

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: First Shot Monuments Historic District
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: State Spur Road 95, from SH 97 to Stevens Creek
City or town: Cost State: Texas County: Gonzales
Not for publication: [] Vicinity: [x]

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National
Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the
property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
[] national [x] statewide [] local

Applicable National Register Criteria: [x] A [] B [x] C [] D

Signature of certifying official / Title: Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: 1/2/17
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
[] entered in the National Register
[] determined eligible for the National Register
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[] removed from the National Register
[] other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public/local

Category of Property: District

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	1	structures
3	0	objects
4	1	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Recreation and Culture: monument, work of art
Transportation: road-related = road
Landscape: park

Current Functions: Recreation and Culture: monument, work of art
Transportation: road-related = road
Landscape: park
Industry/Processing/Extraction: waterworks = water tower

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Other: Sculpture
No Style

Principal Exterior Materials: Stone/granite; Asphalt; Metal/bronze

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7 through 9)

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

X	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: F (Commemorative Properties)

Areas of Significance: Art, Conservation

Period of Significance: 1903-1937

Significant Dates: 1903, 1937

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Tauch, Waldine (sculptor)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 10 through 15)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 16-17)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 7.5 acres

Coordinates (see continuation sheets xx)

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property includes the entirety of Texas State Highway Spur 95, running approximately 1.1 miles from State Highway 97 north to Stevens Creek. The property includes two small publicly-owned parks and the road connecting them, and is comprised of only public property within the right-of-way between the parks, measured 15 feet from either side of the road's center line to include the original roadbed, as well as the parks, parking areas, and stone monuments.

Boundary Justification: The nomination includes the public property associated with the historic parks and highway spur.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Gregory Smith (THC National Register Coordinator), with Howie Richey

Organization: Gonzales County Historical Commission

Street & number: 414 Lawrence St.

City or Town: Gonzales State: TX Zip Code: 78629

Email: chair@gonzaleschc.org

Telephone: 830-263-4663

Date: August 2016

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 18-25)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 26-28)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 29-51)

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photograph Log

First Shot Monuments Historic District
Cost vicinity, Gonzales County, Texas
Photographed by Gregory Smith
February 2016

Photo 1
Centennial Roadside Park from SH 97
Camera facing NE

Photo 2
Centennial Roadside Park from SH 97
Camera facing NW

Photo 3
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing north

Photo 4
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing north

Photo 5
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing NE

Photo 6
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing SW

Photo 7
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing north

Photo 8
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
detail
Camera facing north

Photo 9
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
detail
Camera facing north

Photo 10
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
detail
Camera facing north

Photo 11
Centennial Roadside Park, stone curb on west side
Camera facing west

Photo 12
Spur 95 from Centennial Roadside Park
Camera facing NW

Photo 13
1903 Monument
Camera facing NW

Photo 14
1903 Monument
Camera facing NW

Photo 15
1903 Monument, detail
Camera facing NW

Photo 16
1903 Monument Park
Camera facing north

Photo 17
1903 Monument Park
Camera facing south

Photo 18
Spur 95 approaching 1903 Monument Park
Camera facing NW

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 19

Spur 95 leaving 1903 Monument Park
Camera facing east

Photo 20

Spur 95 approaching 1903 Monument Park
Camera facing north

Photo 21

Spur 95 leaving 1903 Monument Park
Camera facing SE

Photo 22

Spur 95, midpoint
Camera facing north

Photo 23

Spur 95 leaving Centennial Roadside Park
Camera facing north

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Description

The First Shot Monuments Historic District is in the unincorporated community of Cost, Texas, approximately seven miles southwest of the Gonzales County seat of Gonzales. The district consists of two small parks connected by State Spur 95, a 1.1-mile-long state highway running between State Highway 97 and Stevens Creek, approximately 500 feet south of its confluence with the Guadalupe River. The southern roadside park is a triangular 2-acre parcel bounded on the south by Highway 97, featuring a large sculpted granite and bronze bas-relief monument dedicated in 1937 to commemorate the "First Shot" of the Texas revolution in 1835. The north park is an irregular 3-acre parcel featuring a small granite monument dedicated to the same event in 1903. Completed in 1937, the asphalt 2-lane road connecting the parks gently winds through its rural setting. The district overall retains a high degree of integrity.

The unincorporated community of Cost is in south central Texas, approximately 60 miles east of San Antonio, on a small rise approximately one mile south of the Guadalupe River. The nominated property consists of two small parks connected by a 2-lane asphalt road, traversing a rural landscape over rolling hills. The road runs north from State Highway 97 (SH 97), and curves slightly to the west as it approaches Stevens Creek. The area is sparsely populated, and is surrounded by scattered residences and a mix of wooded lots and open agricultural fields. The right-of-way along the spur is planted with grass and is defined by a wire fence along the property lines.

Roadside Park (Contributing site)

The southern park is a triangular parcel at the intersection of Spur 95 with State Highway 97, and is slightly less than three acres in area. The park plan is roughly symmetrical, defined on the west side by a driveway, the east side by Spur 95, and south side by SH 97. The driveway and spur meet at the north end of the park, forming the point of a triangle. The park is set back from the highway approximately 40 feet by a pull-off parking area between the west and east entrances. To the west and the east of each entrance are low curved stone curbs, likely dating to the 1930s. A grassy lawn (approximately 280 wide and 180 feet deep) dotted with oak trees is set at the center of the park, and is bounded by the south parking area, the east and west approaches, and a small paved lot to the north. The lawn is defined on the south edge by a low stone retaining curb, less than a foot high. A stone sidewalk leads from the parking area to the large sculpted granite monument with a bronze bas relief panel.

Centennial Monument (contributing object)

The centerpiece of the park is the First Shot Centennial Monument, a collaboration between the architectural firm of Raymond Phelps and George Dahl Dewees and sculptor Waldine Tauch, which was installed and dedicated in 1937. The monument is sixteen feet and two inches wide, thirteen and a half feet tall, and three feet and ten inches in depth. The monument has a three-part composition, with the large central panel dominated by a bronze bas relief depicting six Texians behind a small cannon. Flanking the central panel are bas relief figures carved in granite. On the left is a woman holding a laurel branch, representing victory, and on the right is a woman holding a book with her finger marking a page, possibly representing the First Shot's place in history. The monument base is inscribed as follows:

NEAR HERE ON OCTOBER 2, 1835 WAS FIRED THE FIRST SHOT OF THE TEXAS REVOLUTION OF 1835-36.
THE SHOT HEARD ROUND THE WORLD. AT GONZALES THE TEXANS DEFIED THE MEXICAN
GOVERNMENT AND REFUSED THEIR DEMAND FOR THE GONZALES CANNON WITH THE "COME AND
TAKE IT" CHALLENGE UNTIL REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVED FROM OTHER PARTS OF DEWITT'S COLONY
AND FROM THE COLONIES ON THE COLORADO AND BRAZOS. THEY THEN PURSUED THE MEXICANS
FROM GONZALES TO NEAR THIS POINT AND FIRED UPON THEM WITH THIS CANNON, DRIVING THEM
BACK TO BEXAR.

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

THIS SHOT STARTED THE REVOLUTION AND WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADDING MORE TERRITORY TO THE UNITED STATES THAN WAS ACQUIRED BY THE FREEING OF THE ORIGINAL THIRTEEN COLONIES FROM ENGLAND.

The backside of the monument is unadorned, and reveals the stone block composition of the object. The monument is topped by a low granite entablature with a plain pediment over the central panel.

Centennial Highway Marker (contributing object)

To the east of the sidewalk at the retaining wall is a small pink granite 1936 highway marker. On the front is a brass medallion which reads "Texas Highway Department" on a ring circling a star inscribed with the year "1936." The bronze plaque on top reads:

ONE AND ONE-HALF MILE FROM
HERE THE FIRST SHOT OF THE
TEXAS REVOLUTION
WAS FIRED FROM A SMALL CANNON
BY TEXANS UNDER THE COMMAND
OF COL. JOHN H. MOORE
OCTOBER 2, 1835

Water Tower (noncontributing structure)

At the northwest corner of the park is a tall column water tower, less than fifty years old.

1903 Monument Park (contributing site)

At the north terminus of Spur 95 is an irregular five-sided parcel just under three acres in area. Its plan is roughly rectangular in the north half, and triangular in the southern half, with sides that bend to meet the highway. Approaching from the southeast, the highway spur leads directly to a small granite monument in the center of the park. At the monument, the spur splits, curving to the southwest into a private driveway for an adjacent home, and to the northeast into a looped driveway and small parking area, reconnecting with the highway a few feet southeast of the monument. A driveway from the parking lot access road leads down to a boat landing on the creek.

