

and men and the complete destruction of stage stand and property. Through Bass Canyon, the Overland Trail passed to Eagle Springs Stand, located on the northwest end of the beautiful Eagle Mountains. From there it wound across that big valley between Eagle and Quitman mountain ranges, passing through the rugged Quitman Canyon on to Fort Quitman, located on the Rio Grande, up the River to San Elizario and Ysleta. San Elizario, the county seat of El Paso County, was the only place of importance. It had about four thousand Mexican inhabitants. A good many years ago the little town, which is situated on an elevation in the valley, was in Mexico, on the West side of the Rio Grande, until the Savage Rio Grande on a rampage cut a new channel. When the water subsided the river was confined to a new channel west of town.

SANTLEBAN HAS A VISION

"Before starting for Chihuahua in 1876, the G. H. & S. A. Company was rushing its tracks toward San Antonio, which was designated in its charter as the terminal point, and the belief was generally entertained that the road would not be extended beyond that city for many years. Naturally I was of the same opinion, because I was thoroughly acquainted with the country over which the road would have to pass. I could not believe in the possibility of a locomotive making its course through that uninhabited region with its smoke, or that its whistle would ever startle the great silent wastes. Even if it were practicable to build a railroad to El Paso, many persons thought, and I among them, that the Indians would destroy the track as fast as it was built and cause it to be abandoned.

"I found the wholesale merchants in Chihuahua rejoicing at the prospects of having a railroad terminus at San Antonio, within nine hundred miles of them, and they were considering the best means of reaping the greatest advantages that could be secured in the transportation of goods. They thought it was possible to avoid the enormous expense on large shipments of merchandise that necessity required them to order at one time, by arranging for quick transportation of goods in smaller quantities. A single consignment sometimes weighed about 80,000 pounds and was valued at \$100,000.00. This capital, with an additional outlay of \$50,000.00 for freighting and custom house duties, had become a serious burden because the goods had to be stored in warehouses six or eight months until the supply was exhausted.

"Several of the most prominent merchants interviewed me on the subject and inquired if it was possible to make arrangements so

that they could get their consignments through in small lots at regular intervals by introducing a system that would insure rapid transportation, and there by avoid the great outlay and expense that the wholesale dealers were obliged to bear in order to supply their customers.

"I gave the subject careful consideration before coming to a decision. Then I proposed to them that if a number of merchants in Chihuahua would obligate themselves, for a period of ten years, to import seventy-two thousand pounds of merchandise every month, exclusive of heavy machinery, and export all their remittances and freight through me, I would start thirty-six small wagons with five mules to each. I explained that I intended to divide the wagons equally into three trains, and that each wagon would be capable of hauling two thousand pounds of freight, and after the line was established the trains would run on schedule time, and make the trip to Chihuahua in thirty days, by leaving San Antonio on the first and fifteenth of every month, and return in the same time after leaving Chihuahua on the seventh and twenty fourth of each month.

"I agreed to provide specially constructed wagons for the protection of merchandise from the weather, and from Border Bandits, and arrange for their safety on the Trail by placing each train with its twelve drivers and three herders, in charge of a competent wagon master and arm all of the sixteen men with improved weapons, so that they would be strong enough to protect themselves against Indians and outlaws.

"I stipulated that I would receive eight dollars per hundred, of eighty dollars per thousand pounds for hauling freight from San Antonio to Chihuahua and that the rate on copper and other back freight from Chihuahua was to be \$5.00 per hundred, or \$50.00 per thousand pounds, also that the charge for transporting Mexican money and silver bullion should be two and a half per cent, or \$25.00 on every thousand dollars.

"My proposition was accepted with the understanding that the contract should provide for the discontinuance of the line in the event a railroad was completed to Chihuahua at any time within ten years. This stipulation did not concern me in the least, because the remote possibility of such a road being built was beyond my conception. I was much elated over the prospect of building up a safe and lucrative business.

"After perfecting the agreement, I realized that the undertaking was too great for me to handle alone, and I decided to associate Mr. Edward Froboese. I made no unnecessary delay, but immediately returned to San Antonio and consulted with Mr. Froboese,