

Nov 8, 1922

## A REPORT TO OLD SPANISH TRAIL PEOPLE OF TEXAS

### CALL FOR A STATE CONFERENCE

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The time has come when all friends of the Old Spanish Trail must set to save it from disaster.

In three years this highway system has been developed from a mere dream without any substantial support or recognition, until today it is nationally recognized as of first importance, and embraces 4000 miles in its main and tributary trunklines. It has cost three years of toil and sacrifice. At first only a little group of San Antonians and West Texans sustained the work, while elsewhere along the route claimed there were various other highway associations claiming the support of the people, or indifference prevented support to the OST movement. This highway has been marked by other claimants in ten or more sections.

Great physical difficulties, many of which still exist, also discouraged interest, and made the dream of a connected highway across the continent seem unreal. Communities, and even states, stood for policies and inaugurated construction programs that would have left the Old Spanish Trail, as projected, broken and ignored.

### WEATHERING STORMS

By the end of 1920 the people were catching the vision of a great highway, and financial support was increasing. Then came 1921 with its financial depression, memories of which are still burned in the hearts of all business men. There was little money or thought for a far-flung project like this, particularly to a distant headquarters office. The work was kept alive and gaining thru 1921 because the Managing Director gave all his time and drew but \$750 00 for salary, and merchants in San Antonio gave credits when they couldn't give cash. In the fall of 1921 the storms were weathered, moneys began to come, accounts were being reduced, and 1922 was at hand with membership-renewals due and the prestige of clean conduct to assure adequate income for all proper purposes, and for those merchants whose good-will had helped save the work. New memberships, too, were expected in considerable volume, for the constant efforts to unify interest from the Atlantic to the Pacific was having its effect, and support was broadening. The marking in Texas, exceeding a thousand miles, had been accomplished in the midst of the general depression. Some little additional marking remained in Texas, and then less mileage remained to reach St. Augustine than had been marked in Texas. Time was ripe for maps and service to travelers, and section maps for this were planned in December 1921 as the first step. 1922 promised to be a year of easy and important progress, and this faith is proven by the memberships signed this year, and the moneys secured for travel-service maps.

### EAST FINANCES WORK THERE AND AT WASHINGTON

Leaving all these asset-values to the San Antonio office for current expenses and for the payment of the standing accounts, with understandings that new work should supply its own costs, the Managing Director left ~~San Antonio~~ January 2, 1922 for the East where conditions were keeping the project a broken and unrecognized highway. There was no organization in the East, and OST Headquarters at San Antonio was a "foreign corporation." The eastern road-building problems are hard. State highway maps were being prepared for the Federal Road Bureau with sections of the Old Spanish trail not included, or else included with secondary rating. Federal aid was denied on an important section.

Indifference greeted the Managing Director at first, then those people rallied with fine earnestness. In March a Four-State Conference lasting three days was held at Mobile, and a greater one planned for 1923. The East then supplied money for all work there, then supplied the funds for the Managing Director's work at Washington where the Old Spanish Trail was finally placed on all the state maps for primary attention and as a part of the Federal system -- and where the War Department maps and the OST system were brought into accord and a statement issued by the War Department that this highway and its borderland connections were now made a part of the plans for national defense -- and where senators and congress-