1903 monument (contributing object)

The 1903 monument is set in front of a flagpole on a raised island defined by a low two- and three-course stone curb. A sidewalk of rough-cut stone leads to the monument from the south. Stone sidewalks also lead to the monument in the center of the island from the east and west. The north half of the island is planted with oak trees, which form a backdrop for the monument. Another curved stone sidewalk bisects the island behind the monument. The 1903 gray granite monument is set on a short limestone base. The monument is approximately 2-foot square in plan, and three feet high. The stone is rough-faced, with a smooth inscribed panel on its south face, which reads:

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

HERE WAS FIRED
THE FIRST GUN
FOR TEXAS INDEPENDENCE
OCT. 2, 1835
ERECTED BY THE
CHILDREN OF GONZALES
CITY SCHOOLS
APR. 21, 1903

Spur 95 (contributing structure)

The highway spur is roughly 18 feet wide, and runs 1.1 miles from SH 97 to the parking area near Stevens Creek. The flexible base road was completed in 1937, was first treated with road oil, and then topped with an asphalt seal coat in 1942. The spur was treated again in the 1960s. The road was probably sixteen feet wide when it was first built, but it was never significantly widened except in places where asphalt was irregularly applied through maintenance efforts. The road retains a good degree of integrity.

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Statement of Significance

The First Shot Monuments Historic District is the culmination of early 20th century efforts to commemorate a significant event near Gonzales, Texas, that marked the beginning of the Texas Revolution and War for Independence from Mexico. In early October of 1835, a skirmish west of Gonzales signaled an enormous change in territorial leadership, politics, and culture, and paved the way for Texas to become a republic, while earning Gonzales the moniker “the Lexington of Texas.” The approximate site where Texians fired a cannon toward Mexican forces intent on taking the cannon was first marked in 1903 through the efforts of local schoolchildren. In the 1930s, the event was selected for special commemoration as part of the statewide Texas Centennial celebration, with the 1937 dedication of a granite and bronze monument designed by the San Antonio architecture firm Phelps and Dewees with sculpture by noted Texas artist Waldine Tauch. In 1937, the Texas Highway Department completed a 1.1-mile-long spur connecting the Centennial monument park with the 1903 dedication site, thus creating one of the first Texas state highways designed for the sole purpose of providing vehicular access to a historic site. The district is nominated to the National Register at the state level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Conservation for its association with early 20th century local and statewide preservation efforts, which sought to identify and mark places of historical significance in Texas, and make them accessible for the purpose of heritage tourism. The district is also nominated under Criterion C in the area of Art in recognition of the artistic value of the Centennial monument, which is especially noteworthy for its sculpture by Waldine Tauch. The district meets Criterion Consideration F (*Commemorative Properties*) because the monument is primarily significant as a work of art, and the district as a whole reflects early 20th century interest in recognizing historic places throughout Texas, which culminated in the publicly-funded statewide Texas Centennial celebration.

Community of Cost

Although the city of Gonzales is well-known for its association with the “first shot” of the Texas Revolution, the pivotal event actually took place about seven miles west of town, in an area that later became known as the community of Cost, Texas. The community formed in the 1890s, as German immigrants settled in the area. First known as “Oso,” the community’s name changed to “Cost” with the establishment of the post office in 1897. The Cost public school was located immediately west of the Centennial monument site, serving the community from 1897 until 1959, after which Cost students transferred to the Gonzales public schools. The community reported a population of 62 in both the 1990 census and the 2000 census.¹

The First Shot, 1835²

Gonzales was established in 1825 as the capital of Green DeWitt’s Colony, and named for Rafael Gonzales, governor of the Mexican province of *Coahuila y Texas*. The settlement’s location approximately 65 miles east of San Antonio made it the focal point of much activity during the Texas Revolution. Strategically set at the confluence of the Guadalupe and San Marcos Rivers, Gonzales was abandoned twice following Indian attacks, and replatted in 1832 by Byrd Lockhart. After reaching a population of 532 in 1831, the Mexican government sent a six-pound cannon to Gonzales for protection against raids. In 1835, following Texian uprisings at Anahuac and San Antonio de Bexar, Mexican troops advanced north and east to quell a rebellion. In September 1835, Domingo de Ugartechea, the military commander at Bexar, sent Corporal Casimiro De León and five soldiers to retrieve the Gonzales cannon. Ugartechea received word that the citizens of Gonzales refused to turn over the cannon, and dispatched Francisco de Castañeda and about one hundred troops from San Antonio de Béxar to retrieve it, with instructions to use force only if necessary.

¹ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Esther and Raymond Juengermann, “Cost, TX,” accessed August 09, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/HNC98>.

² Adapted from “Gonzales Memorial Museum and Amphitheater Historic District,” National Register nomination, 2003.

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

When Castañeda's troops reached the Guadalupe River at Gonzales on September 29 they found their path blocked by high water and a group of eighteen Gonzales citizens (later known as the "Old Eighteen") with the cannon. The Mexican troops waited on west side of the river, as the men of Gonzales summoned reinforcements from several of the surrounding settlements. Castañeda marched his troops west in search of another place where they could cross the river. On October 1, the Mexican troops camped seven miles upriver on land belonging to colonist Ezekiel Williams. The Texians also moved to keep up with the Mexicans, and on the night of October 1 they crossed to the west bank of the river and proceeded towards the Mexican camp. On the morning of October 2, Castañeda requested the cannon be returned to the Mexican military, to which the Texians responded "Come and take it."³ The Texians fired the cannon in what would be soon celebrated as the "First Shot of the Texas Revolution."⁴ Castañeda ordered a withdrawal toward San Antonio, reporting that "since the orders from your Lordship were for me to withdraw without compromising the honor of Mexican arms, I did so."⁵ The event was more of skirmish than a battle, but was nevertheless a major turning point in the relationship between the Mexican government and the Texas colonists.

Early 20th Century Commemoration Efforts

Soon after the battle, participant Jacob Darst (1793-1836) brought his son David Sterling Hughes Darst (1821-1906) to the area where the first shot occurred, months before the elder Darst died defending the Alamo in March 1836.⁶ Several years later, the David Darst showed citizens the battle site, a visit that later inspired townspeople to erect the first monument to the battle in 1903. Students from Gonzales schools promoted the project with guidance from their academic advisors.⁷ On May 6, 1903, approximately 200 persons, including Mr. Darst, government officials, schoolchildren, teachers, and other county residents, attended a ceremony dedicating a small granite marker in the vicinity of the battle. At the time of the dedication, members of the Chamber of Commerce proposed to build a road from the main highway to the marker.⁸

Subsequent efforts to commemorate the battle occurred in the city of Gonzales, miles from the rural site. In 1910, through the efforts of the Gonzales Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the State of Texas commissioned Pompeo Coppini to sculpt the figure of a Texian rallying to the call for frontier defense before the revolution's first battle. Affixed to the base of that statue, which stands in Texas Heroes Square in Gonzales, is a bronze bas-relief of men readying a small cannon. In 1913, the city donated 150 acres of city park lands to the state. The property included a boulevard running east from downtown, on which the state would build memorial buildings in the 1930s.⁹

³ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Thomas Ricks Lindley, "Gonzales Come and Take It Cannon," accessed August 09, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qvg01>.

⁴ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Stephen L. Hardin, "Gonzales, Battle of," accessed August 09, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qeg03>.

⁵ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Thomas Ricks Lindley, "Gonzales Come and Take It Cannon," accessed August 09, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qvg01>.

⁶ "Jacob Darst," *Sons of DeWitt Colony Texas* (<http://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/dewitt/dewitt.htm>), accessed February 9, 2016. Neither archeological evidence nor the historical record supports the location of the monument as being the actual site of the skirmish. No record of archeological work at the park in on file with the Texas Historical Commission.

⁷ "Monument with Appropriate Inscription Marks Spot Where First Gun was Fired for Texas," *Gonzales Weekly Enquirer* clipping, July 19, 1923; from the files of Gonzales County Archives.

⁸ Frenzel, Victoria Eberle, *Gonzales: Hope, Heartbreak, Heroes* (Houston, TX: TGI Printed, Inc., 2008).

⁹ "Gonzales Memorial Museum and Amphitheater Historic District," National Register nomination, 2003.

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

The Texas Centennial in Gonzales County

In 1923, the Advertising Clubs of Texas, in association with Texas Press Association established the Texas Centennial Survey Committee with the aim of promoting the Lone Star State with events and celebrations. A 1932 amendment to the Texas constitution authorized an official state-sponsored centennial program, with instructions for the legislature to allocate funds for that purpose. In 1934, the legislature appointed the Texas Centennial Commission, which included an advisory board representing each Texas county and a three-member panel of historians.¹⁰

In the fall of 1934, the Texas legislature considered a bill to fund the Texas Centennial. As originally planned, nearly \$9 million was proposed in the appropriation, with requests for state aid to local communities increasing the total to \$12 million. Included in this proposal was \$303,000 for projects in and around Gonzales, including \$10,000 for a pageant, and \$75,000 for the acquisition of land near the First Shot site for conversion into a park and construction of an amphitheater and auditorium “at the spot known as Defiance or Santa Anna’s Ferry, where the “Come and Take It” battle was fought and the Texans successfully resisted the enemy.”¹¹ An expenditure of \$10,000 was proposed for the “rebuilding in native logs of the miniature Gonzales that once covered little more than a city block” and \$135,000 for the “erection of a permanent fire-proof, architecturally beautiful and serviceable Museum and Library for the housing of Texana pertaining chiefly to Gonzales.” Another \$45,000 was proposed to furnish the library and purchase “books, maps, documents, relics and the like for the Museum and Library.”¹²

The Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations was created by an act of the legislature in 1935, with a termination date of May 8, 1937. The federal government created an assisting group, the United States Texas Centennial Commission, chaired by then-Vice President John Nance Garner of Uvalde. Because the federal government made appropriations to the Commission to aid the state in construction, in 1937 the Texas legislature extended the life of the commission to December 31, 1938.¹³ As part of the effort to commemorate historic events, each of the state’s 254 counties received pink granite markers with brass plaques describing their history and name origins. Several statues and sculptures were commissioned throughout the state, honoring such historic figures as Stephen F. Austin and Jose Antonio Navarro. Hundreds of granite and bronze historical markers were placed at historic sites throughout the state. In addition, a number of permanent public buildings were erected to serve as museums, libraries and memorial buildings. Exposition buildings were built at Fair Park in Dallas, where eighteen buildings were constructed in time for the main Texas Centennial celebration in 1936, and also buildings at the Will Rogers Memorial in Fort Worth. State-sponsored memorial museums were built in Alpine, Austin, Canyon, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Gonzales, Huntsville, Lubbock, San Antonio, and at the San Jacinto battle site near Houston.¹⁴

In July 1935, the Commission of Control adopted a resolution to not allocate any funds for the purchase of property on which to place monuments and markers, arguing that the responsibility of land acquisition belonged “to the community in which the historic spot is located.”¹⁵ The resulting cut removed \$575,000 from the nearly \$8 million of requests for Texas Centennial projects. At the time, the board also announced that no allocations would be granted before October 1, potentially upsetting plans for a Centennial celebration slated for October 2 in Gonzales.

¹⁰ “Gonzales Memorial Museum and Amphitheater Historic District,” National Register nomination, 2003.

¹¹ “Details of Texas Centennial Plan Now Before Texas Legislature,” *Abilene Reporter-News*, October 31, 1934.

¹² *Ibid.*.

¹³ Schoen, *Monuments Erected by the State of Texas to Commemorate the Centenary of Texas Independence; the Report of the Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebration*, p. 10.

¹⁴ Schoen, pp. 15-38.

¹⁵ “Funds are Denied for Texas Markers,” *El Paso Herald-Post*, July 9, 1935.

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

In 1935, the historical board advising the Centennial Commission of Control recommend that events associated with the First Shot should be commemorated at the rural site with “one of the most impressive monuments in Texas,” at the cost of \$40,000.¹⁶ The panel of historians favored a towering monument in a landscaped park at the rural site, “placed on high ground near where the first shot for Texas independence was fired and in a park to be beautified and maintained by the State Highway Department which also was to build a connecting link to the main State highway.”¹⁷ Organizations from the city of Gonzales objected to this plan, supporting instead a museum in town and not at the battle site. The Commission of Control debated the issue in an executive session, and decided to allocate \$30,000 for the museum in town, \$10,000 for the battle site monument, and another \$10,00 for other markers in the county.

Claud Holley, Manager of the Gonzales Chamber of Commerce, in a letter to the *Dallas Morning News*, supported the Commission of Control’s recommendation:

We do not believe the expenditure of \$40,000 on a remote spot would be, in the first place, good for business; in the next place, it would have no foreseeable usefulness other than possibly a few people might drive the eight miles on a dirt road to see a monument of this type. We are spending \$10,000 on this particular ground, which we believe to be totally sufficient. This being only a small part of the historical picture of the town of Gonzales we do not propose to spend our entire sum on this one event but to commemorate our history in its entirety.¹⁸

On October 2, 1935, a ceremony marking the centennial of the First Shot was broadcast statewide. The grand public festivities in Gonzales County, however, were postponed to the following month, when the city took the honor of opening the statewide Texas Centennial celebration with an exposition. An article published in *the Dallas Morning News* in late October outlined some of the program’s activities:

An elaborate historical parade and pageant will be presented on November 5. Many Texas cities are planning to enter decorated floats in the parade...The six-day celebration will be climaxed on Sunday, November 10, with a religious service of state-wide interest in commemoration of the early religious life of the pioneers.¹⁹

The celebration featured a mile-long parade and attracted 30,000 people. A small replica cannon was fired in Hero’s Square in Gonzales, near Coppini’s statue of the defiant Texian.²⁰ Exposition attendees also toured significant properties outside the central city, including the famed battle site near Cost.

In 1936, the State Highway Department purchased right-of-way for a 1.1-mile road (State Highway 226, now Spur 95) from the 1903 monument to State Highway 112 (now SH 97) near Cost. The right-of-way included acreage for a park around the 1903 monument, and additional park space at the junction of the spur with the main highway dedicated for placement of the state’s \$10,000 First Shot monument. The highway department contracted the project in June 1936, and it was completed in February 1937, just in time for the monument dedication the following month. The new road, dubbed the “Lexington of Texas Spur,” was one of the first (if not the very first) Texas state highways designed for the sole purpose of providing vehicular access to a historic site.²¹

¹⁶ “Centennial Board Again Overrides Advisors’ Request: Gonzales Allocation is Changed, but Only After Bitter Wrangle,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 5, 1935.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ “Letters from Readers: From Gonzales,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 12, 1935.

¹⁹ “Gonzales Centennial Exposition To Open on November 5,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 24, 1935.

²⁰ *Texas Centennial Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Dallas; from the files of Gonzales County Archives.

²¹ Record of State Control Numbers, Sections, and Jobs, Texas Department of Transportation. Gonzales County, Control No. 503,

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

The First Shot Centennial Monument, featuring sculpture by Pompeo Coppini's protégé Waldine Tauch, was unveiled for the press on November 11, 1936, but the formal dedication took place near Cost on Sunday, March 14, 1937. The public dedication had been proposed to take place on March 2 (Texas Independence Day) but was postponed to March 14th to accommodate the schedules of Lt. Governor Walter Woodul and other state officials, who had already planned to attend the dedication of a memorial building in Huntsville.²² Due to inclement weather, Governor James Allred gave a dedicatory speech in the nearby Cost School.²³ Other speakers included Gonzales County Judge Willis Ellison, Texas Supreme Court Justice Richard Critz, and State Senator Rudolph Weinert. The ceremony then moved outside, as a crowd of about 2,000 gathered in cold drizzling rain to hear Lt. Governor Woodul (who also chaired the Centennial Commission) accept the monument on behalf of the State of Texas. A cannon was fired in tribute to the first shot, and a band played "The Eyes of Texas."²⁴

The funds originally intended for an expansive monument at the First Shot site were instead allocated for a museum and library in the city. On October 30, 1937, Governor Allred dedicated the Gonzales Memorial Museum and Amphitheater on property donated to the state in 1913 (NRHP 2004). The state Centennial commission allocated \$30,000 to the project, while the Public Works Administration granted \$24,545 in federal funds. Additional state allocations included \$6,000 for equipment and furnishings, and the construction of a reflecting pool, \$1,500 for the marble plaque honoring the "Old Eighteen," and \$1,500 for sixteen bronze plaques relating the early history of the region.²⁵ The opening of this facility was the culmination of major Texas Centennial projects in Gonzales County.

Waldine Tauch and the Centennial First Shot Monument

The Texas Centennial Board of Control invited artists nationwide to compete for commissions to design many sculptures to be placed around the state. The architectural firm Phelps & Dewees of San Antonio designed the First Shot monument's overall form, but the most noteworthy artistic value is found in the sculpture of Waldine Tauch, protégé and later full partner of Pompeo Coppini. Waldine Tauch (1892-1986) was born in Schulenburg, Texas, and began to sculpt and carve at the age of seven. Her family moved to Brady, Texas, where she earned local acclaim through a county fair art contest with a statue carved in butter. The Brady Tuesday Club was so impressed with her talent that its members raised money to support her art education, and the club president convinced sculptor Pompeo L. Coppini, a staunch advocate of Neoclassical sculpture, to accept her as a student. In 1910, two weeks before graduating from high school, Tauch moved to San Antonio to live with Coppini and his wife. She worked with Coppini on a number of his major works, including the 1923 Littlefield Fountain for the University of Texas. From student to protégé to partner, Tauch worked with Coppini in San Antonio, Chicago, and New York City over the next 25 years.²⁶

After Tauch entered the competition to design seven Texas Centennial statues and monuments, she began to research the history and persons to be commemorated in each. Tauch travelled to Gonzales to speak with decedents of the Old Eighteen, and conducted research about the event at the local library. Two days before competition deadline she travelled to Gonzales to visit the proposed monument site. The competition for sculptures was held at the state capitol in Austin, with as many as 67 artists from around the nation competing for each commission. Tauch set up her models on pedestals in the capitol basement, and several weeks later received commissions for three projects: a bas relief of

Sec. 1 (YKMO050301AA)

²² "Dedication of the Battle of Gonzales Monument Reset," *Gonzales Inquirer*, February 18, 1937.

²³ "Governor Allred Pays Tribute to Gonzales Heroes," *Gonzales Inquirer*, March 18, 1937.

²⁴ "Texas Memorial: Ceremonies Held at Gonzales," *Valley Morning Star* (Harlingen, Texas), March 15, 1937. "Texas Revolution's First Shot Sounds Anew at Gonzales," *Dallas Morning News*, March 15, 1937.

