

U.S. Department of Agriculture Bureau of Public Roads 1931

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U.S. Route 80 From Savannah, Georgia, to San Diego, California

United States Highway 80 really starts at Tybee Island off the Atlantic coast about 18 miles southeast of Savannah, Georgia. In Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi it traverses sections where important campaigns of the Civil War were waged, and which today are rich in agricultural and industrial development. Continuing westward it passes through the cotton belt and oil fields of Louisiana, the cattle and grain centers of Texas, the mining district and reclaimed desert lands of New Mexico and Arizona, and the Imperial Valley of California, to San Diego, a playground of the West, the first settlement in the State, and the beginning of Spanish history on the Pacific coast.

Route 80 crosses the territory of the Mississippi Valley explored by DeSoto, the region of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona trod by Coronado and his followers in their search for the Cities of Gold, follows the trail of the padres on which they established their missions, traverses the land of the Apaches and of the prehistoric race whose ruined habitations remain to tell of their civilization. From Texas to California, the highway touches the Mexican border at several places and gives easy access to it at others. Federal-aid highways and State and county roads lead to national parks and monuments, to national forests and Indian reservations, and to mountain ranges with tourist camps and resorts and excellent hunting and fishing. The route also gives easy access to several large irrigation works, notably the Elephant Butte, Roosevelt and Coolidge dams, the latter now in course of construction.

All southbound highways feed into Routes 80 and 90 which run through a section rich in historic romance. When the 13 original colonies were fighting for independence, Spain controlled an empire in the South and West, and was just beginning to build the California missions. Florida was Spanish until 1819; Spain sold Old Louisiana back to France in 1800, and France ceded it to the United States in 1803. The independence of Texas was won in 1836 and the State was annexed by the United States in 1848. The New Mexico-Arizona-Southern California territory was ceded to the United States by Mexico in 1848, and the Gadsden purchase of part of southern New Mexico and Arizona was consummated in 1953. Routes 80 and 90 today bind together all of these Spanish territories of the United States.

Route 80 has a total length of 2,671 miles, of which 798, or about 30 per cent, are paved with brick, concrete or bituminous macadam, according to figures of the Bureau of Public Roads of the United States Department of Agriculture. More than half the mileage, or 1,472 miles, is surfaced with gravel, sand-clay or topsoil. Climatic conditions in the Southern States are favorable for this lighter construction, which is proving adequate for present traffic. Some of the States have developed very successful methods of treating sand-clay and lime rock roads to eliminate dust which is the one important defect of such surfaces in this region. On the route there are 315 miles of graded and drained earth roads, and 86 miles of unimproved highways.

In the improvement of Route 80, the States have been helped materially by the Federal Government. Of the total mileage, 1,502 miles have been improved with Federal aid, at a total cost of \$23,372,305 of which the Government contributed \$11,041,351, or about 50 per cent.

Route 80 begins at Tybee Island, Georgia's playground, and passes through Savannah, an important and prosperous port and tourist city, whose landlocked harbor is 18 miles from the sea on the Savannah River. In 1733 the Colony of Georgia was founded in Savannah by General James Edward Oglethorpe, and the city has retained and extended its magnificent system of streets, parks and squares originally designed by its founder.

On the western wall of the Customs House is a tablet commemorating the spot where the first public building in Georgia was erected and where Rev. John Wesley preached his first sermon in America, in 1736. Wesley came to this

country as a clergyman of the Church of England and later established Methodism in America. Near Wright Square is the Tomo-Chi-Chi boulder erected in memory of the Indian chief who was a companion of General Oglethorpe and the friend and ally of the Colony of Georgia.

Other well-known and historical sites in the city are Savannah Theater, erected in 1818 and said to be the oldest theater in active use in the country; the famous Washington guns in front of Chatham Artillery Armory which were captured from the British at Yorktown in 1781; the Robinson home, built in 1782, after the British evacuated Savannah; Fort Wayne, named for General Anthony Wayne in 1782 and now the Savannah Gas Company headquarters; Owen House, built in 1815, in which General Lafayette was entertained; a granite seat which marks the spot where, General Oglethorpe pitched his tent and spent his first night on Georgia soil; Spring Hill tablet, opposite Central of Georgia Railway Depot, which marks the spot of a bloody battle in 1779, in which Pulaski was killed, and also Sergeant Jasper; and Oglethorpe Monument in center of Chippewa Square.

The Cannon Monuments mark the beginning of the first two highways in Georgia. The one on the east side of the monument, marks the beginning of the road to Darien in 1735 which is probably the first road laid out in Georgia with the assistance of Tomo-Chi-Chi. Greene Monument commemorates the memory and services of General Nathaniel Greene during the Revolutionary War. Mulberry Grove, a plantation just west of Savannah, was confiscated from John Graham, declared guilty of treason, and presented to General Greene. Here Eli Whitney, then a tutor to the Greene children, invented the cotton gin.

