

II. EVOLUTION OF NAMED HIGHWAYS

INTRODUCTION

This section of the report highlights six of the earliest and most significant named highways that date to the founding of the Texas Highway Department in 1917. This section complements the statewide context by describing some of the broad trends associated with the development and evolution of each named highway. The six selected named highways and their respective state highway designation include the Bankhead Highway (SH 1), Meridian Highway (SH 2), Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway (SH 3), Del Rio–Canadian Highway (SH 4), North Texas Highway (SH 5), and East Texas Highway (SH 8). (See *Figure 135*.) These highways were deemed to be among the most important in the state by state officials in 1917. However, this list does not include such notable roadways as the King of Trails Highway (SH 6), Puget Sound to Gulf Highway (SH 7) or Jefferson Davis Memorial Highway (SH 12). Nonetheless, the selected highways included in this study present a good cross section of the geographic diversity within the state. They share many common physical attributes and historical influences; however, they also showcase particular patterns and themes that are regionally distinctive. Some segments lie along early roads and trails that can be traced back to the Spanish colonial era. Others closely follow the railroads that forged new paths through Texas as the state embarked on a remarkable transformation from a frontier to agricultural-based society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Still other segments were part of a deliberative process by the highway planners to promote tourism, alleviate traffic, or support economic activity. For example, the Del Rio–Canadian Highway extends through a part of Texas that was the nation’s largest producer of wool and mohair, and the East Texas Highway runs through the Piney Woods of East Texas, which was a major supplier of timber and lumber.

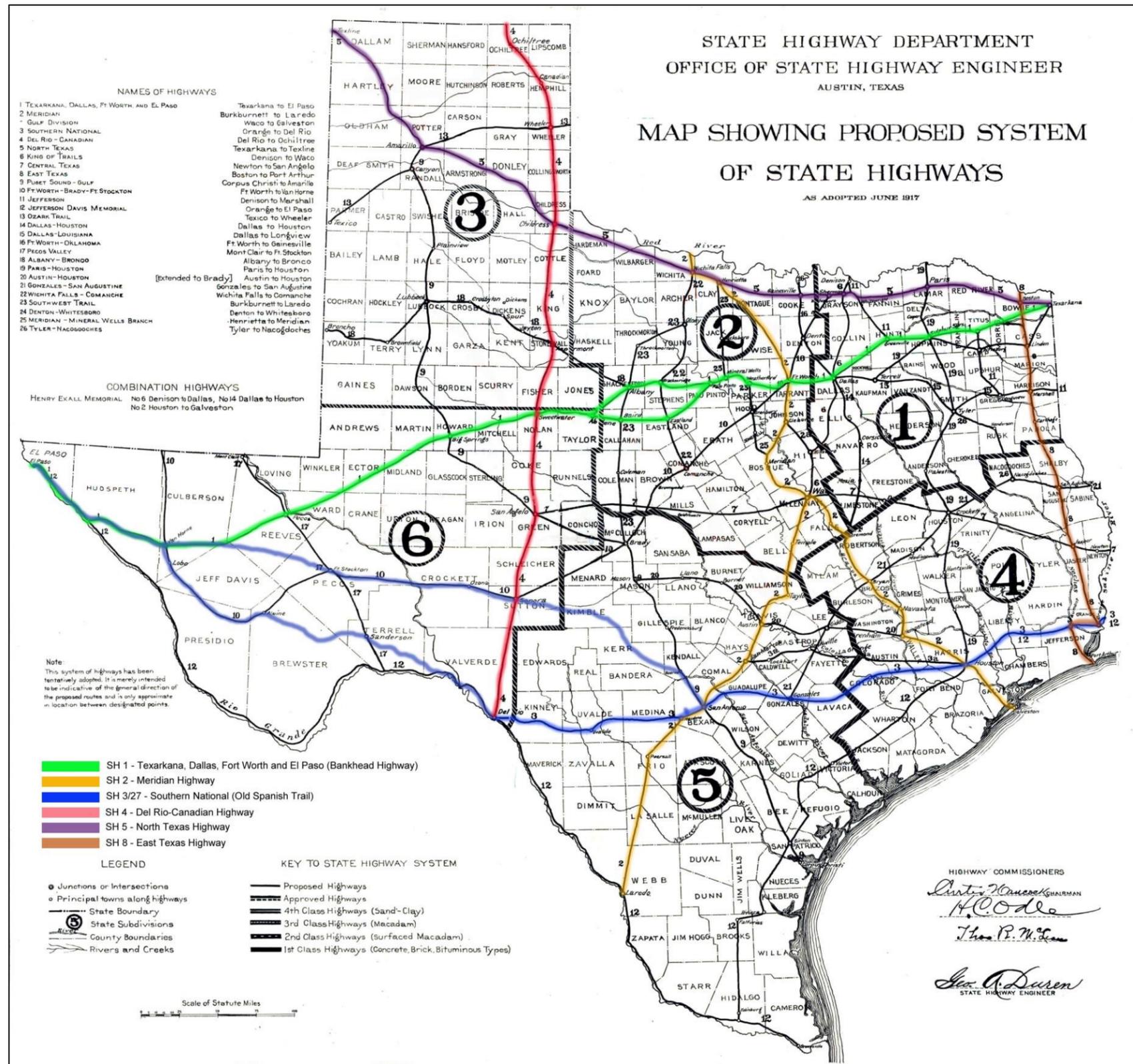
Separate subchapters examine how each of the six subject named highways evolved over time. Each section includes subheadings that correspond to the major periods of development examined in the statewide context. The historic context narrative for each highway presents an overview of the trends associated with the development of the highway. Subsequent subheads discuss the highway’s physical evolution and land development patterns. More detailed research and analysis will shed more light on each of these important routes within the state’s highway program.

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Figure 135. Edited version of the "Map Showing Proposed System of State Highways," 1917, highlighting each named highway detailed in the following sections of this report. Source: Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/cgibin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=6254> (accessed February 21, 2014).



II.1. BANKHEAD HIGHWAY (SH 1) – US 80/US 67 – IH 10/IH 20/IH 30

INTRODUCTION

The Bankhead Highway was the first all-weather transcontinental highway in the United States, and was designated SH 1 in 1917 by the Texas Highway Department. (See *Figure 136*.) In 1926, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) adopted an interstate highway numbering plan that resulted in an overlay designation that split the Bankhead Highway/SH 1 into two newly created U.S. highways. The segment between Texarkana and Dallas became part of US 67, and the portion between Dallas and El Paso became US 80, except for an alternate route between Mineral Wells and Abilene. This “northern route” was designated as US 80A and later as US 180. (Refer to *Figure 59* in previous Section I.4.) The passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 led to the construction of the Interstate Highway System and another new highway numbering system that added still another layer of designations. Much of the historic road was incorporated into Interstate Highway (IH) 30 from Texarkana to Dallas, IH 20 from Dallas to near Kent, and IH 10 from Kent to El Paso and the New Mexico border. The road spanned more than 800 miles from Texarkana to El Paso, providing an engineered roadway for local and regional traffic, as well as for military uses. The highway also brought a new industry—highway tourism—to Texas and entered popular culture through music and story. The Bankhead Highway includes segments of, or sections near, roads and trails forged during Spanish Colonial, Republic of Mexico, Republic of Texas, and statehood eras.

EARLY TEXAS ROADS AND TRAILS: 1680–1880

Historic Context

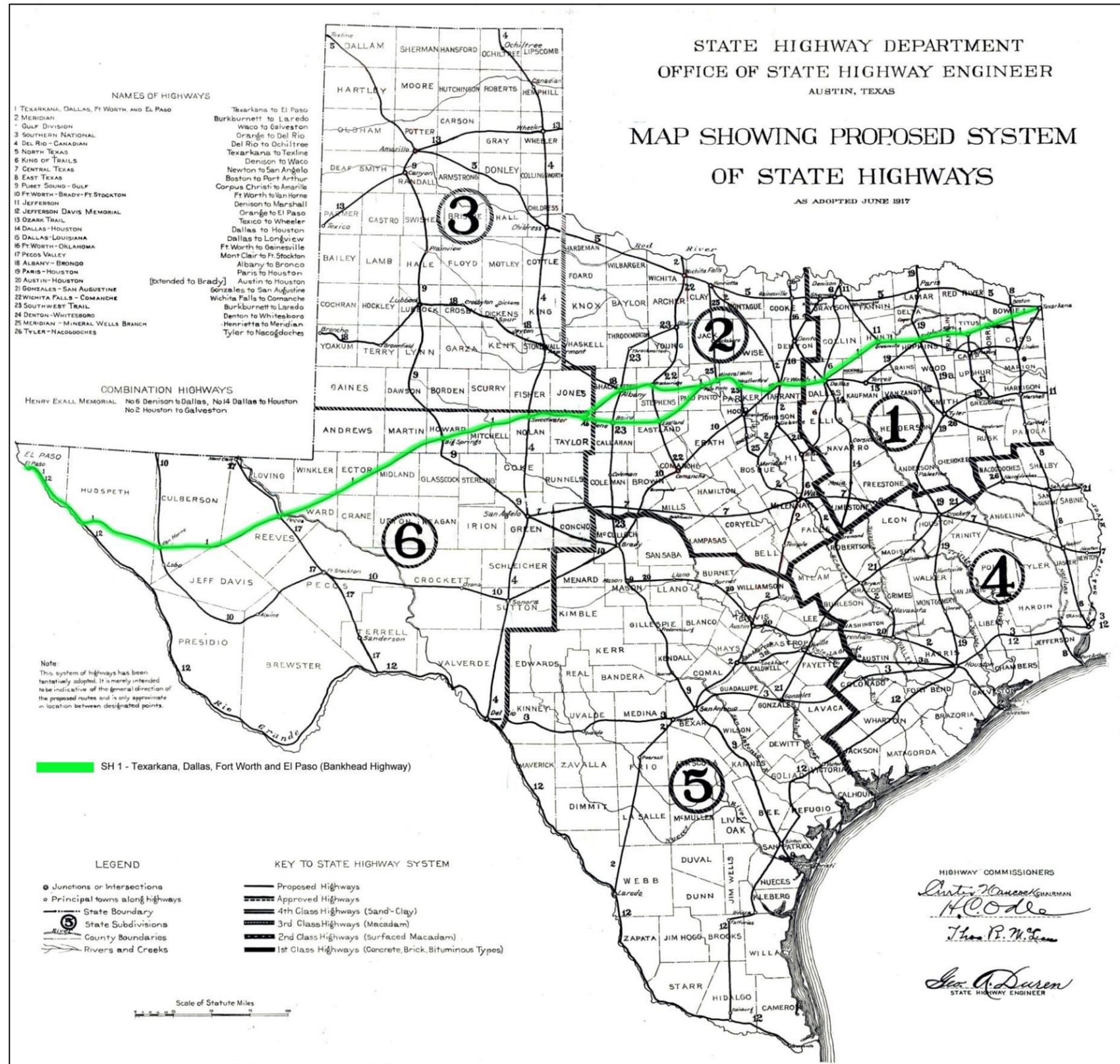
The first European road in Texas was created in 1682, when the Spanish established the first mission and farming settlements in Texas on the Rio Grande near El Paso del Norte at Ysleta.⁷¹⁴ Sections of the road linking these communities are within or near the early Bankhead Highway and Old Spanish Trail alignments, now part of US 90. The influx of Spanish colonists and, in later years, people from the United States, Mexico and other European countries spurred the expansion of this and other roads, as well as the subsequent construction of new trails that became part of an increasingly complex road network in Texas. An east–west route that traversed Texas between Texarkana and El Paso did not exist during this period, but historic map analysis reveals that segments of other trails extended along parts of the general alignment that evolved into the Bankhead Highway.

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Figure 136. Edited version of the "Map Showing Proposed System of State Highways," 1917, highlighting the route of the Bankhead Highway/SH 1. Source: Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/cgib/in/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=6254> (accessed February 21, 2014).



For example, portions of the 1839 Chihuahua Trail (also called the Connelley Trail), which extended across West Texas, may have become part of, or extended within a few miles of, the Bankhead Highway. Between 1849 and 1852, U.S. Army Captain Randolph B. Marcy traveled from southern New Mexico to the Pecos River, then northeast through sand hills near Monahans, Texas, to present Big Spring, Colorado City, and on to Preston along Red River and continuing to Fort Smith, Arkansas.⁷¹⁵ The portion of his trip from the Monahans area to a point south of Colorado City later became the general route of the Bankhead Highway. (See *Figure 137*.) Some sections may have been incorporated into, or extended within a few miles of, the Bankhead. In 1849 to 1850, U.S. Army Lieutenant Nathan Michler explored a route from Fort Washita (Oklahoma) through North Texas to Big Spring and possibly to the present town of Pecos.⁷¹⁶ His route from north of Big Spring to the vicinity of the town of Pecos appears to have been incorporated into, and follows the general alignment of, the Bankhead Highway. The 1849 survey by U.S. Army Lieutenants William H. C. Whiting and William F. Smith from San Antonio to San Felipe Springs (Del Rio) to El Paso created the Lower Military Road. The survey was improved later that year that year by Lieutenant Joseph E. Johnston, and the section from Fort Stockton to El Paso years later became part of the Bankhead Highway and the Old Spanish Trail.⁷¹⁷ The Butterfield Overland Mail line that extended from St. Louis/Memphis to San Francisco from 1857 to 1861 also passed through the state, including a large segment in West Texas along a portion of the Military Stage Road that also is closely associated with the general path of the Bankhead Highway.⁷¹⁸

The expansion of railroads into Texas during the third quarter of the nineteenth century also affected the road network. Since they extended over vast distances, railroads facilitated interstate commerce and brought transcontinental transportation to new levels that forever changed the way a rapidly growing and increasingly sophisticated populace perceived distance, travel, and time. The construction of Texas and Pacific Railway (T&P) across North-Central and West Texas from 1873 to 1881 and 1882 established a physical path for the east–west flow of people and goods across Texas. The Bankhead Highway largely followed this route from Dallas to Big Spring. Towns with rail stops, such as Big Spring, became railheads that supported lively commerce, later enhanced with business from the Bankhead Highway.⁷¹⁹ As this period came to a close, railroads—not roads or trails—became the primary means of transportation for a state that was about to experience unprecedented growth, development, and prosperity.