²⁵ Schoen, p. 31.

²⁶ Hendricks and Reese, *A Century of Sculpture in Texas, 1889-1989*, p. 26.

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Isaac and Frances Van Zandt to be placed at the Van Zandt County Courthouse in Canton; a larger-than-life statue of Moses Austin to be placed in San Antonio; and the First Shot monument. These commissions convinced her to open a studio in San Antonio, but for the Gonzales commission, she worked in her New York studio due to the monument's earlier deadline.²⁷

The granite monument features a bronze bas relief depicting Texans manning the famous cannon, waving a flag, and brandishing a sword. The bas relief figures in the central bronze panel and the granite figures flanking it retain their natural contour but can be viewed from many angles without distortion. Lucinda Rebecca Davis Robinson, granddaughter of "Old Eighteen" Texian George Washington Davis loaned Tauch a daguerreotype of him for use as a model for the main cannoner's face in the relief.

Tauch remained in San Antonio for the remainder of her career, and she stayed active into her eighties. Coppini and Tauch opened a studio together and founded the Academy of Fine Arts which still exists today. Other noteworthy works by Tauch include a bronze of Douglas MacArthur at Howard Payne University, the Trinity University bronze entitled "Higher Education Reflects Responsibility to the World," the "Ranger of Today" statue at Union Terminal in Dallas, and Pippa Passes at Baylor University. Her many honors include an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts at Howard Payne University, fellow of the National Sculpture Society of New York City, a Texas Senate Recognition Certificate for contribution to the cultural and artistic life of Texas and the United States, and Woman of Distinction from the honorary society of women educators Alpha Delta Kappa.

Phelps and Dewees, architects, were based in San Antonio and were noted for several projects in South Texas, including homes in the Monte Vista neighborhood, the 1926-28 addition to the Bexar County Courthouse, and in Northeast Texas, the Kilgore College Administration Building (1935, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark 1990). After 1942, the firm Phelps, Dewees and Simmons continued the practice, designing buildings at Randolph Air Force Base and hospitals throughout South Texas.²⁸

Conclusion

The Texas Centennial celebration added more to Texas' treasury of public art than any other movement in Texas history. The state enthusiastically went about marking the historic events of its founding and development, and artists, sculptors, and architects, both well-known and little-known, received much-needed commissions during the Great Depression. The First Shot monument near Cost is an important part of that legacy. On October 2, 2015, Gonzales County mounted another celebration at Cost for the rededication of the First Shot monument after an extensive refurbishment. As in the past, the ceremony began with a welcome and invocation, after which dignitaries delivered speeches, fighters' names were read and their descendants recognized, students performed to musical accompaniment, a cannon was fired, and a ribbon cut.

²⁷ Hutson, *From Chalk to Bronze*. 91-93.

²⁸ "Gonzales Memorial Museum and Amphitheater Historic District," National Register nomination, 2003.

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First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Coordinates of 1903 Monument Park at Stevens Creek

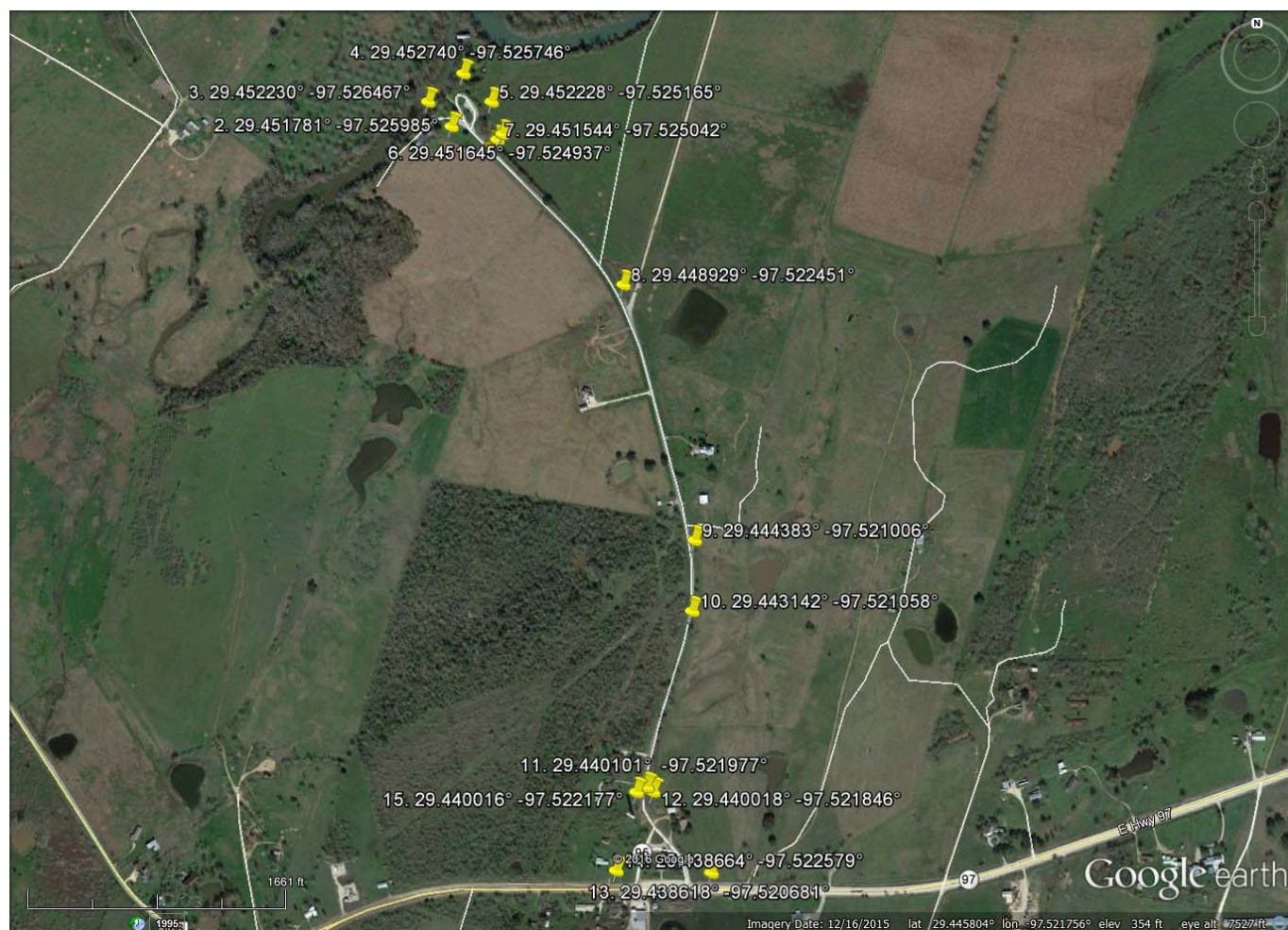
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2. 29.451781° -97.525985°
3. 29.452230° -97.526467°
4. 29.452740° -97.525746°
5. 29.452228° -97.525165°
6. 29.451645° -97.524937°

Coordinates at center line of Spur 95, from 1903 Monument Park to Centennial Park

7. 29.451544° -97.525042°
8. 29.448929° -97.522451°
9. 29.444383° -97.521006°
10. 29.443142° -97.521058°
11. 29.440101° -97.521977°

