

course of the empire dramatized. The spirit of those who participated in the celebration was jubilant. To them it was a gesture of completion, an expression of the satisfaction of worthy achievement, which has not yet stirred the people of Texas who will enjoy over one third of the material advantage of the whole highway and publicity which no money could buy. The Saint Augustinians spent \$16,000 cheerfully in making the dedication of the zero marker there a success and a memory to be cherished. Then, like a ghost-hand from out of the past, came the bestowal of an honor upon this modern blazer of trails.

It is not known just how or by whom the recommendation was made to the King of Spain for Mr. Ayres's decoration. There are records and printed matter of the Old Spanish Trail at Madrid. Spanish people have called upon him expressing their sympathy with the purpose of his efforts. One Spanish gentleman, Don Pio Noriega, called upon him in December, 1927, and was so interested in the work of developing the trail, that he wrote personal letters to Primo de Rivera, Spanish Minister of State, to the Marquis de la Arcos, Minister of South American affairs, and to Ambassador Padilla at Washington, and sent a package of Old Spanish Trail publications and letters to be laid before King Alphonso. At the Saint Augustine celebration and monument dedication, April 1929, a Spanish delegate, Don Rafael Casares Gil, was present and delivered one of the dedication addresses. Which one of these, if any, it was whose pride in the completion of the project begun so long ago under Spanish auspices prompted them to notify their home Government of Mr. Ayres's work, is not known. The first knowledge Mr. Ayres had of the decoration was a letter from the Spanish Ambassador at Washington, sent to a ten-year-old address, transmitting the notification from Madrid. The decoration was bestowed at a brilliant reception in San Antonio, April 28, 1930.

The title Mr. Ayres enjoys by virtue of this high dignity is Knight Commander, which is the highest appointive title of the order. The highest title, Knight of the Great Cross, comes through promotion from a lower title. The cross of Isabel la Catolica rewards those who, on this side of the sea, distinguish themselves in ways which contribute to the distinction of Spain.