

A half of this 200 miles is financed for paving even now, so much is the interest of the people. This Gulf Coast country can become nationally popular as a playground of the people because of its accessibility to the great centers of wealth and population, and because of its climate and its diversified opportunities for sports and relaxation.

It is this section that is breaking the Old Spanish Trail into two parts, while at the same time keeping three cities isolated from auto traffic and social intercourse, and denying to the four states the tourist riches that could easily rival South Florida or the California coast. It likewise hurts Florida and California, for the free flow of travel from coast to coast over this winter-time highway will build up all travel and help all sections. All territory of the Old Spanish Trail will reap of the harvest as each section develops its attractions by opening its highways. The Frost King of the North will lose his subjects by tens of thousands when the Sun God of the South blesses a completed Old Spanish Trail.

To cure these inactivities the Gulf Boulevard section of the OST, embracing the Pensacola-New Orleans section, has organized to meet in conference annually. The first meeting was at Mobile in March, 1922, and the second conference will be with the OST convention at New Orleans, March 26-28, 1923.

That meeting last year has gone into history as a classic. Obstacles that had bred hopeless discouragement suddenly took on first importance. One year ago the people despaired of even a good road. Today they are actually building a paved boulevard project. Mississippi with fine spirit came quickly to the front and is already paving across the state. Louisiana is letting contracts across marshes and isolated sections. Florida is coming to the Alabama line from Pensacola with paving. Between Pensacola and New Orleans are 26 miles of bays, rivers and marshes. Some of the longest bridge and marsh construction in the world is involved. Mobile Bay is eight miles. Biloxi Bay will be bridged and save seven miles of highway and make Biloxi and Ocean Springs one city and the Gulf Coast road unrivaled in the United States. Louisiana must build over a nine-mile marsh and build over three rivers of great difficulty. The Gulf Boulevard from New Orleans to Pensacola is building fast.

IV.

LOUISIANA PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS.

The Old Spanish Trail across Louisiana is now a state project with the power of an accumulating state road fund behind it and a newly-organized state highway commission. It crosses a rich and romantic sugar and cotton plantation country, but also a country of expensive problems in road building.

From the Mississippi state line to Morgan City, a distance of about 150 miles, ancient delta land of the mighty Mississippi river is encountered.

Very little natural road-building material, or natural

drainage, helps the highway in its reach across the state. Yet the Old Spanish Trail through Louisiana is building, and the day is near when New Orleans will be open to the West.

Because New Orleans lies on the Mississippi river, and all that land is ancient delta, the trails of ancient days did not go as the highway of today must go, but swung further northward. The French established two capitals of Louisiana, at Biloxi and at Mobile, before Bienville had the cour- ana, at Biloxi and at Mobile, before Bienville had the cour- age to plant on the lower Mississippi river the metropolis of the new territory that now is New Orleans. The richness of the lands in south Louisiana drew the aristocracy of France to that section. As the market place of the Mississippi Valley, whose channels reach a half of the continent, New Orleans became a melting pot of the races that conquered the new world. French, Spanish and English periods all left their indelible impress; today the Crescent City is quite truthfully spoken of as the "Paris of America."

The Old Spanish Trail of today, true to its principle of building where the people want travel, is forcing itself across the delta and through New Orleans and along the bayous and the plantations of South Louisiana.

The Louisiana highway department, but one year old, is attacking all the OST problems across the state. Epics in engineering will have been achieved with the Louisiana portion of some 350 miles, but serious work still remains and the traffic of the nation waits.

Lake Charles.

Louisiana and Texas are separated by the Sabine river. Lake Charles (Calcasieu Parish) has most of her road paved, but at the river approach is another section of grief. The Sabine River, when at flood, is three or more miles wide. That is another of those serious drainage areas because the OST keeps close to the Gulf and intends to open to the people sections that will always be their playgrounds. The problems of that section cry for attention.

V

EAST TEXAS AND PAVED ROADS.

The Old Spanish Trail across Texas involves 1,000 miles—one third the distance across the continent. And Texas divides into two parts of differing types of country.

East Texas from the Louisiana line (the City of Orange) to San Antonio, 340 miles, is the plains section, flat in the east and a rolling country as San Antonio is approached. East Texas is a country of small farms.

West Texas, 600 miles from San Antonio to El Paso, is the Hill Country, with mountains 400 miles west of San Antonio. This is a land of goat, sheep and cattle ranches. East Texas has the rainfall of the Gulf Coast; West Texas is a dryer area. Road problems are very different in the two sections.

Two years ago a connected highway across Texas was unknown. There was a jumble of crooked country roads in the east. The west was a medley of ranch trails. Auto-

mobile travel across Texas was a problem. Then the scientific weaving together of an overlaid highway across Texas was begun by the Old Spanish Trail membership.