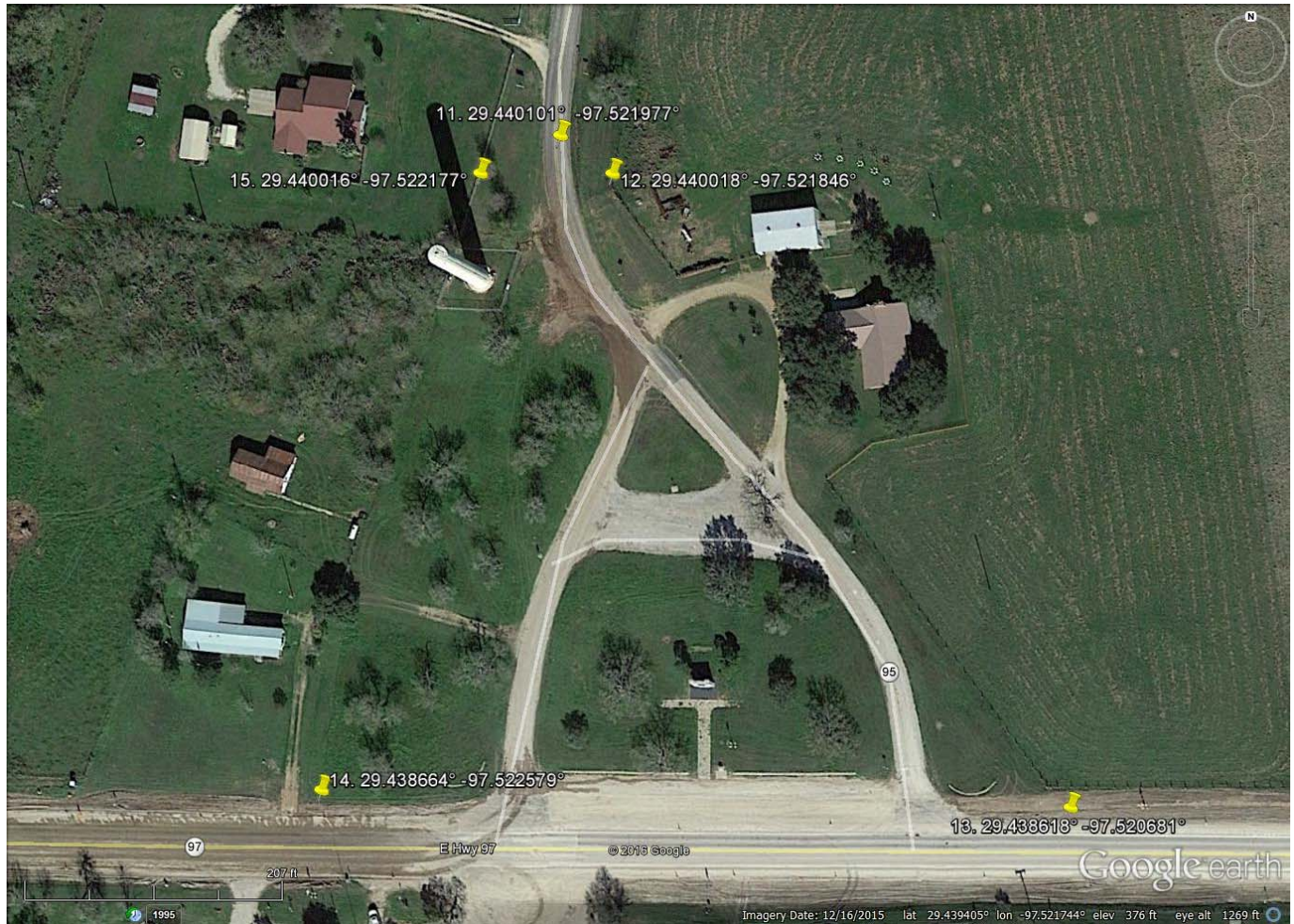
Coordinates of Centennial Roadside Park at State Highway 97

12. 29.440018° -97.521846°
13. 29.438618° -97.520681°
14. 29.438664° -97.522579°
15. 29.440016° -97.522177°



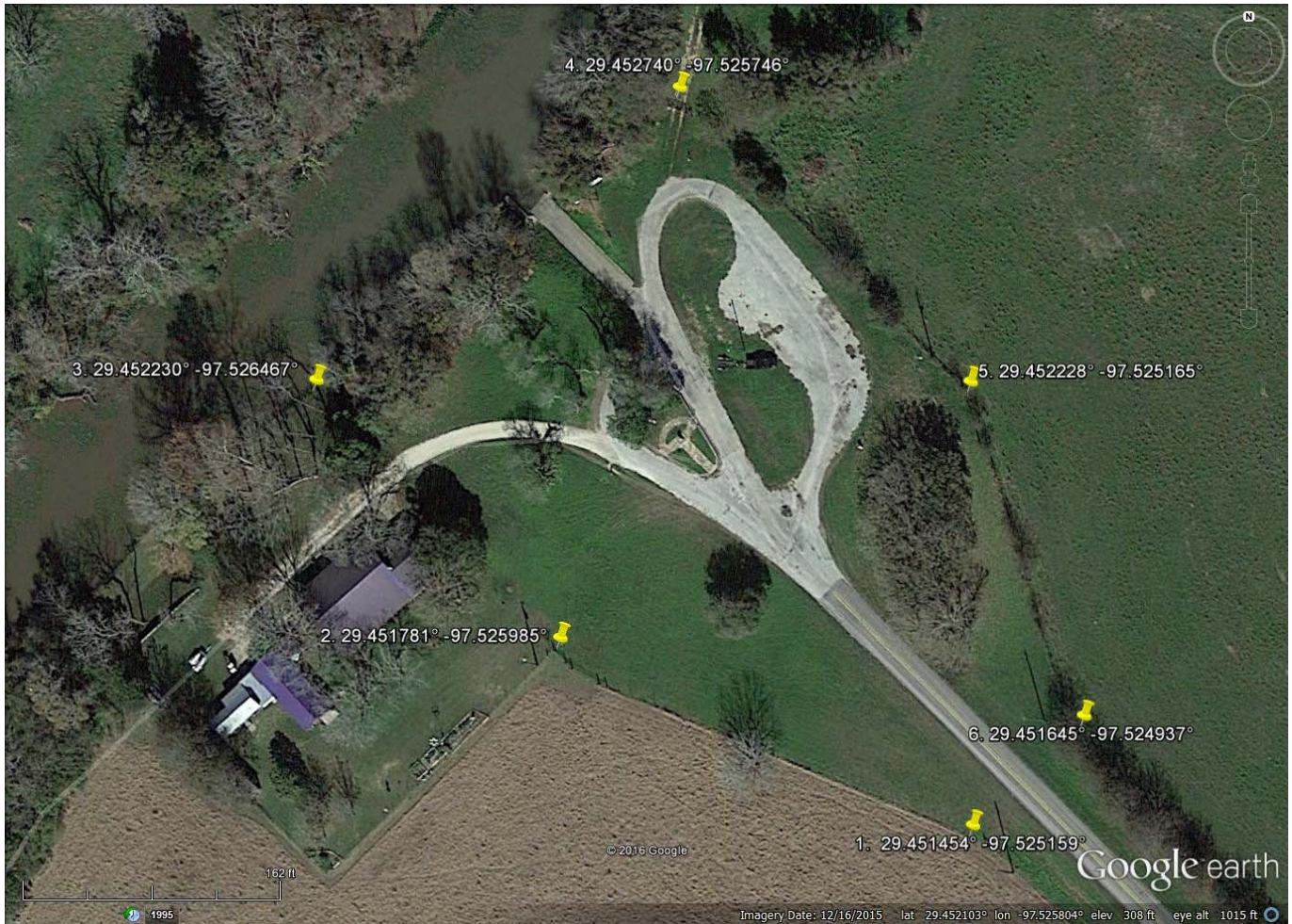
First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Detail, Centennial Roadside Park



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Detail, 1903 Monument Park



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Map showing location of nominated property in proximity to Gonzales, Texas
Source: Google Maps, Accessed August 9, 2016



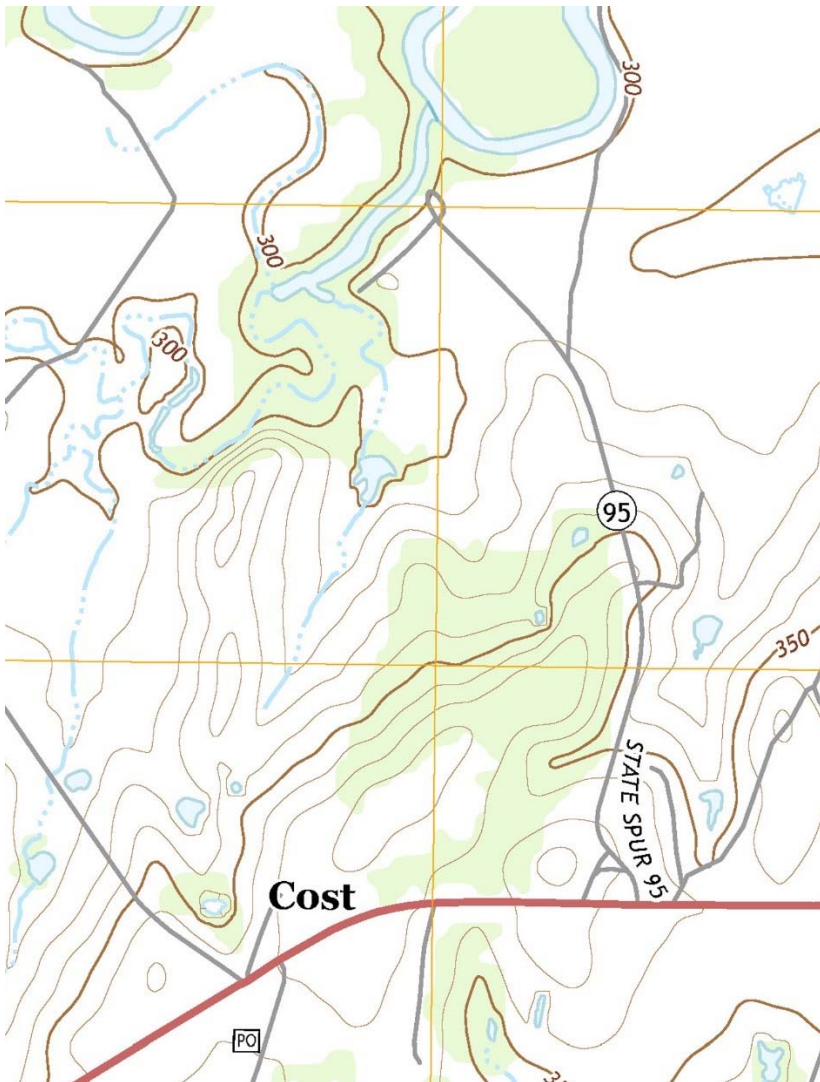
Star at lower left indicates 1936 Centennial Park and southern terminus of Spur 95.

