

ADDRESS BY HARRAL AYRES, MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
dedicating the Monument at Saint Augustine and formally  
opening the Old Spanish Trail to the American people.



Long before the Pilgrim Fathers settled New England, Spanish princes, adventurers and Mission Fathers were exploring and settling this Old Spanish Trail country. Names of discoverers and colonizers like Ponce de Leon, Menéndez, de Soto, de Luna, Galvez, Oante, Cortez, Balboa, Coronado and Cabrillo are known over the land. In the church other names have become canonized for noble deeds. Across this land are old stone missions, old aqueducts and other ancient works of that remarkable period.

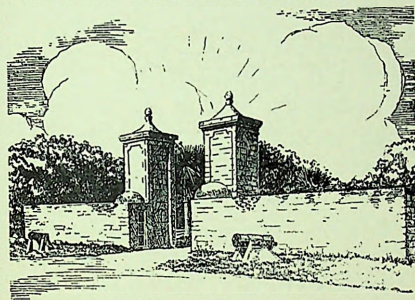
Those were days of travels by sea and up the rivers and bays, or overlaid by rambling trails. The ancient cities of St. Augustine, Pensacola, Mobile, Biloxi, New Orleans, San Antonio, El Paso, Tucson and San Diego were settled on those waterways or those trails and they became clothed with romantic history. When the automobile age came those bays and rivers were barriers to travel and those cities were strangers to one another.

A group of crusaders met in Mobile in 1915 and declared for an automobile trunk line that would open these lands of the conquistadores and the padres of past ages to the enjoyment of the American people through future ages.

The dream of 1915 is the realization of the people of today. The waterways have been bridged and the continent spanned. California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama said to Florida, we are ready now. St. Augustine, with its mantle of Spanish history resting like a spell over the old city, said come and we will give a festival that will portray the story of Ponce de Leon and others of the past.

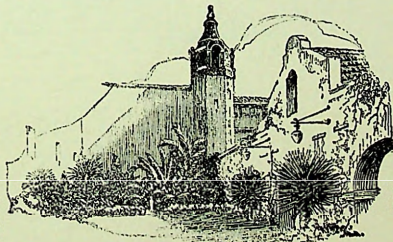
This monument is not alone to mark the beginning of the Old Spanish Trail of today in its long span across the continent. It is a memorial to the men and women who have mastered the problems and made the highway possible and made our recent motorcade drive from San Diego to St. Augustine as dependable as railroad travel. It is a tribute to the Spanish people of yesterday and of today. It is a challenge now to the people to go on with this work and keep this far-southern land a joy for travelers for the years to come and a memorial to all that is good in that age of art and chivalry and adventure and of great mission works. We do not have to agree with all they did. We do not agree with all our Pilgrim Forefathers did. But we may take pride in the glories of that age and help pass on to our children memories of it, not forgetfulness of it.

We accept this monument from the people of this hospitable city in the name of the people of this land and dedicate this highway now to our people as a sacred trust to carry on to new glories and for the pleasure of all who follow us.



ANCIENT SPANISH GATES, SAINT AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

From the old Spanish City on the Atlantic Coast to the old Spanish city on the Pacific Coast the Old Spanish Trail threads its way thru old Spanish cities across the continent.



IN THE VALLEY OF THE PADRES  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA