

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

For more than ten years, on my Old Spanish Trail work, and in my history explorations around South Texas, I have learned much about the Spanish Occupation in these Southern or Spanish Borderlands from Florida to California.....BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING LEARNED IS THAT NO ONE PERSON NOR ANY SMALL GROUP WILL EVER MASTER THE DYNAMIC AND CONSECRATED STORY OF THOSE SPANISH CENTURIES. Broad and Organized cooperation must be fostered.

A number of times during the past ten years I have thought I understood the old Spanish history well enough to weave together that old and interesting story from Florida to California for the benefit of the travelers and the writers that keep asking for it, but again and again new leads to research and study would open to show that I still lacked important data....and steadily also the "lost" history around San Antonio and Spanish South Texas left breaches in the transcontinental fabric.

There are men and women all thru these southern Spanish States who are intelligently interested, and whose studies and research can be coordinated under proper leadership. My contacts with these people are good.

Another important fact learned is that San Antonio and Spanish South Texas (of which North Mexico was the base) comprise one of the great areas of Spanish effort and ambition, and that but little of this Spanish history is really known; much that is known is unorganized and not easily accessible, and much that is written and rewritten is wrong. It is clear also that Spanish South Texas and North Mexico must be studied as one area. Far Northeast Texas is a somewhat different chapter. The Rio Grande in Spanish times was not a boundary, as now, The present Texas includes parts of Spanish colonies whose bases were in North Mexico. The Rio Grande was a river somewhat central in those colonies. Saltillo and Monclova were colonial capitals. The present-day disposition to think of the Rio Grande as a colonial dividing line causes much confusion of thought and writing.

Extensive historical data that I have collected respecting the Old Spanish Trail territory (Florida to California) has repeatedly proven weak because the historical knowledge of the San Antonio territory has been so deficient or erroneous. Research into the history of this Texas--Mexico area is therefore essential to correct understandings of the Spanish history of the Spanish Borderlands from the Atlantic to the Pacific.