

THE GUNTER

San Antonio, Texas, August 1, 1933.

Hon. John A. Valls,  
Laredo, Texas.

Dear Mr. Valls,

I asked A. W. Grant, Managing Editor of the EXPRESS, for the name of the one in Laredo who really understood the old Spanish history, and he told me of you.

For a long while various little groups have been working with me, quietly digging out the Spanish History specially relating to this Spanish South Texas. Not an easy task, but by encouraging and helping each group, or each individual, to stick to a defined angle we are getting somewhere. I have needed for some time information out of Laredo, and someone to put questions to on occasions. I know the great Spanish trail was thru Laredo, and that the trail thru Presidio del Rio was minor. In this I run counter to most written history. Writers constantly sing of the great Camino Real to Mexico City thru Presidio del Rio; some of them have it the great Moctezuma Way. The D.A.R. has marked it thru Texas with granite markers. The State Highway Department has been directed to reconstruct it. At the next highway meeting I think you will see some contracts let on this Camino Real in northeast Texas. But it was thru Laredo the great caravans, great leaders, great padres, and official dispatch riders, traveled most. Saltillo not Monclova was a control. Official dispatches between the officials in Texas, and the padres in Texas, and the officials down in Mexico were very numerous, and those riders and their convoys found their perilous way over this trail.

I possess topographical maps of South Texas. My associates on this phase of this work have been supplied with copies for their locality. With these maps in front of us we are able to fit in many fragment of history that otherwise would be unrecognized and passed and forgotten. In some old Spanish countries workers are doing much land title and other research. The enclosed map is marked according to well-authenticated information. The junction point south of Jourdanton is not entirely cleared up but we know about where it must be and the folks down there will help us. I have translations of old diaries that also help. There is much to be cleared up in the Goliad area but the folks there are helping.

Laredo should have much that will help and Mr. Grant was quite confident you would have real source information or would know who would have it and would cooperate.

Too many people in San Antonio think that because Santa Anna and some Texans had that epic fight that all Texas history begins and ends in that episode. Recently some dear ladies chided me for spending so much time on "dirty Spaniards when such thrilling history was associated with the Fall of the Alamo and the heroes that died there." They naively added that most of them were gentlemen and scholars. That epoch was great and vital but that Spanish century was a remarkable one and if a group can be held together until the broad basic history is told of that century, others will go on with the work just as many have kept spreading the old Spanish story of California since the basic history was published.

I am not unmindful of the task of getting into the open the true story of Spanish efforts in Texas but in sixteen different ~~was~~ groups are working with me, and we are getting some good results ...or I am very wrong in my conclusions. I have been able to draw forth some fine talent.

The Texas Centennial will be in 1936. I believe if we can get the story of the old trails, and their course, well told, that the whole story of those dynamic Spanish empire builders will be interesting to visitors. There are potential leaders in the Centennial movement who are thinking with me in this. People here