Development Patterns

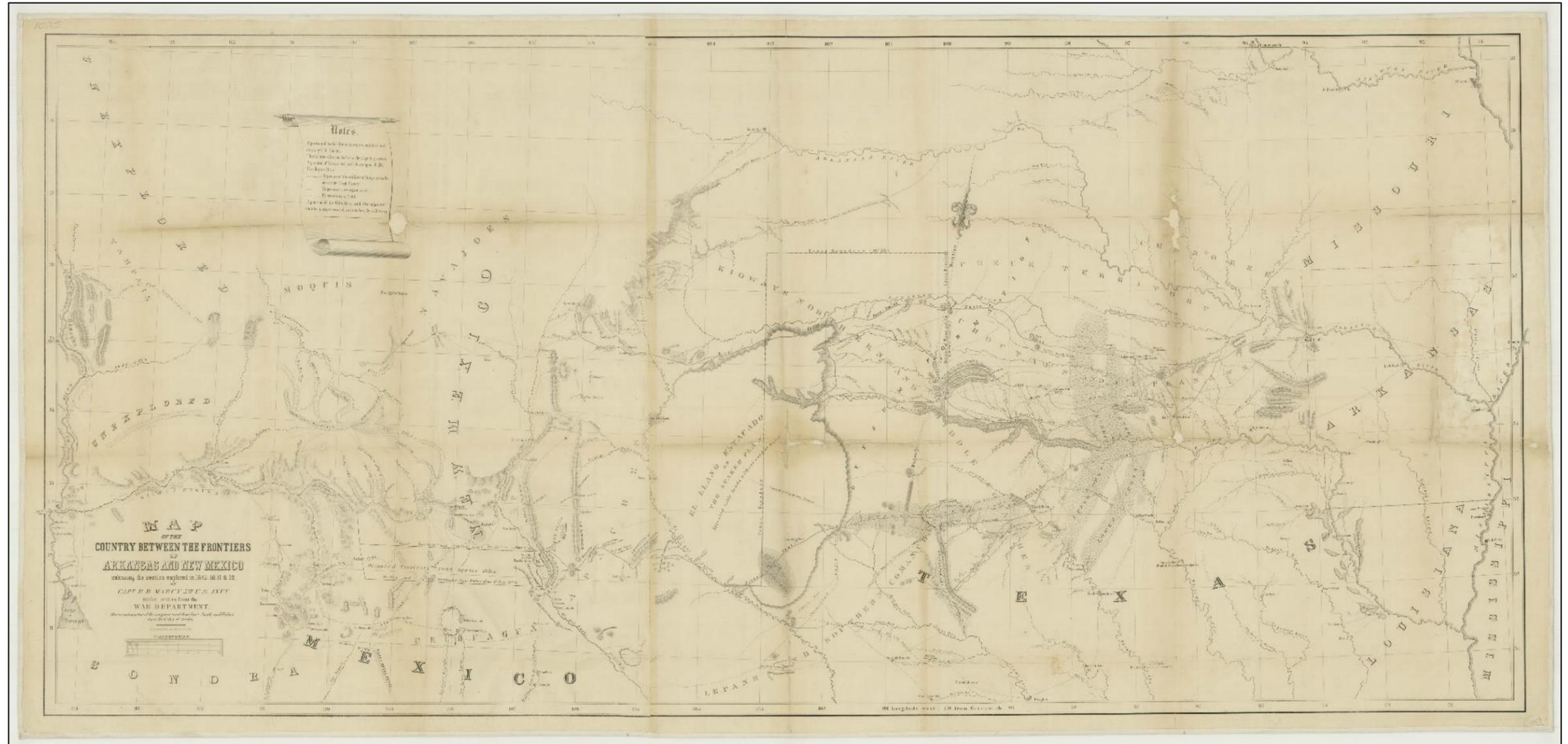
In the period from ca. 1700 through ca. 1880, only small segments of road or trail development had occurred along the route that would

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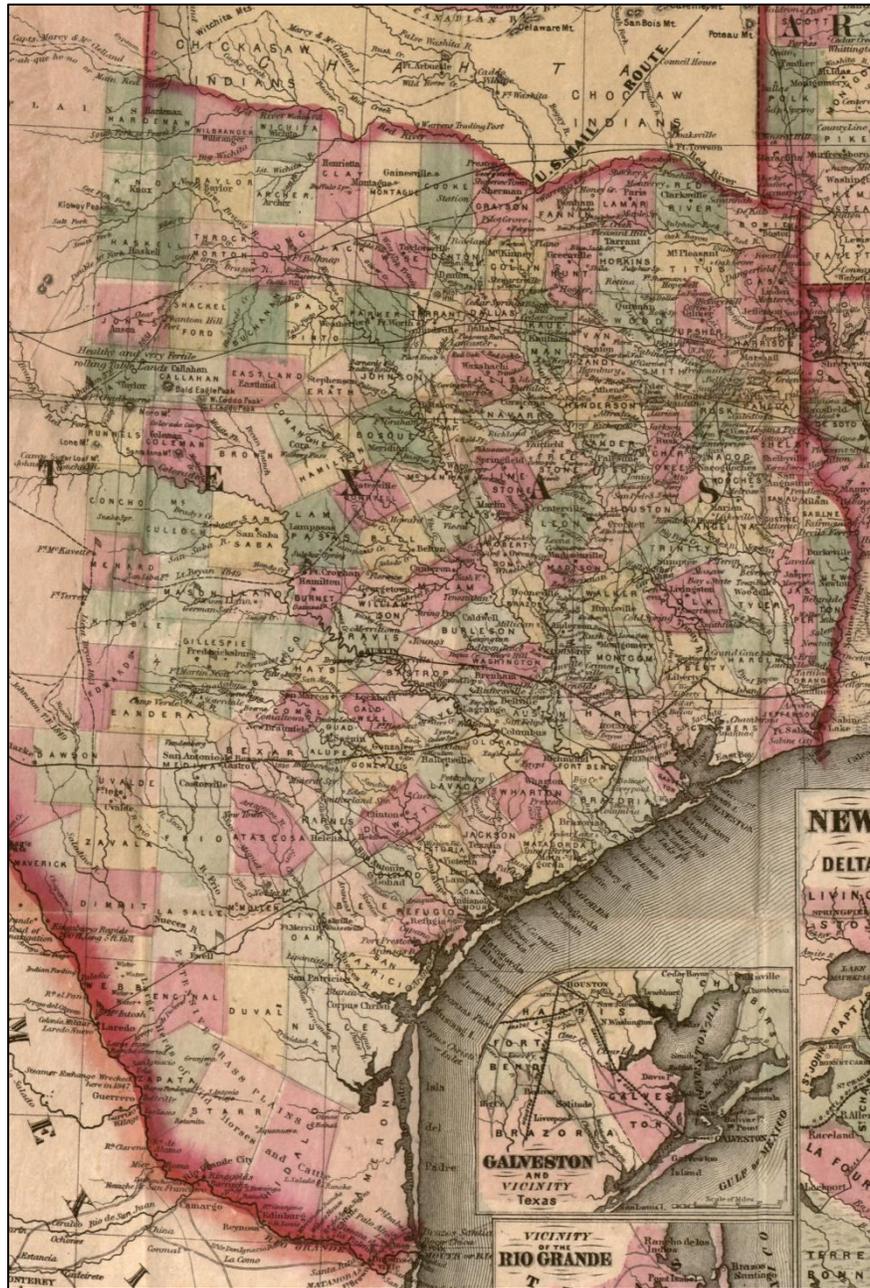
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Figure 137. Map of the Country between the Frontiers of Arkansas and New Mexico, embracing the section explored in 1849–1852 by Captain R. B. Marcy, 5th U.S. Infantry under orders from the War Department, 1852. Marcy's route from the Sand Hills to the vicinity of Big Spring became the general route of the Bankhead Highway. This map depicts just one of several historic paths that established routes that later evolved into the Bankhead Highway. The map also shows how such a path served strategic military needs during the frontier era. Almost a century later, this and other segments of the Bankhead Highway remained significant for strategic military needs but in a vastly different and more modern capacity. Source: Map 1025 Historic Map Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas.



