

ETHERIDGE BROTHERS COMPANY

REALTORS
280 Broadway
SAN ANTONIO

HOME
365 Estes Avenue
January 22, 1930

January 30, 1930

F. Claude Birkhead,
San Antonio.

My dear Claude:

Your letter was nice. I have received a number like it. They help repay me for the sacrifices I have known only too well I was assuming. I esteem, more perhaps than you realize, the fact that men like you have an appreciation of the problems I have faced for 10 years. That you do is a tribute to you for much of the inside story has not yet come out. Getting \$80,000,000 together in a few years, and for a project that was not intended, politically, to be put over, is not without trials. My policy has been to use my influence and intelligence quietly and let the people who was pressing to the work enjoy the limelight. Some inside history is now promising to come out thru Washington. My recent Decoration by the King of Spain is another light on the inside story not yet known. I will be glad when men like you know more of this unpublished history for I have had your money, your sympathy, your goodwill these years to help me "carry on" and I want you to know how much your cooperation really meant.

I faced three fundamental difficulties:

1. The official plan until 1922 was not to build the Old Spanish Trail but to make the southern trunk line hinge on Atlanta, with the westward trunk thru Montgomery, capital of Alabama; Jackson, capital of Mississippi, Shreveport, Dallas, El Paso to California, and distribute from this trunk to the southern territory. This route was (and still is) geographically logical; it was politically best supported; it was financially easy to put over.
2. Every chamber of commerce of importance was committed to trunk lines from the north running southward. An east and west trunk line, so far south, must await according to their dictum) the working out of the communications down to the South.
3. The financing and engineering problems of the Old Spanish Trail project were generally conceded as insurmountable; at least until the other and "more important" trunk lines were built.

If these obstacles had not been overcome there would have been no Old Spanish Trail and the southern national trunk line would have crossed North Texas.

Most cordially,

Harral Ayres

Letter similar to this
also to Tom Etheridge