First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Gonzales County, Texas

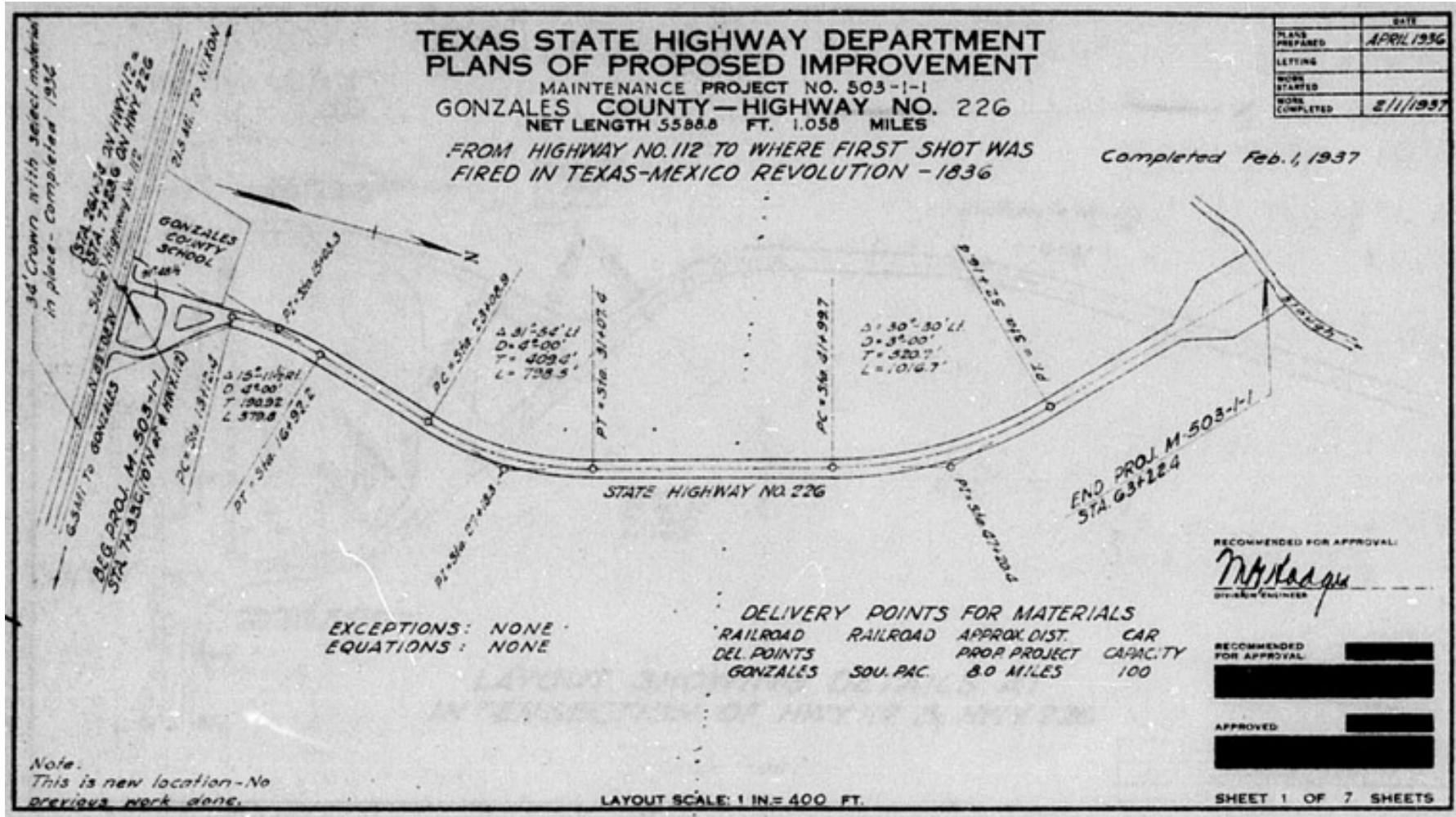


USGS Map (detail). No Scale



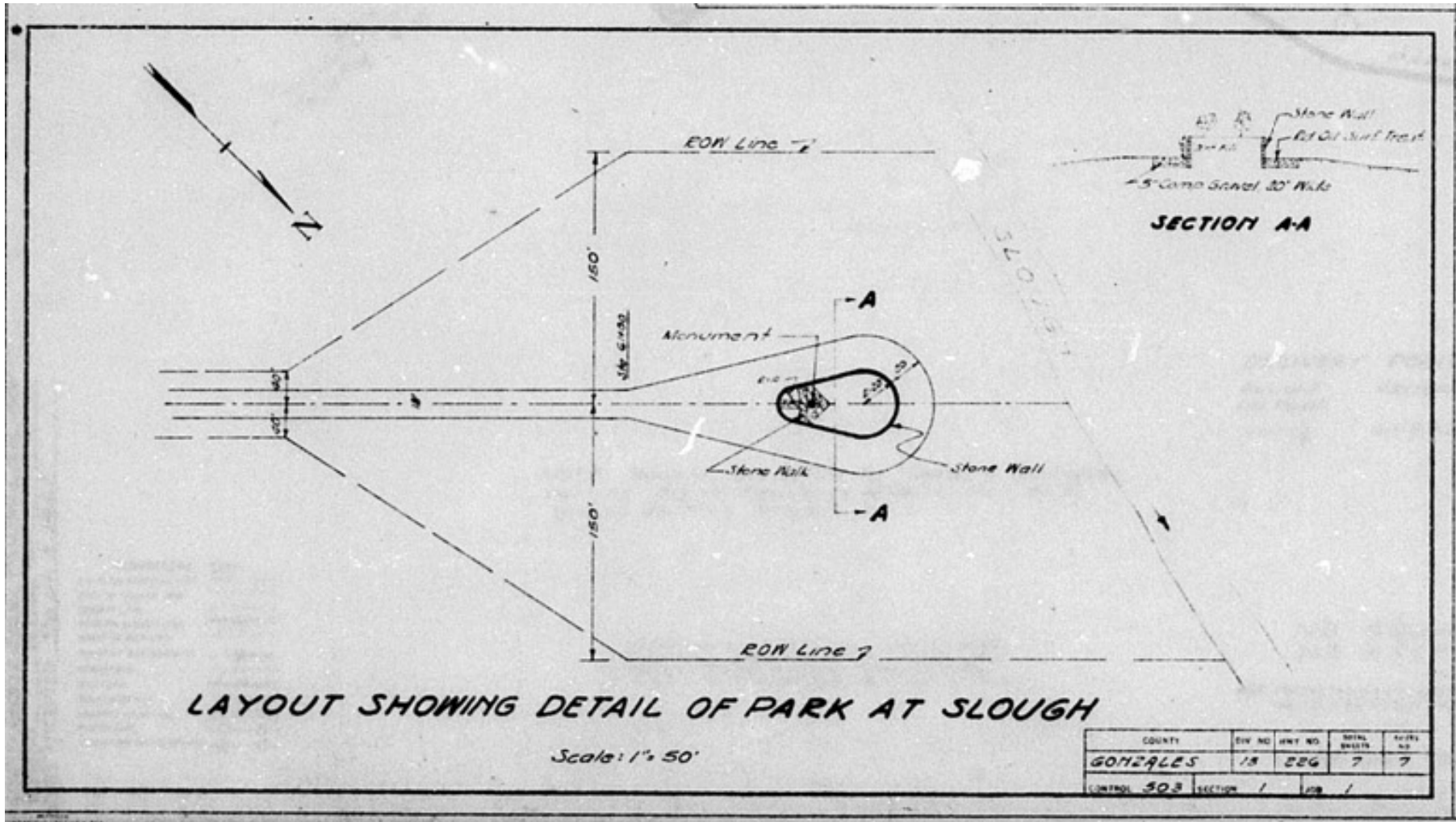
First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Texas Spur 95 (1936 Plans)
 Source: TxDOT



