

The Old Spanish Trail

Three Hundred Years Later It Is Again a Coast-to-Coast Highway, with 949 Miles in Texas

W. FRANCES SCARBOROUGH

Honor has come to a quiet, unassuming citizen of Texas for the successful completion of fourteen years of strenuous effort in bringing the ends of the United States together. April 29, 1930, the decoration of the Royal Order of Isabel la Catolica was conferred by His Majesty, the King of Spain, upon Herral Ayres of San Antonio, with the title of Knight Commander for his services in completing the Old Spanish Trail.

The task so recently completed was fraught with obstacles and difficulties which at times seemed unsurmountable even to Mr. Ayres's tenacious purpose. It is of tremendous importance. Its material evidence is \$80,000,000 worth of paving, bridges, etc., and 2,749 miles of continuous asphalt and gravel highway which connects Saint Augustine, Florida, and San Diego, California. It is the officially designated southern national highway of the United States. The State of Texas is the greatest beneficiary by virtue of its 949 miles of Trail, and it is for this, as well as other reasons, that this asphalt ribbon from coast to coast recommends itself especially to the attention of Texans. The footprints of the first white men to come to Texas etched its first dim outline. Feet of Texan pioneers trampled it out into a road. A Texan welded it into a great national highway, and from the vantage point of three centuries of material development, we Texans can look back and see just how far along we have gotten.

It is an amazing thought that in 1915, only fifteen years ago, there were practically no highways in the southern United States. Mr. Ayres says his experience, when he took up the work of the Old Spanish Trail, was that all roads led to the railroad station. If he wanted to get somewhere by automobile and asked a direction, he was told to "go to the railroad station. You can find out there". There was a network of lesser local roads, but such a thing as a national highway was yet an idea rather than a reality. But when we reflect that although we take a three