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Figure 138. of Texas from
“Colton’s rail road and county
map of the southern states
containing the latest
information,” 1864. Source: The
Library of Congress Geography
and Map Division,
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3861p.cw1011000> (accessed
December 4, 2012).



become the Bankhead Highway. As shown by *Colton’s New Map of the State of Texas*, developed in 1858, no trails or railroads were present along most of the future alignment. (See *Figure 138*.) Existing settlements noted on the map included Dallas, Fort Worth, Weatherford, Sierra Blanca, San Elizario, and El Paso. There was no east–west trail linking these settlements; although roads later incorporated into the highway were present, they served local communities. While Fort Worth had developed into a significant regional commercial center by the 1850s, transportation was provided along different routes, such as the Chisholm Trail and the Butterfield

Overland Mail route. In far West Texas, near present-day Monahans, the old U.S. mail route is shown in the approximate location of the Bankhead Highway for a short distance, but the majority of the routes do not overlap.⁷²⁰

By 1874, construction of the T&P Railway line began to establish a route that closely paralleled the future path of the Bankhead Highway, especially in West Texas. However, the majority of the rail line remained incomplete until the 1880s, and new railroad-oriented settlements had not yet appeared on the map.⁷²¹

COUNTY ROADS AND THE GOOD ROADS MOVEMENT: 1880–1916

Historic Context

Between 1880 and ca. 1912, the road that became the Bankhead Highway consisted of country roads funded by county bonds that followed the route of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway from Texarkana to Dallas and the T&P Railway from Dallas to Fort Worth, Cisco, Abilene, Sweetwater, Big Spring, Midland, Monahans, Pecos, and Sierra Blanca, where it joined the Southern Pacific system into El Paso. Early automobile enthusiast and “Pathfinder” Guy Finney followed the approximate route from Dallas to El Paso in 1910 seeking to determine a path for automobile travel. Another such pioneer was A. L. Westgard, who mapped the road in 1913.

The growing number of people across the country who began using automobiles during the early twentieth century triggered the creation of organizations whose like-minded members promoted automobile travel and advocated the construction of new and improved roads. That trend reached Texas and around 1912, the Fort Worth–El Paso Highway Association formed for the purpose of promoting road development on the route. It was among the first automobile associations organized in Texas. In 1916, a separate organization, the El Paso–Fort Worth Highway Association, was formed with County Judge S. A. Penix of Big Spring elected as president. The intention of the new Association was to hire an engineer to survey the route;⁷²² it operated simultaneously with the older Fort Worth–El Paso Highway Association. There appears to have been no equivalent organization for the roadways between Dallas and Texarkana until 1917. The Bankhead National Highway Association formed in Alabama in 1916 but did not become active in Texas until 1918.

Physical Evolution

As noted above, much of the route that was to become the Bankhead Highway was in place by 1916. The route during this time would likely have been earthen and gravel (or a combination of both) in West Texas;



Figure 139. Rendering of the Texas & Pacific Railroad Depot in Fort Worth, ca. 1900 (destroyed by fire). Source: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph30012/> (accessed May 02, 2013), crediting Tarrant County College NE, Heritage Room, Fort Worth, Texas.

sand-clay and gravel may have dominated much of the road in the remainder of the state. Much of the entire length of the Bankhead route would have been unimproved and would not have adequate drainage. In and through the larger cities such as Dallas, Fort Worth, Abilene, and El Paso, existing roadways may have been macadamized or treated with bituminous materials, due to the high traffic volumes present in those areas.

Development Patterns

Between 1880 and 1916, tremendous land development along the future route of the Bankhead Highway was triggered by railroad construction. Historical maps indicate that, by 1893, the St. Louis Southwestern Railway was completed between Texarkana and Dallas. The T&P Railway also was completed from El Paso to Shreveport via Dallas. (See *Figure 139*.) New railroad towns sprouted along both railroad lines, but especially along the route of the T&P in West Texas.⁷²³ (See *Figure 140*.) Merkel, Cisco, and Abilene all are examples of railroad towns from this period. In Abilene, the railroad company platted the town in the 1870s and then auctioned off lots, creating a totally new community and maximizing their profit from the land grant received to construct the railroad. Often, the railroad company located these towns where the railroad intersected a water source, as in Big Spring.⁷²⁴ The layout and configuration of these new communities contrasted with those that pre-dated the railroad. Whereas older towns and cities typically developed around a central focal point, such as a courthouse or public square, or were near a strategic water crossing, the railroad towns featured an orientation that took advantage of a linear-based corridor that followed the railroad. This configuration later proved ideal for the development of the Bankhead Highway that largely paralleled the path of the T&P and St. Louis and Southwestern railways. Since property abutting the railroads became focal points of activity, commercial and industrial concerns evolved near railroad depots and stops, and the supporting road network extended into nearby rural areas and emanated out from these highly developed nodes.

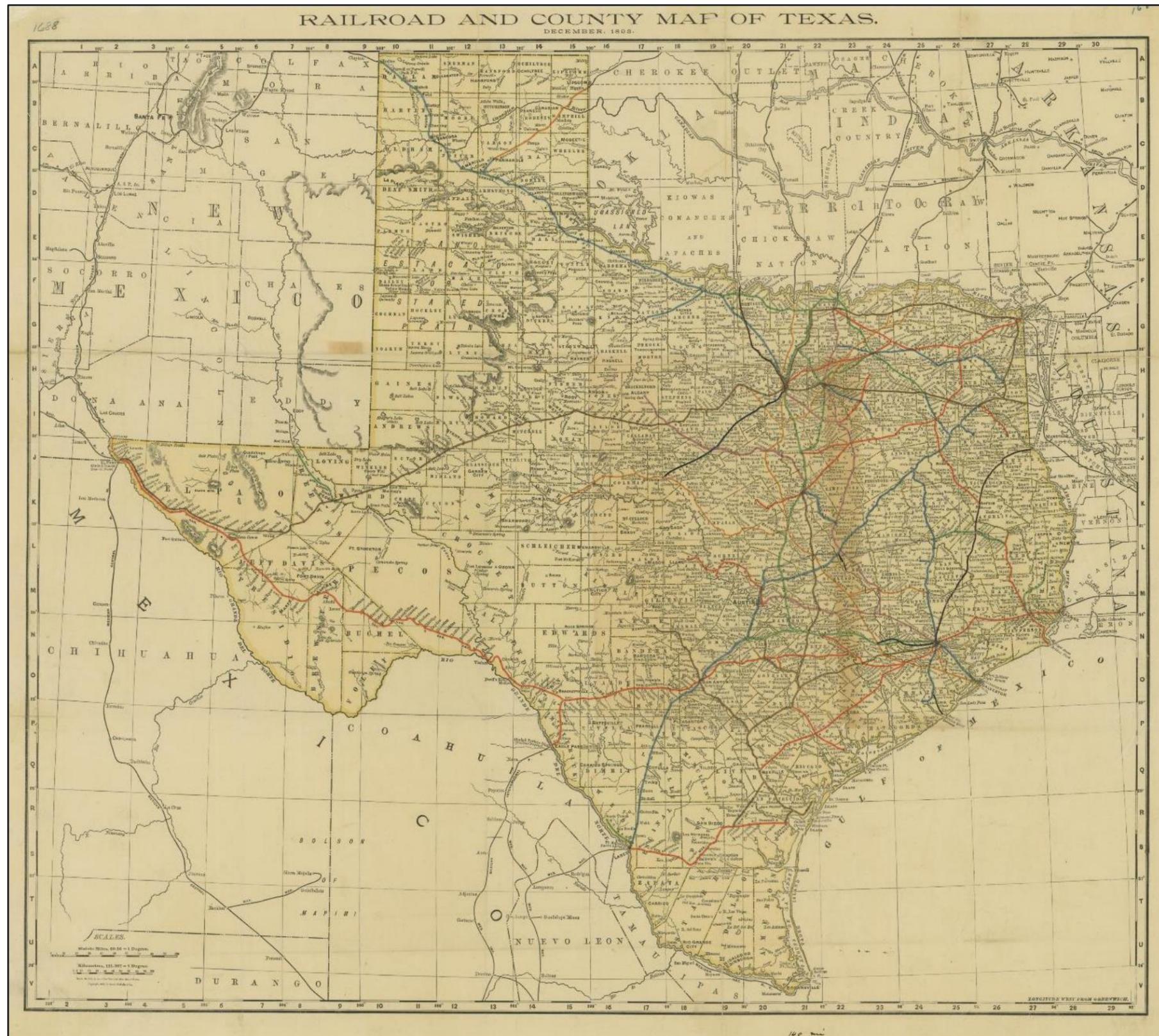
At the time, the economy of the land along the future Bankhead route was primarily agricultural, but with a growing emphasis on industry. In East Texas, the arrival of the railroad created a lumber “bonanza,” and logging and milling lumber were the focus of the economy.⁷²⁵ In the early 1880s, ranching and cattle were the focus in West Texas. As the 1880s and 1890s progressed, though, West Texas saw an increase in farming of corn, oats, wheat, and especially cotton, and a decrease in ranching. Around the turn of the century, sheep-raising became a popular new source of income in West Texas, further diversifying the agricultural economy.