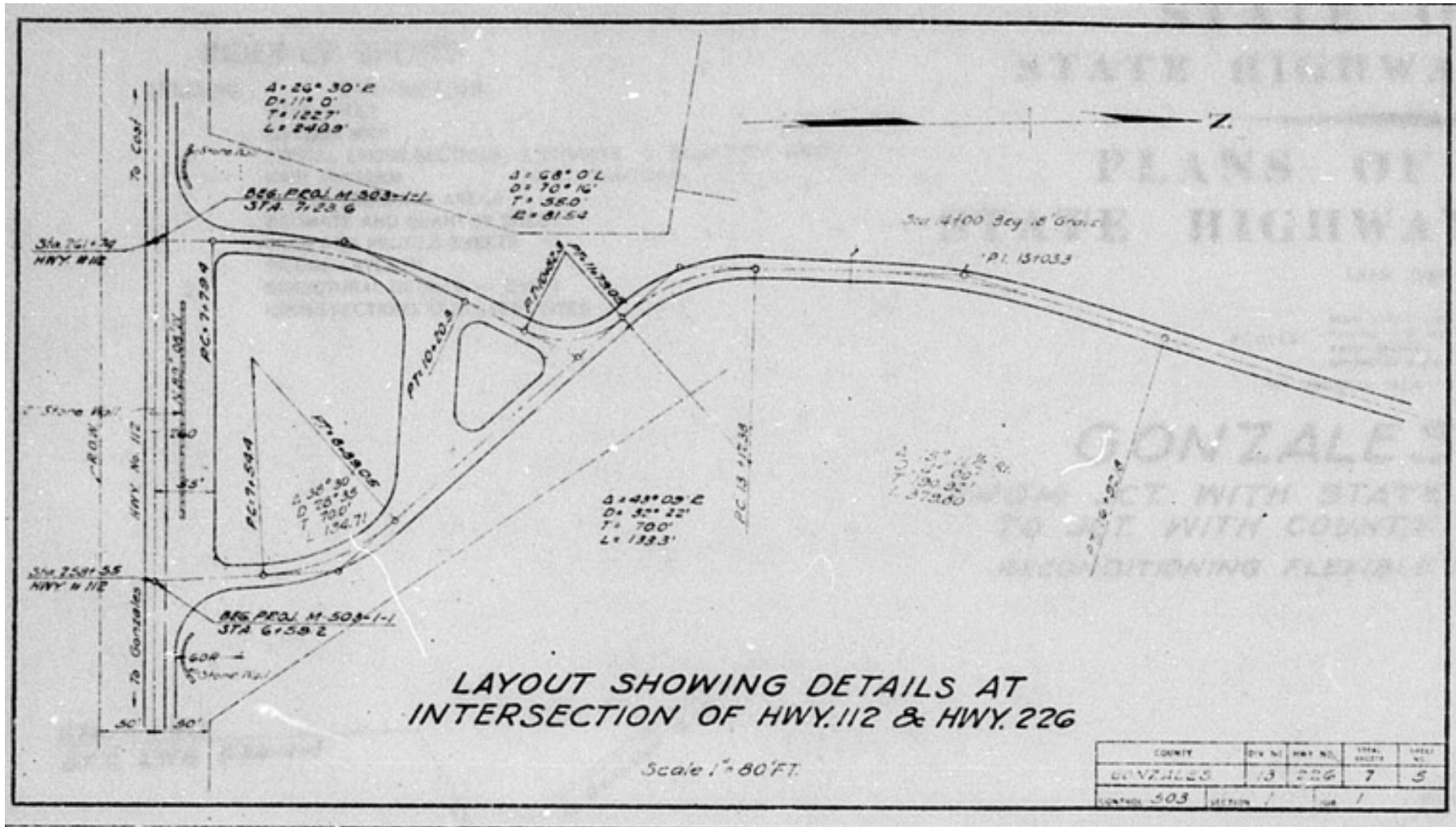
First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

1903 Monument Park at North Terminus of Spur 95 (1936 Plans)
 Source: TxDOT



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Centennial Park at intersection of Spur 95 with State Highway 97 (1936 Plans)
 Source: TxDOT

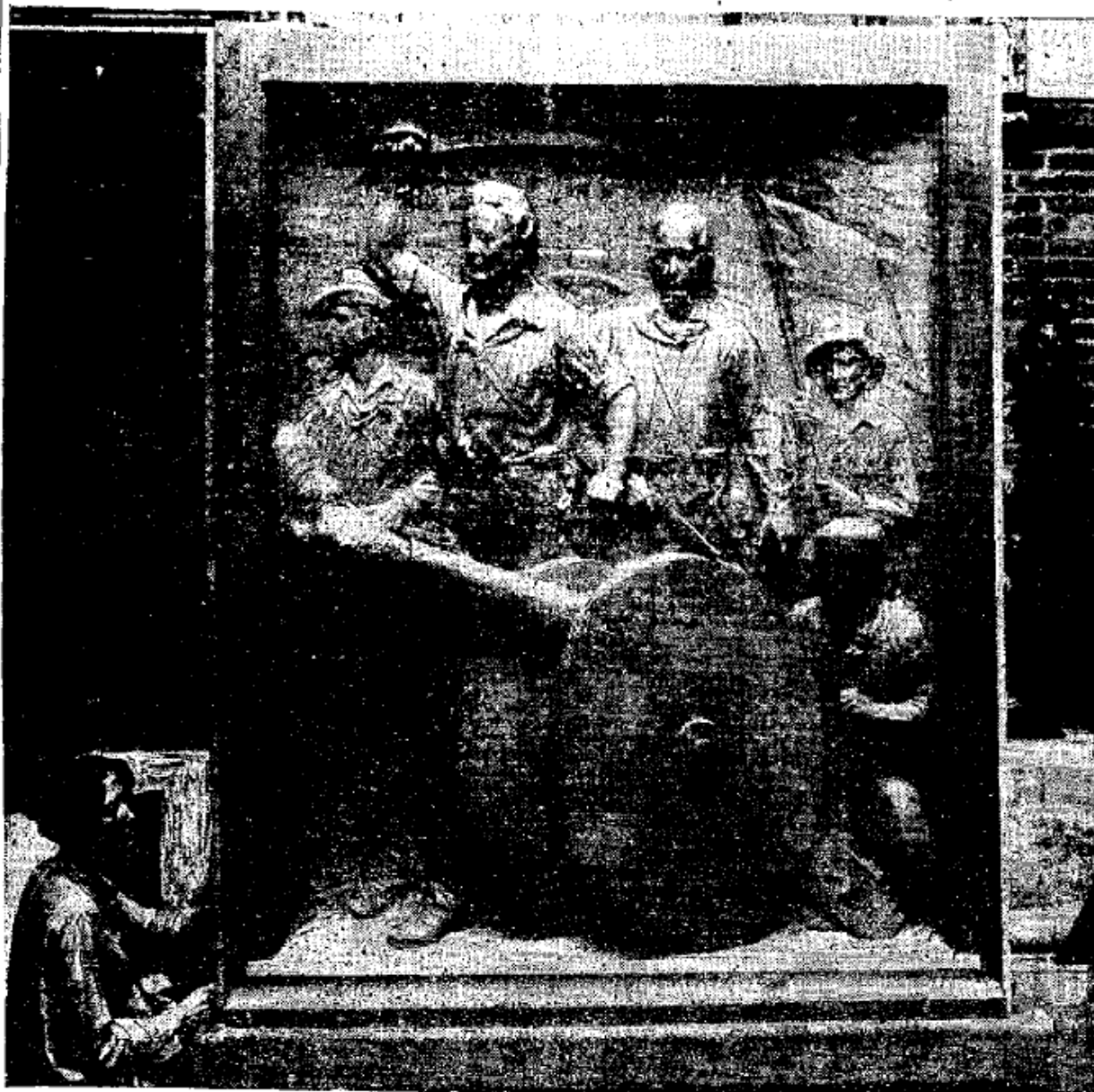


First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

San Antonio Light, November 8, 1936

THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHT.

