

## TEXANS PRAISE SPANISH TRAIL

### Members of Motorcade Back in Houston See Great Future For Route.

The Old Spanish Trail is America's best transcontinental highway and will be so recognized when certain weak spots in West Texas are ironed out, Texans who participated in the San Diego, Cal. to St. Augustine, Fla., motorcade declared on reaching Houston Wednesday afternoon on their homeward journey from the Florida city.

Leaders of the Texas delegation began here a series of conferences which they hope will result in the early improvement of sections of the historic trail west of San Antonio.

"The purpose of the conferences," Haral Ayres of San Antonio, managing director of the Old Spanish Trail association, said, "is to find a basis of co-operation between the state highway department and West Texas people for the clearing up of all the weak sections of the trail now existing in West Texas. We hope for an early meeting of state highway officials and West Texas leaders at which every question and problem involved can be gone into and a speedy solution found."

He added that this meeting probably will take place at some point in West Texas. More definite plans will await a discussion of the situation with Chairman R. S. Sterling of the highway commission.

Mr. Ayres, Colonel H. M. Dichmann, president of the San Antonio Automobile club and a director of the American Automobile association;

Judge W. O. Huggins of Houston, Mrs. F. W. Sorell of San Antonio, national director of the beautification department of the Old Spanish Trail association, and Mrs. Alex Adams of San Antonio, assistant director, participated in the conference held here at 5 p. m. Wednesday.

The Texas members of the motorcade, numbering nearly a score, reached Houston in their bus at 3 p. m. Wednesday. They were escorted from Houston by a welcoming party from Houston, including Col. Ike Ashburn, general manager of the Chamber of Commerce; Mrs. E. Clinton Murray, East Texas director of the beautification department of the trail association, and Mrs. F. W. Armstrong. Most of the motorcade members live in San Antonio; they planned to start the last lap of their journey of more than 2000 miles at 7 p. m. Thursday, after spending Wednesday night in Houston.

#### Plan Return Trip.

One result of the trip at St. Augustine is to be a return motorcade in October to form at St. Augustine and travel the trail through Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans, Houston and San Antonio to San Diego. All Florida counties on the trail are organizing for the big trip, according to Mr. Ayres, and at least 100 cars will participate in it.

"Two things were demonstrated by the trip to St. Augustine," Mr. Ayres said at the Warwick Wednesday night. "One was that a fleet of cars can sweep across the continent on the Old Spanish Trail, making stops for dinner engagements and the like, average 275 miles a day and reach St. Augustine with the cars in essentially the same condition in which they left the Pacific coast.

"The other thing shown by the trip is that the only weakness of the trail now unsolved or not in the process of solution lies in our own state west of San Antonio. We have roads there that are bad in wet weather—and there is wet weather there sometimes. It was the only region in which the motorcade was thrown behind its schedule.

#### Called Best Route.

"If we are to draw the great volume of travel which should pass over the

trail we must keep the whole route in first class condition. The Old Spanish Trail is already the best transcontinental highway in the country, but the people of the nation have just begun to realize it. It is the only transcontinental route open all the year.

"To show what this trip accomplished, I may say that when we traveled toward St. Augustine, the people we met were interested in us. On our return trip, the people were interested in the highway. They had realized that they were on an ocean-to-ocean route, open all the way, connecting the nation's greatest playgrounds, as well as some of its most interesting historic spots."

Members of the motorcade attended a three days' festival at St. Augustine in connection with the dedication of a monument marking the beginning of the trail. The California delegation issued an invitation, backed by the mayor of San Diego, the Automobile club of Southern California and other officials and organizations, for a return motorcade from St. Augustine to San Diego and received enthusiastic acceptances from prominent Floridians.

#### Objects of Trip.

"The return motorcade in October will have two principal objects," said Colonel H. M. Dichmann of the Texas delegation. "One of these will be to fix the minds of northern people, at a time when they are planning their winter trips, on the country traversed by the Old Spanish Trail. The other will be continued development of the inter-community friendship along the highway so wonderfully manifested on the first motorcade. The big purpose is to tie together California, Texas, Florida and the country in between as the big winter playground of America.

"The distance from New York to San Diego by way of Mobile and Houston is now but 160 miles greater than the distance between those cities by way of Memphis and Dallas, and the roads and climatic conditions on the Mobile-Houston route are so much better that the driving time is actually less than over the Memphis-Dallas route.

#### Will Turn Southward.

"Once the people of the north realize that they can be playing golf in the sunshine their second day out of Washington and then enjoy outdoor sports all winter long from Florida to California, thousands who now spend their winters at home will turn southward."

Paving along the trail has been completed or arranged for from St. Augustine to west of San Antonio, except in one county in Mississippi and one county in Alabama, Mr. Ayres said.

"That means," he remarked, "that improvement of the Old Spanish Trail has given Houston a paved highway to New York."

#### Covered 2743 Miles.

The California delegation, traversing the whole length of the trail from San Diego to St. Augustine, motored 2743 miles in 11 days. The Texas delegation began its trip at San Antonio, traveling above 1200 miles to the Florida city.

The trip from St. Augustine to Houston—1025 miles—was met in five and a half days, with a number of stops. The travelers left St. Augustine Friday morning, spent half a day in New Orleans and made several other shorter halts. At Beaumont Wednesday morning, they were given breakfast by Beaumont people, and at Liberty were entertained at lunch. Liberty women, already organized for beautification of the trail through Liberty county, discussed with women of the motorcade the trip to St. Augustine.

#### Party Reaching Houston.

The party reaching Houston included, besides Mr. Ayres, Colonel Dichmann, Mrs. Sorell and Mrs. Adams, Mrs. J. L. Brown and Mrs. H. A. Moss, both of San Antonio, national directors of beautification work on the trail; Miss Virginia Edgecombe, manager of the trail association's touring department; Mrs. Ida Brosch, assistant secretary of the association; Mrs. W. D. Hundley, Mrs. W. G. Masterson, Mrs. Rose Lee Loring, Mrs. H. S. Affleck and Miss Marie Callen, all of San Antonio, and Mrs. Annie J. Smith of Houston.

At a reception at the Warwick, beginning Wednesday at 8:30 p. m., leaders of Houston organizations interested in the Old Spanish Trail heard the returned tourists tell of their trip and discussed with them the improvement and beautifying of the trail. Among those participating were Mrs. Murray, Mrs. H. M. Heyde, president of the City Federation of Women's clubs; Mrs. W. O. Huggins, Mrs. L. L. Parks, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest McNier, Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Bushway, W. W. Jones and Edward Teas.