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Figure 140. Railroad and County Map of Texas, December 1893. This map depicts the many railroads that provided service in Texas. By the late nineteenth century, the railroad provided the most effective means of transporting people and goods in the state. Roads leading into Texas' rich agricultural lands supported the growing number of farmers who increased profits by selling their goods to new markets and had greater access to agricultural implements that increased efficiency. The development of the rail network greatly influenced the subsequent development of the state's road network—particularly the Bankhead and other named highways—to play such an important role during the early years of the automobile era. Source: Map (Chicago: Rand McNally Co., Inc., 1892 [sic]), from the Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, map # 7878, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=1688> (accessed January 3, 2013).



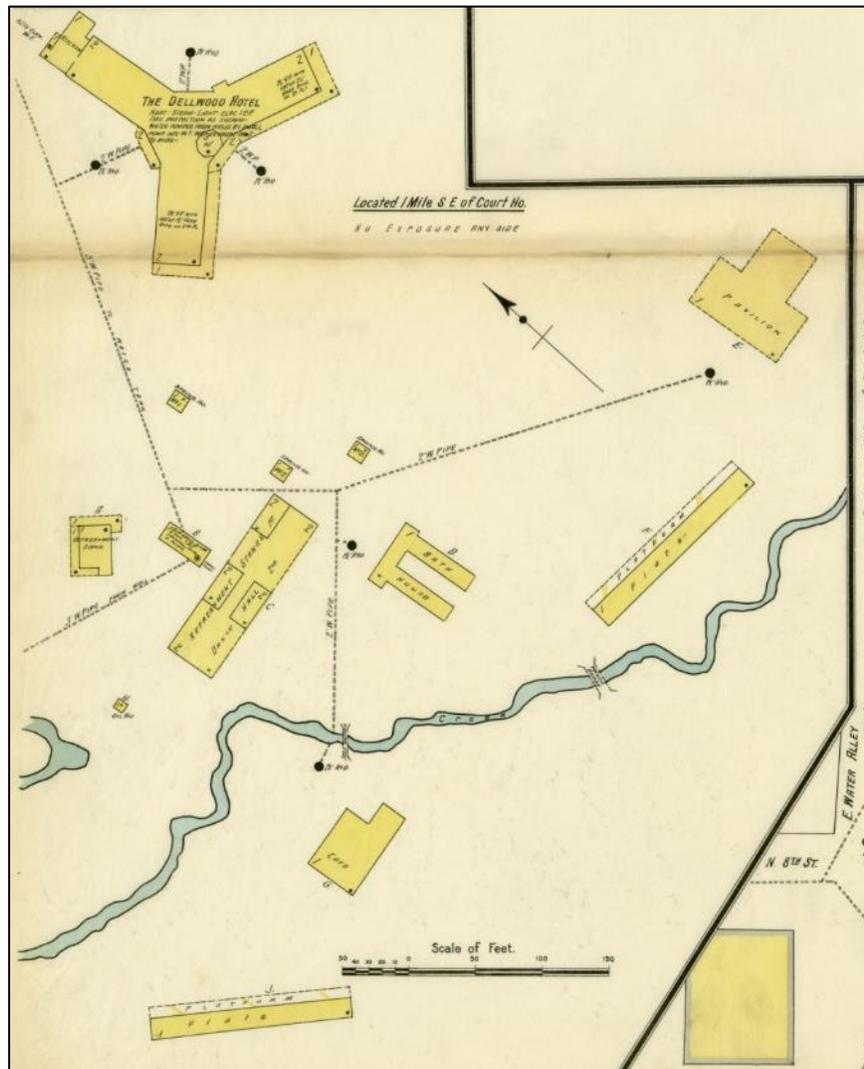
Industry at the time concentrated on processing agricultural goods. A growing number of cotton gins and mills developed along the railroads, and the meat packing industry in Fort Worth experienced rapid growth.⁷²⁶ The T&P Railway constructed a grand railroad depot in Fort Worth, expressing the important relationship between the railroad and the city's economy. Other industrial endeavors of the era included coal mining, which began in Erath County in 1888, and brick making, which began in Thurber in 1897.⁷²⁷

Between Dallas and Fort Worth, the "Interurban" electric railway was constructed in 1902.⁷²⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of Fort Worth from 1910 label the "Interurban Right of Way" directly along the future route of the Bankhead Highway. These maps show residential suburbs extending from the city to the east along the Interurban corridor, with single-family houses arranged within subdivisions platted in regular grid patterns. In Dallas, the Oak Cliff and Dallas streetcar line was completed in 1904, similarly stimulating the growth of residential suburbs and neighborhood commercial nodes along the future path of the Bankhead Highway.⁷²⁹

The railroad also generated tourism along the Bankhead's future route. The health-giving properties of mineral springs proved especially attractive. In 1885, the "Crazy Well" was dug in Mineral Wells, and "Crazy Water" was touted as a cure for rheumatism and various and sundry other ailments.⁷³⁰ In 1891, a mineral well with supposed healing properties was discovered in Arlington, generating tourism.⁷³¹ Yet another spring was discovered in Mount Pleasant in 1908. Sanborn maps of Mineral Wells from 1900 show a variety of resources related to the mineral waters, including bath houses, hotels, and bottling works. These resources were located within the commercial downtown area, which was several blocks north of the train depot and organized with a regular street grid. In Mount Pleasant, Sanborn maps from 1911 illustrate little tourism-related development downtown near the depot and courthouse, but they do show the sprawling Dellwood Hotel, with bath houses, refreshment stands, a dance hall, and "flats" scenically arranged at the edge of town along the creek. (See *Figure 141*.) Although guests at the Dellwood probably arrived in town on the train, by 1911 automobiles were available to transport them from the depot to the hotel. This allowed tourism-related resources to be built at the edge of town, presaging patterns that would be seen along the highways built in the decades to come.

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Figure 141. Image of the Dellwood Hotel in Mount Pleasant, 1911. Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Mount Pleasant, 1911. Source: the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/m-o/txu-sanborn-mount_pleasant-1911-1.jpg (accessed February 6, 2014).



