in blood would not down. Spirits of greater strength than any which had blazed its path were to travel it again. The Americans came, men who were willing to fight and die that along this highway peace and plenty might forever live. They fought unto death, did these Americans, first for the Presidio de Bexar, then for the Alamo, and yet again on two occasions when envious Mexico reached out its hand of blood against the then weak Republic which was to become a part of the greater one.

These fighters lost, but their blood crystallized the divided spirit of the Americans and peace was won.

The peace for which they fought overwhelmed the roadway. The enterprise of these pioneers pushed civilization's speed in all directions. So broad was the sweep that in the vast empire the single streak across the map became blotted out, and El Camino Real was lost.

But the Daughters of the American Revolution reached this highway from oblivion. Led by Mrs. Lipscomb Norvel of Beaumont they searched the records and fixed its exact course. A legislative appropriation of 1915 for \$5,000 permitted a physical survey to be made, and the King's Highway was marked and blazed. Monuments of its age, signifying the triumph of its rich territory against the forces of greed and avarice, were laid along its route.

This highway, most ancient of America, runs through the northwest corner of San Pedro Park, past San Fernando Cathedral and on down past the missions, entering Mexico at Presidio. To the north it traverses Comal, Hays, Bastrop, Lee, Burnson, Brazos, Madison, Houston, Cherokee, Nacogdoches, San Augustine and Sabine Counties to the Louisiana State line.

TEXAS TREE STATISTICS

Area of Texas	167,934,720
Forest Area	25,000,000
Farm forests comprise from fifteen to fifty per cent of total farm area in 157 counties east of the Break of the Plains.	
Value of wood material sold from farms	\$12,000,000
Persons engaged in timber manufacturing in Texas	23,518
Persons engaged in manufacturing industries as compared with timber industries	70,230
Value of lumber products	\$40,000,000
This is equal to an estimated 12 per cent of all manufactured products in the State.	
Value of cedar cut from Edwards' Plateau in South-west	\$700,000