

TOURIST CAMPS

By the Department of Beautification, Mrs. Henry Drought,
Director-General

The remarkable growth of the automobile travel movement has already developed need for well-regulated camps, rest rooms and comfort stations for men, women and children. The country hotels have not yet advanced to meet the change. Quite generally they were built long ago for limited patronage. Their equipment is not good, and their service is often indifferent. A few cars of tourists find the hotels also deficient. Satisfaction is often expressed. The country restaurant also is deficient. In the cities good hotel service is always available.

Nice camps in the rural communities are appreciated by these travelers. Lavatories and rest facilities are essential. Women and children particularly should be remembered. A caretaker and a lodge manager for the sale of fuel and camp needs is advised. A fire department for camp space in a park of this sort is also advised; the supervision, the protection, the cleanliness and conveniences repay for the charge.

Camps harboring hundreds of visitors are not unusual. Attention is given to tourists at Schulenburg, Texas, have been such that, according to records, over 5000 cars carrying over 15,000 people stopped at their camp in 1923.

DESIRABLE PROVISIONS

Water. Cooking. Camp grates. If possible provide cooking ovens and wood, or gas and quartz meters.

Comfortable toilet facilities.

Bathing pool or shower bath.

Incinerator for burning garbage and trash.

Tables, benches and lights around the cooking and eating quarters. A brush or vine-covered arbor with comfortable seats will provide shade and comforts even tho you have a good grove.

A pavilion or lodge is also desirable as a storm shelter and for other conveniences or pleasures. Comforts and lights where the women can attend to family cares would be another convenience.

Cleanliness and Sanitation Important

By all means keep sanitation, neatness and cleanliness well in hand. Travelers are quick to condemn the lack of these and to pass the word along to keep away from unattractive or unclean camps.

Don't have open privies if it can be avoided. They are a menace. Where nothing better is possible, lime or some other disinfectant should be provided to keep them as sanitary as possible.

Paint your woodwork white. It is a constant surjection to cleanliness.

Don't have advertising around your camp. It cheapens the place. Communities that are providing rest camps are amply repaid. Build up good-will and the numbers that come will increase, and when they go will scatter words of friendliness.

Vacation Camps

Another kind of camp is possible in places of unusual attraction. Little cabins may be built and arranged to be rented at \$1.00 a day and upward, and a central lodge established where meals can be served. This permits people to get in their cars or travel by train and go to some place and "rough it" at small expense. There are many people who want to get away from the city for a few weeks and enjoy the woods and streams. Vacation camps should be financially self-sustaining.

Combination Camps

Some places are combinations of Tourist Camps. Vacation Camps and of Amusement Parks. Where such camps or parks are on an important trunkline, auto parties flow in from a wide territory. The attractions depend in part on the natural opportunities for entertainment and relaxation and on the conveniences provided. At one park in Texas, auto parties are so numerous special parking grounds are provided with traffic officers in charge. More than 2000 parked cars have frequently been counted Sundays and week-days. There is a swimming pool fitted for all sorts of sport, also bath houses and lock boxes, promenades, benches, pavilions, children's playgrounds, dance floor, tents, tent floors for parties with their own equipment, dance sleeping rooms, boats, canoes, restaurant, drinks, etc. Such parks, attractions and care for the tourist, the week-end party, or the pleasure seeker of a day or evening.

Classes of Campers

The foregoing are simply for suggestion. Experience will teach a class of well-to-do auto owners who are off for a trip with the family or on a week-end jaunt, and they desire nice surroundings and companionship; (2) There is a large mass of men and women who spend three or three weeks of vacation annually, and who want to spend their vacation in the country, but they must have nice accommodations where they can rest their sleeping accommodations and be free of cooking problems, and have opportunities for sport, relaxation and entertainment; (3) There is that ever-increasing interstate and transcontinental auto travel class. All these are an asset to every community and wherever they travel they find nice facilities for their comfort the word is continually passed along and that camp grows in popularity; (4) There is also a class of wanderers who are living largely in the public camps, and there are others who litter and muss up the camp. These are not assets.