INITIATION OF THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1917–1932

Historic Context

Development of a route from Texarkana to El Paso remained a patchwork of different county-level roads before Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1916. The Act introduced the federal government as a new source of funding to improve highways, and it also forced Texas to create a state highway department (as the last state in the nation to do so). As the new agency began operations, highway associations continued to play an important role in the state's evolving road and highway network. Under the leadership of W. B. Starr, Secretary of the Fort Worth–El Paso Highway Association, the organization documented the proposed road and encouraged passage of county-issued bonds for its improvement. In the spring of 1917, the

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Figure 142. Photograph of the highway leading into the downtown of Colorado City, Mitchell County, 1922. Source: The University of North Texas, Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph50084/> (accessed April 7, 2014), crediting the Permian Basin Petroleum Museum, Library and Hall of Fame.



Dallas–Texarkana Highway Association was formed. The two organizations were urged to join and combine efforts⁷³² but failed to do so by June 21, 1917, when the Texas Highway Commission met in Mineral Wells and tentatively identified the 25 highways that would comprise the state’s system of highways in order of importance. The first highway listed was the Texarkana, Dallas, Fort Worth and El Paso Highway. Its route ran from Texarkana to Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, Sulphur Springs, Greenville, Rockwall, Dallas, Fort Worth, Mineral Wells, Abilene, Sweetwater, Colorado City (*Figure 142*), Big Spring, Midland, Pecos, Van Horn, and El Paso. Two amendments to the route were accepted by the Commission. The first divided the highway into two parallel routes between Texarkana and Sulphur Springs. The second divided the highway into two parallel routes between Mineral Wells and Abilene.⁷³³

In early 1918, the director of the Bankhead National Highway Association (formed in 1916) signaled the interest of the organization in selecting the route of SH 1 and designating it part of the Bankhead National Highway. That selection was finalized in Mineral Wells in April 1919, when an all-Texas route was selected in preference to a route through Oklahoma. The route was the same as that designated by the Texas Highway Commission in 1917, except that it did not include the two alternate routes. (Refer to *Figure 35* in previous Section I.4.) Instead, the route identified by the Bankhead National Highway Association east of Dallas ran from Texarkana to Naples, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, and Sulphur Springs. West of Fort Worth, the route ran through Mineral Wells to Palo Pinto, Strawn, Ranger, Eastland, Baird, and Abilene.⁷³⁴

The Bankhead National Highway Association promoted the all-Texas route after 1919, and residents of Pittsburg formed an association in

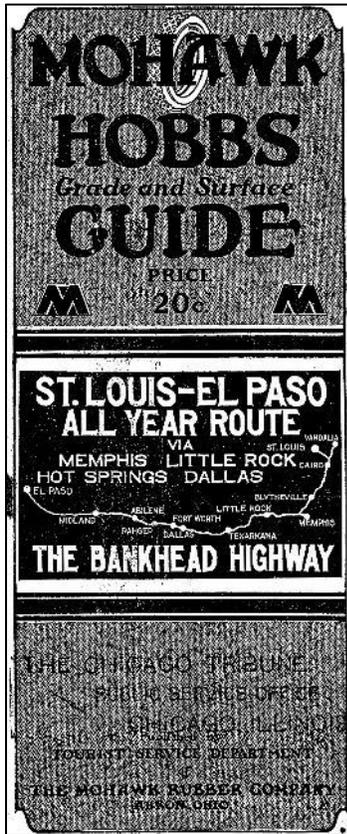


Figure 143. Cover of the log book entitled “Mohawk Hobbs Grade and Surface Guide,” published ca. 1926, which provided maps of the Bankhead Highway, descriptions of the surface paving materials for each segment, and listings for hotels and tourist attractions. Source: Research files of T. Lindsay Baker.

May 1921 to formalize an extension off the main Bankhead route that ran from Mount Pleasant to Mexico City by way of Pittsburg, Gilmer, Tyler, Athens, Kerens, Corsicana, and Waco. At that point, the proposed Bankhead route merged with the Meridian Highway (SH 2).⁷³⁵ The Texas Highway Commission did not acknowledge the south-running extension. Although the so-called “Texas–Mexico Division” appeared on maps published by the Texas affiliate of the Association, the extension typically did not appear on maps published by the Bankhead National Highway Association.

On March 21, 1921, the Texas Highway Commission designated portions of SH 1 as part of “The Major State Highway System.” The route selected between Texarkana and Dallas mimicked the Bankhead National Highway Association’s selection, going by way of Maude and Naples, and that between Palo Pinto and Abilene went by way of the 1917 southern route. A segment of the road between Sulphur Springs and Greenville was not considered to be part of the System. That route, plus the Sulphur Springs to Greenville segment, was confirmed in 1924 as a primary road of the Federal Aid Highway System.⁷³⁶

In 1926, a log of the Bankhead Highway indicated slight variations in the route, which diverged from SH 1 at Sulphur Springs and followed SH 11 (the Jefferson Highway) to Greenville, where it picked up SH 1 again to Dallas (Figure 143).⁷³⁷

The growing network of named highways from the late 1910s to the mid-1920s created a complex layering of road names and state highway designations that easily could confuse interstate motorists. Maps of the era contained complicated symbols and numbers that referred to a lengthy legend that often was difficult to decipher. The federal agency in charge of assisting highway construction at that time—the Bureau of Public Roads within the Department of Agriculture—proposed the creation of a new interstate highway numbering system that would address the confusion that often arose by the many names often associated with the same physical segment of a highway. Since states owned and operated the highways, the Bureau provided its recommendations to AASHO, which adopted the highway designation system in 1926. This new numbering system affected the Bankhead Highway, which, despite its decade-long existence, was designated as two U.S. highways. The segment between Texarkana and Dallas became US 67. West of Dallas, the Bankhead followed the newly designated US 80 to El Paso. The alternate route on the Bankhead Highway between Mineral Wells and Abilene by way of Breckenridge and Albany was designated as US 80A.

The Bankhead National Highway Association appears to have become less active in Texas and local groups more active beginning in the late 1920s and early 1930s. By that time, the route was essentially complete,

paving of the last link having occurred in Mitchell County in 1931. Promoters turned their attention almost exclusively to advertising the route for the purpose of attracting tourist traffic. Caravans of boosters traveled the route from California to Arkansas to attract attention to their particular transcontinental route and committed to advertising campaigns that would carry the old Bankhead forward in the public's mind as the Broadway of America.⁷³⁸ "The Broadway of America" was the product of an advertising campaign created for the Bankhead Highway.

Physical Evolution

The *Mohawk Hobbs Grade and Surface Guide* for the Bankhead Highway, which was published around 1926, outlined the pavement types along the entire Bankhead Highway from El Paso to Texarkana.⁷³⁹ (Refer to aforementioned *Figure 143*.) The guide notes that there are "beautiful paved streets" in El Paso, wide asphalt roads between El Paso and Fabens and an 18-foot-wide concrete road to the El Paso–Hudspeth county line. Gravel roads, or asphalt gravel roads, and high-speed gravel roads were located along much of the Bankhead through West Texas. Between Pecos and Baird, the total distance of the road was 264 miles of highway, and approximately 105 miles of this segment of road was denoted as "dirt," "gravelly dirt," "gravel-rough," and "to be graveled."⁷⁴⁰ East of Baird to Texarkana, the surfacing material consisted of moderate to high quality materials such as macadam, asphalt, brick, and concrete; only 36 miles of this 335-mile stretch of the Bankhead Highway was dirt. Road widths were not included in the guide, with the exception of the segment of road from Cisco to Ranger in Eastland County, which is noted as being an 18-foot-wide brick road.⁷⁴¹ (See *Figure 144*.)

