

Highway Construction in Alabama

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The Eastern Work of 1922

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These statements give an indication of the progress that has been made...

The Construction of the Highway

Ten miles across Mobile Bay... Three and a half miles across Escambia Bay near Pensacola and four miles of other bridges in North Florida... Seven miles across Pascagoula River and Biloxi Bay and the Bay of St. Louis in Mississippi...

West from New Orleans, to the Pacific Coast, local funds were being voted from 1919 on, but no State was yet cooperating satisfactorily with State and Federal funds. The Texas State engineer in 1922 declared no construction of primary type could be undertaken until it was assured all the States would construct their sectors.

The Washington Work

May 1922 had arrived. Sturdy bands of crusaders were active at Mobile, at Pensacola, and along the coast along the Mississippi Coast, but no construction was in sight. Then at a little meeting at the Battle House in Mobile, S. H. Peck again led out. "We are realizing these questions must be solved at Washington," he said. "If you men will stand by me I will give Harrel Ayres the funds and let him go. We cannot solve these problems here." Mr. Peck handed over \$900 that afternoon. The Director made a brief trip back to the San Antonio office, the first return since New Year's day, then jumped to the Dixie Highway convention at Jacksonville, Florida, and was in Washington about June first. Senator Craft and others fortified him with letters. Senators and Congressmen at Washington, still notable in national affairs, soon were cooperating actively. Senator Underwood, then Democratic leader; Congressman McDuffie of Alabama, now Democratic whip; and Congressman Wurzbach of San Antonio, gave the service of their offices and their secretaries. A tribute is due those secretaries for their helpfulness. A month and a half were spent in Washington in unceasing labors, such as everyone knows who is familiar with affairs at the national capital. Most of the far-southern senators and congressmen aided.

Special conferences were opened at the War Department. The Department was preparing a war map of highways needed for national defense, as information for the Federal and State highway officials who then were beginning to formulate the national system of highways. The Old Spanish Trail in the East, but highways connecting those seaport cities, ^{from} ~~Northward~~ were already mapped. Army engineers believed those southern waterways would not be bridged for many years and the Federal Road Bureau officials at Washington frankly expressed the same opinion. This was the same old claim, that north-south highways were the proper outlets. The army road map, then half completed, was laid aside and the Old Spanish Trail project became a ^{matter of} ~~basic~~ consideration from a military and an engineering standpoint. By July a series of understandings had been formulated and several unusual declarations flashed over the wires from Washington... and from then on construction of the Old Spanish Trail swept forward. Millions and millions of dollars flowed into great bridges and paved roads.

These Washington Declarations follow:

was not shown