

STATEMENT REGARDING J. W. FRANCIS

Last spring it was obvious that something should be done regarding the popularizing of travel over the Old Spanish Trail. I asked Mr. J.W. Francis, a nationally known publicity man, to make a trip of inspection and investigation over the Trail and to map out a plan of campaign for us, and to arrange for the publication of a magazine if sufficient support could be secured. Upon his arrival in San Antonio from Florida, Mr. Francis informed me that it was not a matter of good or bad roads that was diverting the traffic over the northern routes, but that it was merely a matter of publicity. He also advised that various influences were being brought to bear on the OST travel. He found organized hotel associations and others were spending money in printer's ink in order to obtain this muchly wanted traffic. The plan of campaign which Mr. Francis outlined to me in order to oppose this unfavorable publicity was about as follows:

In order to place to the best advantage before the tourists what they could expect to see by traveling over the Old Spanish Trail, it was planned that the Chamber of Commerce in each city on the Trail should in connection with their office maintain an OST office, which in addition to giving road information, would maintain a permanent photographic exhibit from each city on the trail. These exhibits to constitute a series of pictures showing the agricultural and industrial pursuits in each locality along the Trail, as well as the historic and present-day points of interest to tourists and the accommodations such as camp sites and hotels. The advantage of each of these offices is permanent, because of the fact that in each city on the trail the traveler would find exhibits from the entire trail from coast to coast. Mr. Francis also proposed the gathering of data and photographs from each city on the OST to form a basis for articles in national periodicals and newspapers not located on the OST. This publicity would be obtained free of charge, since the trail has assumed national interest. Also, these same photographs would form a basis for a campaign to be consistently carried on through the Metropolitan newspapers located from coast to coast upon the OST.

His plans met with my approval. No real efforts have been made towards publicity, and it is my sincere desire to see the OST get the tourist traffic that we are justly entitled to. Everywhere great camp sites have been built for travelers; all along the trail feverish efforts have been put forth to complete this great highway. Now let us co-operate and advertise the fact that we have in the Old Spanish Trail America's greatest transcontinental highway, upon which winter snows cut no figure.

I have received word today from Mr. Francis that he has just completed the trip to San Diego and that he has met with great encouragement from the East to the West. I am also in receipt of a letter from Mr. A. H. Gardner, Tombstone, Arizona, advising that Mr. Francis had been meeting with success in that section. I would appreciate very much a line from you telling me what you think of this plan.

yours very truly,

Fred B. Johnson
President Old Spanish Trail.