



### The Highway And Its Romance

The Old Spanish Trail connects the playgrounds of Florida with the playgrounds of California and links the playgrounds that lie between. It will bring to the cities and towns along the way a continual tide of tourist and automobile travel and a permanent pleasure to the people. The Old Spanish Trail will revive and keep alive the remarkable history of old Spanish days, a history on the northern continent that reaches from Florida to California and offers historical associations more romantic than anything in the land. Those were the days of Spanish splendor, of Cavalier and Conquerer, of Columbus, Cortez and Pizarro, of Ponce de Leon, De Soto and Coronado and of the great orders of priests whose missions are scattered along the Trail. Mexico was the throbbing heart of Spanish endeavor; of the New Spain of their hopes.

The Spanish dreamed of gold and glory, and with expeditions worth a King's ransom they struggled through jungles, deserts and mountains to despair and death while the phantom of riches raised others to follow.

In South America they sought for the land of the Gilded Chief whom they called El Dorado, they searched for the Temple of the Sun and the Enchanted City of the Caesars. In North America they searched for the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola through Arizona and New Mexico, and for the realms of the Gran Quivera in Texas and Kansas; they sought the Great Kingdom of the Tejas, the Mountain of Silver, the Streams of Pearls, the Provinces of Wealth and the Fountain of Youth. They added luster to their period and won new empires and lost them. Today the Floridas and the New Spain of those days are the winter retreats of the people of the North American continent. The Old Spanish Trail can and will become the most famous and most traveled highway in the land—the Highway of the Southern Borderlands and of Mexico.



## In the Footsteps of Padres and Conquistadores

The Story of Three Centuries, Florida to California  
and Mexico.

The stores of gold found in Mexico and Peru set the Old World on fire, but the Spanish alone organized those costly expeditions that explored vast domains for more riches while the Franciscan missionaries pushed their works to save Indian souls. A hundred years before the Pilgrims set foot on Plymouth Rock the Spanish were penetrating the country along the Old Spanish Trail. The story of their explorations and settlements from Florida to California is a romance that has not yet been clearly written, but as the highway that traverses this country is reconstructed for modern-day travel this story will be developed for the pleasure of the travelers that pass over it.

Four centuries of history, the longest period in American annals are embraced in the Old Spanish Trail. From ocean to ocean it is rich with Spanish adventures and the wonders of the Old Mission construction.

Ponce de Leon landed in Florida in 1513 and was the first European to disembark on the United States mainland. De Narvaez reached Florida in 1528, eleven years before De Soto, and explored the Gulf country with 300 men to the country of the present Tallahassee. He failed to reconnect with his ships and a historic disaster ensued. In crudely constructed vessels a part of his followers reached the "Isle of Ill-fate" believed to be Galveston Island, shipwrecked, naked and dying, and some lived as slaves to the Indians for six years. De Vaca, the royal treasurer, and three others escaped in 1534, crossed Texas and reached in 1536 the Spanish at Culiacan on the west coast of Mexico. That story of eight years of awful suffering and nakedness is a revelation of the cost of conquering a new land—and it marks the first Spanish Trail across the continent. De Vaca is thought to have been in the country of Sheffield, Fort Stockton and the Big Bend in Texas on the Old Spanish Trail, passing that way into Mexico.