The East Texas division is now all financed except for one county and little parts of several others, and big construction is under way.

Orange, Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Houston will be connected with concrete. 40 miles are finished, and other work is going forward. The money is ready.

West of Houston, on to San Antonio, a federal standard gravel road is built, with two sections still under construction, and two small breaks that need financing. Out of San Antonio paving is being laid eastward and westward, and it is not long before these gravelled miles will be covered and East Texas will have a paved highway.

The plans of the Old Spanish Trail call for a connection with the Main Line from Houston to the Mexican extension down through Brownsville, and this, too, will call for paving.

VI.

WEST TEXAS HILLS AND MOUNTAINS.

San Antonio is the beginning of the Hill Country of Texas. The Main Line of the Old Spanish Trail goes north-westward from San Antonio, then westward through the goat, sheep and cattle ranches, with their rocky hills and spring-water streams. These are the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains. West about 400 miles are the Davis Mountains, with peaks higher than any of the mountains of the East, and remarkable in the summer and winter pleasures they offer to the people. The State of Texas is now moving to make these mountains a state park. The Old Spanish Trail will open them to the travel of the nation.

A second OST trunkline goes westward from San Antonio to the Rio Grande at Del Rio and then will follow a borderland route westward and connect again with the Main Line at these Davis Mountains. Within these two trunklines lie this wild hill, canyon and mountain country, blest with cool breezes in summer and a sunny atmosphere in winter, and one of the last wild and primitive regions left to the people. Tourist Loops of the OST are marked and threading this country. Another state parksite embracing the Frio Canyons is contemplated. Along the Rio Grande another trunkline is building and the auto traveler will build up international friendship.

The elevation at San Antonio is 600 feet. The elevation westward rises to 1,000 and 2,000 feet. The Davis Mountains are 5,000 to 9,000 feet. El Paso is 3,900 feet.

Travel now makes the distance, 600 miles, from San Antonio to El Paso in three and four days. The people have done a great deal to make travel comfortable. They have a big mileage and a sparsely settled land to span. They are giving nice account of themselves and offering an opened way to sister states for traffic over the Old Spanish Trail.

Between Kerrville and Junction is a rocky and forbidding divide. There was no remedy except a new and expensive

road. One-half of the sixty miles, in the Junction territory, is now a completed federal standard highway laid down on new courses by an engineer who loved the country and studied the scenic delights of the hills and streams. Now in the Kerrville territory, the other half, fashioned by the same engineer, is building. When that highway over that divide is finished, cars will sweep into that Hill Country and find a new world.

Southward from San Antonio a third trunkline is being laid down—the Mexican extension, which also will have a connection from Houston and be a part of the highway around the Gulf from Tampa to Tampico. This goes south to the Rio Grande Valley, then sixty miles down the valley to Brownsville, on the way to Tampico and Mexico City. It is 240 miles from San Antonio through a primitive, unsettled country to the Valley. The sixty miles in the Valley are through an irrigated and rich citrus fruit and truck section, where wealth is accumulating with rapid strides. In the past year millions have been voted for a paved highway along this trunkline. Now the Federation of Women's Clubs in that string of towns through the valley are fostering a move to line the Old Spanish Trail there with palms. Everyone proceeded to co-operate, and hardly was the ink dry on their first call to the people before the move had spread and an Avenue of Palms ninety miles long was in process of realization. It will fall to the men to solve the problems and build this system of highways, but it will be the women who will beautify it, and it will be the women also who will start the crusade to stop disfigurement by advertising signs.

This southern Texas work brings to Old Spanish Trail travel its access to Mexico. The Rio Grande is now tapped by the OST system at all its important crossings, and the Mexican government and the Mexican states are planning their highways that they may bring the day close when international travel will bring better understandings between the two nations.

VII.

WESTERN ACHIEVEMENT.

All across the continent the Old Spanish Trail is graced with the charms of borderland conditions, first are the romance, sports and relaxations of the Gulf Country, then in Texas the Rio Grande country and its international types, while across Arizona and California is that twilight zone that marks the bounds of the two racially different people. Many "battles" and budding "crises" have scarred that boundary land.

Arizona holds fascinating appeal. Its written history starts with that remarkable expedition of Coronado searching for the seven cities of gold, and a new-old history is being written daily as antiquarians delve back into old Indian civilizations and works.

The modern "cities of gold" are Douglas and Bisbee, where the wealth of copper is being mined and smelted. Douglas is on the border; Agua Prieta over the line. Bisbee has had to pile her streets and houses on top of one another