The bunkers of the Savannah golf course are the breastworks thrown up by the Confederate soldiers at the approach of Sherman. Nearby is "The Hermitage," on a bluff of the Savannah, a well preserved old plantation, and a relic of ante-bellum days. Also nearby is the experimental bamboo grove maintained by the United States Department of Agriculture.

The route continues through orchards of peach and pecan trees and rich farming land to Macon, in the heart of the Georgia peach belt. The first date in Macon's history is 1540 when De Soto crossed the Ocmulgee where the city now stands. Shortly after 1800, the Government established Fort Benjamin Hawkins, and Macon became an important point on the stage-coach line from New York to New Orleans. Wesleyan, the first chartered women's college in the world, was opened here in 1836.

Leaving Macon, the highway crosses rich bottomland to Columbus, on the Chattahoochee River, an industrial city with some of the largest cotton mills in the South. It was founded 100 years ago as an Indian trading post. The 14th Street bridge marks the spot where one of the last battles of the Civil War was fought. Nearby is Fort Benning, the United States Army Infantry School.

From Columbus, Route 80 begins its stretch of 227 miles across Alabama, through Tuskegee, the home of the Normal and Industrial Institute founded and conducted by negroes, of which Booker T. Washington was principal, to Montgomery, the capital, a commercial city and lumber center. In the Capitol was held the secession convention and on the Portico, at a spot marked with a brass tablet, Jefferson Davis was inaugurated President of the Confederate States. In the Winter Building, the order was given to fire on Fort Sumter.

Leaving Montgomery, the highway traverses the black soil belt, a gently rolling prairie in west-central Alabama, passing through Selma, a creamery center in the heart of a rich agricultural section and also noted for its textile plants; through Marion Junction, a large hay shipping point; through Uniontown, Demopolis and Livingston to the Mississippi State line, where it begins its march of 164 miles across that State. The road passes through productive plantations devoted largely to cotton and tobacco raising to Meridian, picturesquely situated in a valley surrounded by beautiful wooded hills with streams and small lakes in abundance. This city is a wholesale and manufacturing center, the site of the annual Mississippi-Alabama Fair, and is noted for its hibiscus, hydrangeas and beautiful crepe myrtle. During the Civil War it was an important railway center and was seized by the Union forces in 1864.

The next city of importance is Jackson, the capital of the State, founded in 1829, and named for Andrew Jackson, hero of the battle of New Orleans, and later president of the United States. The city is on the Old Natchez Trace, the

settlement and military road, down which many of the early Virginians and Carolinians came on their way to the Southwest. In the Civil War it was the scene of a battle between Grant's forces and the Confederates under Joseph E. Johnston, and the Confederate trenches may still be seen in the southern part of the city. Here Jefferson Davis made his last speech.

Continuing, the route reaches the Mississippi River at Vicksburg, today an important river port and one of the largest cotton markets in the country. The Spaniards built Fort Nogales on its site in 1791; and during the Civil War, it became the "Gibraltar of the Confederacy," keeping open the way to the grain and beef supplies of the Southwest until 1863 when, after an epic resistance of 47 days, it surrendered to the siege of the Union forces under General Grant and Admiral Porter. In the National Military Park, established by the Government to commemorate the siege and defense of the city, the battle lines of the opposing armies are preserved and clearly marked, and excellent roadways give access to the entire battle front. The National Cemetery, fronting the river and joining the northern end of the Park, contains the graves of over 16,500 Union soldiers, some 12,500 of whom are unknown.

Crossing the Mississippi, Route 80 runs across the cotton belt of Louisiana, passing through Tallulah, where the United States Department of Agriculture has a large experimental station, specializing in the study of the bollweevil; through Monroe, in the center of the gas fields with its carbon black industries and paper and lumber mills, and across the Red River to Shreveport, a beautiful residence city. It is rich in lumber and agricultural interests, the center of one of the large oil and gas fields in the country, and is the home of the Louisiana State Fair. In Shreveport the Third Attack Wing of the Air Corps is to be located.

About 20 miles beyond Shreveport, the route enters the Lone Star State and passes through Longview, a lumber and cotton-seed oil center. The city is the capital of the sweet potato belt of eastern Texas, and produces and ships millions of slips. Earlvile, an ante-bellum post office in the eastern limits of the town, and on the old stage road from Tyler to Marshall, was the nucleus of the city.