GONZALES TO DEDICATE MONUMENT



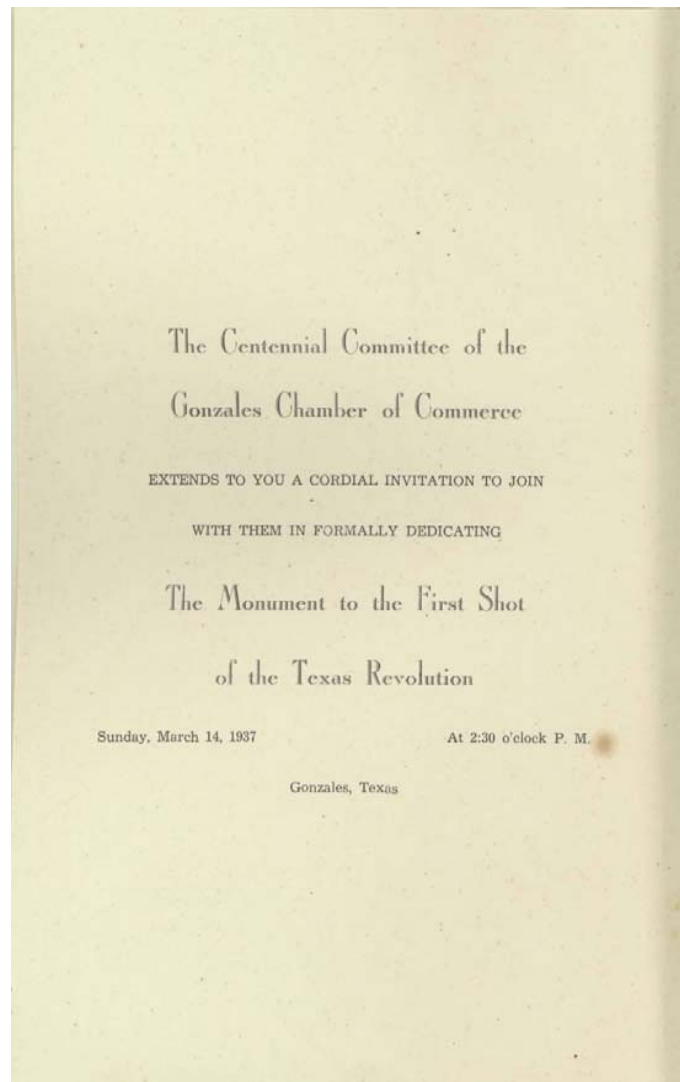
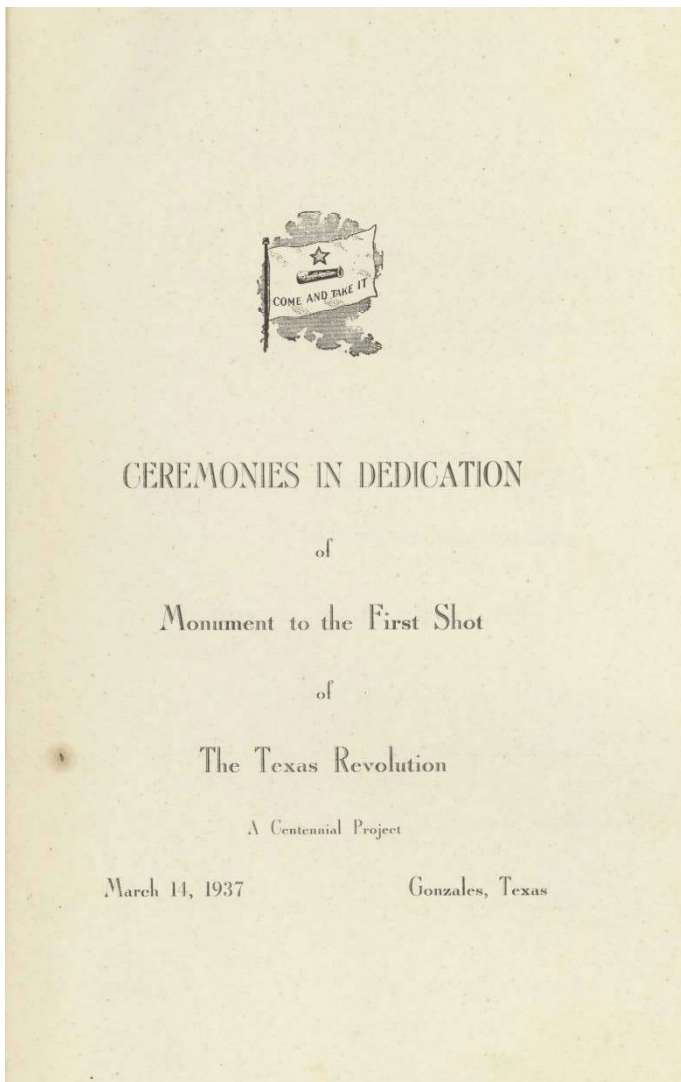
Waldine Tauch, sculptor shown at left, designed memorial monument which will be unveiled and dedicated November 11 at Gonzales, in commemoration of the first shot to be fired in the Texas revolution. The

monument stands on the spot where the "shot heard round the world" was fired in 1835. Panels on the sides of the monument represent fame and history. Miss Tauch won the award in state competition.

—Photo by Ward; Dorr News service.

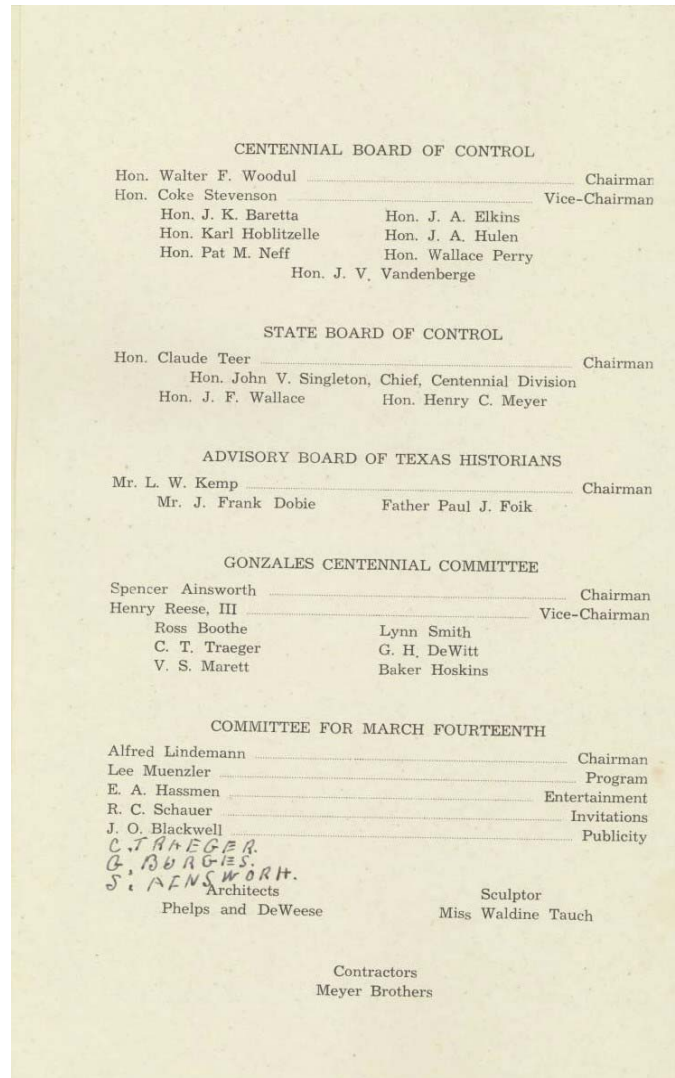
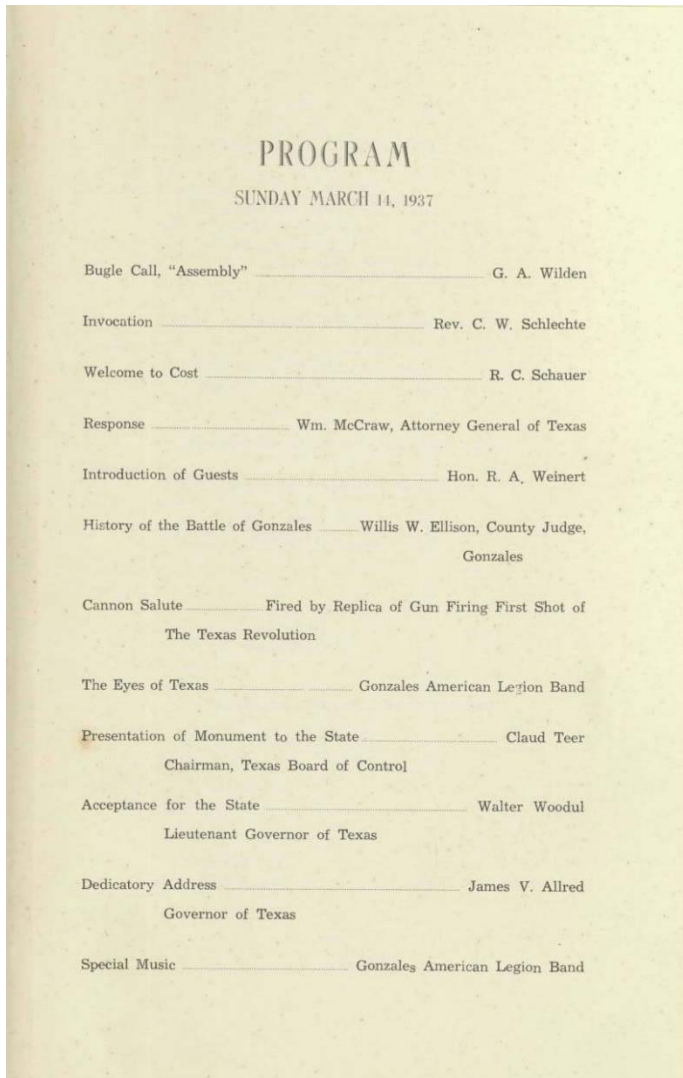
First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Program from Monument Dedication, 1937



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Program from Monument Dedication, 1937



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 1
Centennial Roadside Park from SH 97
Camera facing NE



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 2
Centennial Roadside Park from SH 97
Camera facing NW



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 3
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 4
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 5
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing NE



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 6
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing SW



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 7
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 8
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument detail
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 9
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument detail
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 10
Centennial Roadside Park, Centennial Monument detail
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 11
Centennial Roadside Park, stone curb on west side
Camera facing west



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 12
Spur 95 from Centennial Roadside Park
Camera facing NW



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 13
1903 Monument
Camera facing NW



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 14
1903 Monument
Camera facing NW



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 15
1903 Monument, detail
Camera facing NW



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 16
1903 Monument Park
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 17
1903 Monument Park
Camera facing south



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 18
Spur 95 approaching 1903 Monument Park
Camera facing NW



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 19
Spur 95 leaving 1903 Monument Park
Camera facing east



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 20
Spur 95 approaching 1903 Monument Park
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 21
Spur 95 leaving 1903 Monument Park
Camera facing SE



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 22
Spur 95, midpoint
Camera facing north



First Shot Monuments Historic District, Cost, Gonzales County, Texas

Photo 23
Spur 95 leaving Centennial Roadside Park
Camera facing north



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