

Divisions

I. FLORIDA DIVISION—1,000 Miles.

East Coast, Miami and St. Augustine. West Coast from Tampa. North Florida, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Pensacola. Tampa is the ancient gateway of De Soto, De Narvaez and the early explorers. St. Augustine is the oldest city in the United States. All South Florida is rich in old Spanish history.

Pensacola was the ancient gateway of the Spanish in West Florida and Pensacola claims the most ancient history of any city in the land, for De Luna came with a great expedition of military and priests in 1559 and planted a colony.

The ancient trail of the Spanish connected Pensacola and St. Augustine. Florida was Spanish until 1819.

II. ALABAMA DIVISION—70 Miles.

First indefinitely Spanish, then a part of the Old Louisiana of the French. Mavilla was the ancient Indian kingdom where De Soto's great expedition encountered disaster. That was the first decisive battle in the United States. Mobile takes its name from Mavilla, and the Old Spanish Trail had its birth at Mobile in 1915, with Pensacola and West Florida assisting.

III. MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST DIVISION—90 Miles.

The seat of the first colonizing efforts of the French and the first capital of Louisiana. Later both Spanish and English controlled the territory. Seat today of summer and winter colonies seeking the pleasures of the Gulf and the beauties of its shores.

IV. LOUISIANA DIVISION—350 Miles.

For 200 years the Spaniards sailed the Gulf of Mexico and held it as a Spanish lake. Argosies laden with gold sailed over it and filled the years with romance and adventure. Expeditions sought new sources of riches but the Spaniard passed by the empire the Mississippi River embraced. De Soto discovered and crossed the mighty Father of Waters and while dying begged his followers to subject it to the flag of Spain. But the perishing remnants of that expedition struggled down the Mississippi River seeking safety and left to La Salle, the French-Canadian from Quebec 140 years later, the distinction of claiming the vast territory the Spanish might have commanded had they followed the river up from the Gulf. In 1699, seventeen years after La Salle,

a French fleet entered the Gulf and colonized Louisiana. Later the Louisiana of the French was subjected to the standards of Spain and the Castilian period of New Orleans has left its impress for all time. After the American Revolution France again controlled Louisiana and it was finally sold to the United States by Napoleon. The Mississippi River was the doorway for all the midland country and in the restless struggle of races and of men to possess the West, New Orleans became the crucible where the burning passions of life and ambition were fused into a racial type different from anything in America.

V. EAST TEXAS DIVISION—1,000 Miles.

From the Louisiana line (Sabine River) to Schulenburg, Texas, and to include tributaries. Galveston, with many touches of old Spanish history, and named for Galvez, once governor of Louisiana in Spanish time, should be embraced. The battlefield of San Jacinto where Texas won independence from Santa Anna is near Houston.

Also to include the ancient Spanish trail up the Gulf coast from Mexico, the first penetration of the Texas country. Refugio, Corpus Christi, San Patricio and a host of other names testify to ancient Spanish endeavor. The mission fathers plodded this trail in those first heroic years to save Texas from La Salle's colony and from the French in Louisiana. The site of La Salle's fateful landing is on this trail. The place of his treacherous death is on the Main Line of the Old Spanish Trail, near Orange, Texas, and will be made an Old Spanish Trail campsite. The first group of missions at Nacogdoches and those at Victoria, Goliad and Mission Valley were served by this old trail, and every mile is rich with records of those remarkable days.

The Main Line of the OST calls for supreme effort at present, but an Old Spanish Trail all around the Gulf from Tampa, the earliest eastern gateway, to Brownsville the land's end in the United States by the Gulf's western shores, would be a logical and interesting development.

VI. WEST TEXAS DIVISION—1,000 Miles.

Schulenburg to Van Horn and to include tributaries. Colonized and held by the Spanish when the French threatened Spanish dominion by occupying the Mississippi River territory. San Antonio is an ancient mission, military, governmental and social center of the Spanish. Their classic mission structures are still seen at San Antonio.

THE HIGHWAY OF THE SOUTHERN BORDERLANDS