Development Patterns

Once construction of the Bankhead Highway was complete, traffic far exceeded expectations. The Bureau of Public Roads initially estimated that about 200 cars per day would travel on the Texas segment of Bankhead.⁷⁴² However, in a 1927 study, Bureau of Public Roads officials found closer to 1,000 cars per day traveling on the road.⁷⁴³ In 1929, a study published in the *Abilene Morning News* counted one car per minute on Bankhead in Mitchell County (1,216 cars in 1,200 minutes), explicitly excluding local traffic from the count.⁷⁴⁴

Although the intended users of the Bankhead Highway ranged from farmers to the postal service to the military, in the 1920s the most ardent travelers on the highway were tourists.⁷⁴⁵ In 1923, the Garland Chamber of Commerce conducted a count of travel through town along the Bankhead Highway, and estimated that 75 percent of travelers stopped for gas, drinks, and food.⁷⁴⁶ As traffic increased along the

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Figure 144. Photograph showing a segment of brick road east of Cisco along E. 16th Street, 2013. The discovery of oil in Eastland County in the 1910s ushered in a period of unprecedented growth, wealth, and development. The influx of people and growth of businesses and oil-related industries dramatically increased land values and county coffers. Flush with new revenues, Eastland County embarked on an ambitious road building program that made use of locally manufactured brick paving. This stretch near Cisco is a well-maintained and preserved example of this trend and symbolizes the county's wealth and prosperity of the era. Photo by HHM.



Bankhead Highway, a real estate boom occurred on lots along or near the route.⁷⁴⁷ (See *Figure 145*.) Much of this new development targeted the growing number of tourists passing through these communities. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show that auto-oriented businesses immediately abutted the right-of-way in most urban settings. These businesses included entirely new building types and forms that catered to motorists and included gas stations, restaurants, and tourist courts. Hotels likewise became more prevalent and often were larger, grander, and far more opulent, such as the Baker Hotel in Mineral Wells constructed in 1925. Frequently, these new auto-oriented businesses were located at the intersection of two different alignments of the Bankhead Highway, or near the intersection of two highways, such as where the Bankhead Highway and the Puget Sound to Gulf Highway intersected at Big Spring.⁷⁴⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps also show concentrations of auto-oriented development in Abilene where the north and south routes of the Bankhead Highway (SH 1-A and SH 1-B) met, as well as in Fort Worth where the Bankhead Highway intersected the Meridian Highway. Garages, auto repair shops, and similar light-industrial and auto-oriented businesses often were located on land near the intersection of the highway and railroad line. (See *Figure 146*.) Proximity to railroads was also important for auto dealerships, which still received shipments of new automobiles via rail.⁷⁴⁹

In West Texas, traffic stimulated by the oil boom augmented tourist traffic. After the discovery of the McCleskey oilfield in Eastland County in 1917, growth in Ranger and Cisco boomed.⁷⁵⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps also show growth in other oil boom towns like Monahans in Ward County in the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁷⁵¹ The Bankhead Highway

Figure 145. Advertisement promoting real estate development in Big Spring along the newly-completed Bankhead Highway, 1923. Source: Big Spring Herald, "Note Well!" [advertisement], February 9, 1923, pg. 2, from <http://newspaperarchive.com/>.

NOTE WELL!

**WATER THAT HAS PASSED A WATER-WHEEL
NEVER PASSES THAT WAY AGAIN
— OPPORTUNITY**

Keep your EYE on THE BANKHEAD HIGHWAY; West of City, running for 1,400 feet thru what will soon be THE READ ALLOTMENT. That Addition will be the "I AM THAT I AM of this City; for it is planned that every lot will have a four-foot cement sidewalk in front of same; there is nothing in the City that will compare favorably with THE READ ALLOTMENT; on Sale later.

Have 400 acres only 1-2 mile East of City Limits for SALE. Fine for Dairy, Turkeys, Chickens, Plgs. Berries, Pecans, Potatoes, Tomatoes; a natural protection for livestock and fowls, as there is a grove of native trees near the water, and a fine location for a "bungalow."

See the lot jut North of the Episcopal Church, nicest location in City for a Home; sidewalk of cement and curb made.

See lots in Fairview Heights; this Addition adjoins the Grounds of the High School Building. Mr. E. O. Prichard lives in this Addition and will take pleasure in showing you any lot desired.

See lots opposite the residence of Joe Copeland in The Earle Addition; splendid for a Home.

See Blocks No. 54 and 55, on Second Street; full Blocks 300x300 feet; fine for Oil company, Lumber company, Cotton Mill; near trackage. Lease or sell.

It does not matter what kind of a Business you have I can please you with a LOCATION for same; and to encourage a Cotton Mill locating here can put them on 40 to 70 acres within the City Limits, where they will have sufficient room or space for "bungalows" for their employes, and convenient for trackage.

See the corner opposite the Court House and THE BANKHEAD HIGHWAY; 150x140 feet frontage; fine for any Business; look on West on the HIGHWAY, and put you up a "hot-dog" stand and small filling station; first chance, last chance; this will pay someone nicely.

See the Corner on West Second, where The Gulf Highway turns to the North; fine for a filling station.

See the high lots opposite Noble Read's residence; fine for two homes or a Church; grandest view in City.

See space next to George's Restaurant; 20 to 60 foot frontage.

For rent, 320 acres, one-half in City Limits; 160 acres plow-land, and 160 acres in pasture. Rent \$3.00 per acre for the plow-land, and I charge you nothing for the pasture; you keeping up the fencing. Live in City and plant whatever you may desire to plant: melons, canteloupes, cotton, potatoes, goobers, feed, etc. See me.

**THE WHEEL THAT DOES THE SQUEAKING, IS THE WHEEL
THAT GETS THE GREASE**

Listen to my SQUEAK; there is sure something good in sight for our City: A. & M. College in view, Cotton Mill (we must have one), Gulf Highway soon be in sight, need a four-story Apartment, a four-story Hotel, one hundred new homes, of small "bungalows," more Fords and less kicking.

H. CLAY REED, Agent. 200 WEST SECOND AND SCURRY

provided an indispensable transportation route for oilfield laborers and drilling supplies. In fact, in 1927, the Bankhead Highway was widened and new embankments constructed to accommodate traffic to oil wells near Midland.⁷⁵²

Despite the economic impact provided by the construction of the Bankhead Highway, some local residents along the route questioned its aesthetic impact. In 1925, the Bankhead National Highway Association appointed a women's commission to oversee highway beautification. The committee planted trees, shrubs, and flowers; helped to remove advertising signs, and erected commemorative markers.⁷⁵³ Local organizations and city governments supplemented this movement to

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Figure 146. Photograph showing a gas station and railroad tracks at the future location of the town of Pyote along SH 1, also marked as the Bankhead Highway, 1928. Source: Photo Collection, Texas Department of Transportation, on file at the Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.



beautify the Bankhead Highway. In 1927, for example, the Big Spring Chamber of Commerce filed a resolution opposing billboards.⁷⁵⁴ (See *Figure 147*.) The Howard County Home Garden Club also planted flowers and shrubs along the route.⁷⁵⁵ In some instances, though, landscaping efforts aimed to boost tourist business. In Garland, the public square was landscaped in order to present an attractive face to travelers and encourage them to stop.⁷⁵⁶

