

Old Spanish Trail Divisions

I. FLORIDA DIVISION—4,000 Miles.

East Coast, Miami and St. Augustine. West Coast from Tampa. North Florida, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Pensacola. Tampa is the ancient gateway of De Soto, De Narvaez and the early explorers. St. Augustine is the oldest city in the United States. South Florida is rich in old Spanish history.

Pensacola was the ancient gateway of the Spanish in West Florida and Pensacola claims the most ancient history of any city in the land, for De Luna came with a great expedition of military and priests in 1559 and planted a colony.

The ancient trail of the Spanish connected Pensacola and St. Augustine. Florida was Spanish until 1819.

II. ALABAMA DIVISION—70 miles.

First indefinitely Spanish, then a part of the Old Louisiana of the French. Mavvila was the ancient Indian kingdom where De Soto's great expedition encountered disaster. That was the first decisive battle in the United States. Mobile takes its name from Mavvila, and the Old Spanish Trail had its birth at Mobile in 1915, with Pensacola and West Florida assisting.

III. MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST DIVISION—90 Ms.

The seat of the first colonizing efforts of the French and the first capital of Louisiana. Later both Spanish and English controlled the territory. Seat today of summer and winter colonies seeking the pleasures of the Gulf and the beauties of its shores.

IV. LOUISIANA DIVISION—350 Miles.

For 200 years the Spaniards sailed the Gulf of Mexico and held it as a Spanish lake. Argoes laden with gold sailed over it and filled the years with romance and adventure. Expeditions sought new sources of riches but the Spaniard passed by the empire the Mississippi River embraced. De Soto discovered and crossed the mighty Father of Waters, and while dying begged his followers to subject it to the flag of Spain. But the perishing remnants of that expedition struggled down the Mississippi River seeking safety and left to La Salle, the French Canadian from Quebec 140 years later, the distinction of claiming the vast territory the Spanish might have commanded had they followed the river up from the Gulf. In 1699, seventeen years after La Salle, a French fleet entered the Gulf and colonized Louisiana. Later the Louisiana of the French was subjected to the standards of Spain and the Castilian period of New Orleans has left its impress for all time. After the American

Revolution France again controlled Louisiana and it was finally sold to the United States by Napoleon. The Mississippi River was the doorway for all the midland country and in the restless struggle of races and of men to possess the west, New Orleans became the crucible where the burning passions of life and ambition were fused into a racial type different from anything in America.

V. EAST TEXAS DIVISION—225 Miles.

From the Louisiana line (Sabine River) to Schulenburg, Texas, and to include tributaries. Galveston, with many touches of old Spanish history, and named for Galvez, once governor of Louisiana in Spanish time, should be embraced. The battlefield of San Jacinto where Texas won independence from Santa Anna is near Houston. East Texas is a new empire winning its way. Four cities in that district are gateways to the Gulf and developing commanding positions, Houston, Beaumont, Orange and Galveston.

VI. WEST TEXAS DIVISION—600 Miles.

Schulenburg to Van Horn and to include tributaries. Colonized and held by the Spanish when the French threatened Spanish dominion by occupying the Mississippi River territory. San Antonio is an ancient mission, military, governmental, and social center of the Spanish. Their classic mission structures are still seen at San Antonio.

The first Spanish trails were up the Texas Gulf Coast, but when San Antonio was settled an inland trail developed from Mexico City thru San Antonio to Nacogdoches and then into French territory at Natchitoches and on to New Orleans and Mobile—the Old San Antonio Road, (El Camino Real; the King's Highway) now marked in Texas every 5 ms. by the D. A. R. This Camino Real in Texas is one of the most ancient highways in America for it appears to have been a continuation of the highway of the Aztecs.

San Antonio and New Orleans started the same year (1713), each becoming the military, religious and commercial seat of empire, San Antonio became the seat of the Franciscan missions of the diocese of San Antonio. New Orleans became the Louisiana seat of the Jesuit diocese of Quebec. Nacogdoches was the Spanish military and mission frontier and Natchitoches was the French frontier post. Missions were also planted near Uvalde and near the old silver mine at Menard.

VII. EL PASO AND NEW MEXICO DIVISION—670 Miles, Main Lines.

Van Horn westward thru and including New Mexico (336 ms.) and the Rio Grande Valley.