Continuing westward the highway reaches Dallas and Fort Worth, two important railroad centers on the Trinity River. Dallas, a manufacturing, financial and jobbing center is located in the Black Waxy Belt, chief cotton-producing region in the State, and is noted for its beautiful parks. Besides its cotton market, Dallas makes cotton gins, saddlery, harness and leather goods and has several petroleum refineries. Five transcontinental highways intersect at the city, and a loop highway takes the traveler to the main entrance of the famous fair grounds, over beautiful East Pike highway to New Hope Road, and then to New Hope and through Garland back to Dallas, passing the great White Rock reservoir. Dallas is the seat of the Federal Reserve Bank for the 11th District.

Fort Worth is a great market for livestock, grain and food products, and has large textile mills, feed and flour mills, several oil refineries and enormous packing plants. The city is located on a high bluff, overlooking the confluence of West Fork and Clear Fork of Trinity River, and has a splendid park system. In 1849, a place was selected on Trinity River for an army post, which was built on the site of a cabin erected by Ed Terrell in 1843, the first white man's habitation in the vicinity. The post was originally named Camp Worth, after Brigadier General William J. Worth, a successful campaigner against the Mexicans. Meandering Road around Lake Worth is a beautiful drive.

Beyond Fort Worth is the great cattle country of west Texas where the route passes through Eastland, Abilene, Sweetwater, and Pecos, north of which are the Carlsbad Caverns. From Pecos the road runs through the Davis Mountains to Van Horn, where Route 90 joins it.

Leaving Van Horn, the highway coincides with the Old Spanish Trail, traverses mountainous country, reaches the Rio Grande and follows it through Ysleta, founded in 1682 and the oldest town in Texas. Its people are mostly of Spanish or Mexican descent, and its narrow streets and adobe dwellings are distinctly foreign. Route 80 continues to El Paso, the largest American city on the Mexican border, and an important port of entry. Across the Rio Grande is the Mexican city of Juarez. The original Spanish name, El Paso de Norte, meaning The Pass of the North, is significant of the importance of the city's location on the ancient routes of exploration, and the same advantage of location makes it today the metropolis of a vast area extending nearly 800 miles in every direction. Here the old trail from Mexico City to Santa Fe, the Camino Real or King's Highway, is a part of the route. It is believed that Cabeza de Vaca and his three

companions traveled through the pass and over the trail in 1536, the only survivors of the De Narvaez expedition which landed in Tampa Bay to take possession of the Floridas. Here also came such explorers as Rodriguez in 1581, and Benavides in 1630, followed by the pioneers of the missions. From El Paso, Elephant Butte Dam, one of the Government's greatest irrigation projects is reached. The road to Hueco tanks, used for centuries as a natural fortress by the Indians, passes Fort Bliss, the largest cavalry post in the country, Picture Rocks, and many records of ancient Indian civilization.

Leaving El Paso, Route 80 coincides with United States Highway 85 for some 44 miles, enters New Mexico, at the southwestern corner, follows the Rio Grande, with the beautiful Organ Mountains to the east, through the irrigated Mesilla Valley to Las Cruces, in a region developed by the Elephant Butte Dam and where there are fine fishing, bathing and camping facilities. The highway continues through an agricultural, mining and stock-raising region to Deming and Lordsburg, from which Gila National Forest with its cliff dwellings and the Apache lands may be reached over Federal-aid highways. From Deming a Federal-aid road leads south across the Florida plains to the Mexican border.

From Lordsburg, the highway turns southward and skirting the Chiricahua Mountains, continues to Douglas, Arizona, near the Mexican border. Copper mined at Bisbee, 26 miles away, is brought here for smelting. Cave Creek in Chiricahua Mountains and Ramsey Canyon in Huachuca Mountains affords good fishing and camp resorts and may easily be reached from Douglas as may also Chiricahua National Monument, with the Pinnacles, remarkable examples of erosion in the Coronado National Forest. Just east of Douglas is the mountain peak, half in United States and half in Mexico where the late Pancho Villa, the Mexican bandit, assembled his forces before attacking Agua Prieta, just across the border.

The route continues to Bisbee, which, founded as a mining town in the canyon between two rich copper mountains, has spread up the sides of the canyon, its houses built one over another and clinging to the walls. Three of the largest copper mines in the country are located here - the Copper Queen, Calumet and Arizona, and the Shattuck. From Bisbee a trip may be made to and from the beautiful Huachuca mountains in a day.

Between Bisbee and Tombstone, the road crosses the continental divide at an altitude of 6,030 feet at a point marked by a monument. Tombstone is one of the famous silver camps of the Old West and was named by Ed Schieffelin, discoverer of Tombstone Mine. The country in which Schieffelin made his discovery was infested by smugglers, cattle rustlers and blood-thirsty Apaches. A miner asked him one day what he was looking for and for the answer, "Just looking for stones."