MILLIONS IN CONSTRUCTION

Road and bridge construction inaugurated along the Old Spanish Trail the past two years, and involving some ten millions of dollars, is now nearing completion. From New Orleans to San Diego this highway is 94% improved, and the construction in progress will soon make it a comfortable drive from Florida to California and give the American people a transcontinental highway open all winter and connecting all the winter playgrounds.

FIFTY MILES OF BRIDGES

Because this highway extends along the Gulf of Mexico from Florida to Texas and then across the vast plains and mountains of the West it has had to overcome unparalleled engineering and financial difficulties. Naturally it crosses all the waterways that flow into the Gulf; these drain the whole midland continent and at the crossing points these waterways are frequently broad bays and drainage basins, or rivers that suddenly rise in flood from storms hundreds of miles northward. Over fifty miles of bridges and causeways are necessary. The bridges from the Atlantic to Mobile Bay are built or building. From Mobile to New Orleans extensive paving and other construction is in progress, and improved ferries will be provided to serve travel until the bridges are built. From New Orleans to the Pacific all bridges are built or building except at the Mississippi and the Atchafalaya rivers in Louisiana, and over the Sabine basin at the Louisiana Texas line. Good ferries exist.

COMPLETED IN THE WEST

Thru the West the highway is essentially complete from east of El Paso to San Diego, Cal. Mountains and deserts there have been conquered and one of the most interesting highways in the United States has been developed. The mountains are crossed by easy grades, and this is the only road into California never blocked by snow.

SUMMER AND WINTER ATTRACTION

In winter the Old Spanish Trail has the Gulf of Mexico for its attraction, and the hills and mountains of West Texas, the Mexican border points, and southern New Mexico, southern Arizona and southern California. This southern borderland country is just as attractive to travelers in summer for the Gulf bathing and breezes, the Texas hills and mountains, the western attractions, and the primitive camping, fishing and hunting all along the way are at their best. The Old Spanish Trail is rich in romance and legend, and in old missions and landmarks of the Spanish conquests which had reached their zenith and had passed the two-century mark when the American Revolution was being fought on the Atlantic seaboard.

THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY MOVEMENT

As a result of the Federal Aid laws 7% of the highways of the United States is subject to federal aid, and a national system of trunklines is now the designated and accepted program of the states and the federal government. It embraces about 220,000 mi. During 1923 about 12,000 mi. were improved, making the total of improved mileage January 1, 1924, about 80,200 mi., leaving 135,900 mi. for the years ahead. In addition, maintenance and reconstruction work add to the magnitude of the task.

One billion dollars is the estimated annual expenditure now for highways. Eleven billion dollars is the estimated value of the rolling stock on these highways. A business of incredible magnitude and an extensive engineering force have been created in but a few years.

To the credit of the highway commissioners and the engineers, their achievements in a brief period are one of the epics of American life. Old Spanish Trail officials meet them in various states.

Along the Old Spanish Trail the engineering problems have often been without precedent. Necessary changes in the old road laws have been slow. Financing quite generally has been difficult. Patience and leadership are conquering many a barrier placed by Nature in the path of this highway. Before 1925 ends construction and maintenance will give the people of the nation comfortable travel conditions from St. Augustine to San Diego.

THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION, Inc.

A Membership Organization

The membership is a voluntary band of men and women interested in building a great highway from Florida to Mexico and California and developing its travel comforts, and in the preservation of the old landmarks and the old history of those ancient and romantic periods in the Southern Borderlands where men and empires struggled for mastery long before the American Revolution.

All funds are controlled by an Executive Board of business men. The Department of Beautification plans to beautify, to sign, to historical places, to work against the roadside advertising nuisance, to plan distinctive marking, and to preserve the natural attractions and the wealth of historical values. Engineers, highway officials, women's clubs and boy scouts are cooperating.

The local Councils of San Antonio and Boerne are proceeding to make the section from San Antonio to Boerne a model of beautification. Their plans call for many notable undertakings and it is hoped not only members along the Old Spanish Trail but others throughout the United States will learn from these efforts the best methods for the beautification of the roadsides.

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