"You keep on," said the miner, "and you'll find a tombstone."

Schieffelin remembered this when he found the mine in 1878 and named the camp "Tombstone."

About 81 miles beyond Tombstone, lies Tucson, in a high desert valley surrounded by mountain ranges. It is one of the oldest cities in the country and originated as a small presidio garrisoned by a detachment of 50 soldiers. San Xavier del Bac Mission, on the outskirts of the town, dates the foundation back to 1687. Near Tucson is Old Fort Lowell, founded in 1862; Colossal Cave; the Picture Rocks in Tucson Mountains; Tumacacori National Monument, and three Indian reservations. The Yaqui Ceremonial Dance at Easter is rivalled only by the Papago Dance at Christmas. To the northwest of Tucson, and on the Southern Pacific Railroad, are the Casa Grande ruins which have yielded a buried village and many varieties of ancient pottery and Indian relics.

Around Tucson, the motorist will first see the larger and more fantastic forms of cacti, of such varieties as the Sahuaro, the barrel or "candy cactus," the night blooming cactus, the jumping cholla, cane cactus, prickly pear and passajo. As the highway drops to lower elevations toward Florence, these life-saving desert plants become progressively larger and more abundant. The water stored in them by nature has many times saved human as well as animal life in the desert.

From Tucson, United States Highway 89 leads southward through the Santa Cruz Valley, one of the great seats of mission and colonizing effort by the Spaniards, to Nogales, the main street of which forms the boundary line between Mexico and the United States. In this Arizona New Mexico-and-West Texas country, Coronado and his expedition spent three years, 1540-42, searching for the Cities of Gold and the land of the Gran Quivira.

Route 80 continues from Tucson through Florence, east of which, in the Gila River, is the Coolidge Dam in course of construction, to Phoenix, the capital of Arizona, and a winter health resort in the heart of the Salt River Valley, famous for its beautiful flowers. With the building of Roosevelt Dam, Phoenix rose in 17 years to importance as the clearing house and center for all the Salt River Valley products. In the city are many auto courts and camping grounds and every facility for golf, tennis, trap shooting, riding and hunting. Nearby Camelback Mountain is dotted with beautiful resorts. Also nearby are Papago Saguaro National Monument, a typical bit of desert as it appeared before the Roosevelt Dam was built; Canyon Lake, an artificial body of water lying between brilliantly colored walls of rock; and rocks with hieroglyphics of an ancient race scratched on them.

From Phoenix, the highway follows the Gila River to Yuma, on the west shore of the Colorado just below the junction of the Gila, in the heart of the desert and in the center of the Yuma Reclamation project. Many tourists take the drive from Phoenix to Yuma by night to avoid the heat of the daytime.

Yuma Valley was visited as early as 1540 by Hernando de Alarcon, but was not settled until 1780, when Indians soon destroyed the habitations. In 1850 Fort Yuma was established as a military outpost on the site of the present city; a ferry was put in operation, and the post became a supply depot and stage station on the trail from San Francisco to St. Louis.

Crossing the Colorado, Route 80 continues across Southern California to El Centro traversing on the way the Imperial Valley, once a barren desert, and now as a result of irrigation a veritable garden spot. El Centro is the shipping point for large quantities of vegetables and other products of the valley. From this city United States Route 99 leads northward to the Canadian line, and a paved county highway runs southward to Calexico on the Mexican border.

Route 80 continues westward to San Diego with its important and beautiful harbor on the Pacific Coast, and noted the country over for its climate and luxurious vegetation. Historically, San Diego antedates the Pilgrim Fathers and Plymouth Rock. In 1542 Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, with his ships, "San Salvador" and "Victoria," sailed through what is now known as the "Silver Gate" into San Diego harbor and dropped anchor under the shelter of Point Loma. The expedition remained a week. Then came the Franciscan Father Serra who chose San Diego for the site of his first mission, De Alcalá, in 1769. A few relics of the old mission still remain and the olive trees planted at the time of its founding are still bearing fruit. The city is one of the great naval bases of the country, and an important center of aviation activity.

Point Loma promontory, jutting into the Pacific, gives a Riviera setting to San Diego, which is backed on the east by mountain ranges. On the ocean side of the peninsula, connecting with the city by short ferry and electric car line, is Coronado Beach, a year-round pleasure resort. La Jolla, an artists' colony, is a nearby suburb.

Route 80 in San Diego connects with United States Highway 101, running northward along the coast through Los Angeles and San Francisco to Puget Sound, and southward to Tia Juana, in Mexico.