DEPRESSION, MOBILIZATION, AND WAR: 1933–1944

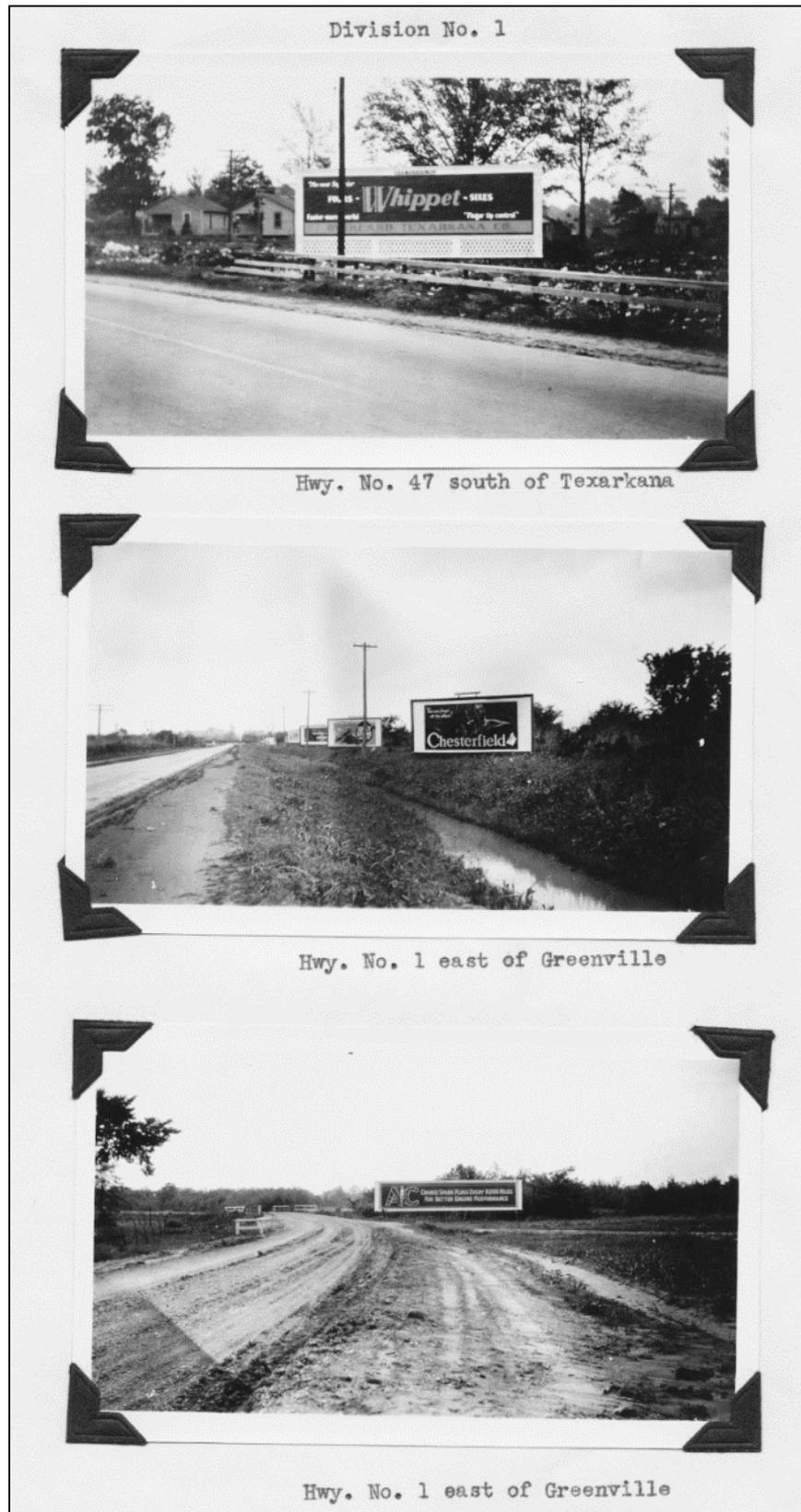
Historic Context

With the completion of the Bankhead Highway, the general route remained essentially unchanged through the Great Depression and war years, and, although a few proposals for relocations of the alignment through and around municipalities surfaced, they were not implemented. In the 1930s and early 1940s, the route west of Dallas was referred to interchangeably as US 80 or SH 1. To confuse things further, when discussed in reference to the Federal Aid Primary (F.A.P.) highway system, the route was called F.A.P. Route No. 1. When President Roosevelt's interest in the establishment of an interstate system became known in the early 1930s, individuals like John M. Hendrix of the Sweetwater Board of Development wrote to U.S. Senator Tom Connally to promote US 80 as one of the “super highways.”⁷⁵⁷ As a primary east–west thoroughfare and strategic military road, this period saw continued development and maintenance of the highway supported by federal aid. (Refer to *Figure 85* in previous Section I.5.)

In 1939, various changes were made along the route. In January, Alternate 80 was described as extending 36 miles westward from Breckenridge to Weatherford; the Texas Highway Commission made the re-description official in September.⁷⁵⁸ Perhaps by this time, the section

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Figure 147. Photographs showing various billboards in Hunt County (no date). These images are from a scrapbook that one of the regional offices of the Texas Highway Department compiled in the 1920s. The photographs show how early highway planners recognized the effects that such billboards could have on the driving experience. Source: Photo Collection, Texas Department of Transportation, on file at the Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.



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Figure 148. Photograph of US 80 through El Paso, ca. 1940. Note how the route traveled through the downtown business district, with grade-level railroad crossings. This image shows how the highway extended into densely developed and congested urban areas. Increased traffic over time led highway planners to begin designing and planning for new alternative routes that bypassed such areas in the future. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



of US 80 between Metcalf Gap and Weatherford was superseded by the new southerly loop of the highway between Weatherford and Strawn (on short-lived US 89).⁷⁵⁹ On September 26, 1939, the Commission described the route of US 80 as traveling from the Texas–Louisiana state line near Waskom to Longview, Gladewater, Mineola, Wills Point, Terrell, Dallas, Fort Worth (with an alternate route through the city), Weatherford, Ranger, Eastland, Cisco, Baird, Abilene, Sweetwater, Roscoe, Colorado City, Big Spring, Midland, Odessa, Monahans, Pecos, Toyah, Kent, Van Horn, Sierra Blanca, and El Paso to the Texas–New Mexico state line near Anthony (with alternate route through El Paso). Giving preference to the U.S. highway, the Commission reduced SH 1 to a small area in downtown Dallas from US 80 at Westmoreland Avenue to a point on the highway near the Dallas County Courthouse.⁷⁶⁰ The new Fort Worth alternate route followed from a point on US 80 at the intersection of Camp Bowie Boulevard and Montgomery Street via Lancaster Avenue to a point on US 80 at Commerce Street. The alternate route through El Paso followed Alameda Street and Texas Street to Oregon Street, then southward to San Antonio Street, westward on San Antonio Street to Davis Street, over Davis Street to the Smelter Road, and back to a point on US 80 (*Figure 148*).

At a special meeting in the spring of 1940, the Texas Highway Commission approved an alternate route for US 80 from El Paso to White Spur, nine miles to the west (even though the route was already in effect from the September 1939 meeting); they forwarded the request for approval to AASHO. With US 80's designation as a strategic military highway during mobilization efforts at the time, the U.S. Highway 80 Association, yet another automobile advocacy group,

initiated a campaign to inform the public on needed highway improvements.⁷⁶¹

In 1943, the Fort Worth alternate route was cancelled until the roadway was actually built.⁷⁶² At the same time, the US 80 Alternate (Breckenridge) was cancelled and part of the route re-assigned to US 180. Further, the alternate route at El Paso was removed from the description of US 80 and given its own designation as US 80 Alternate (El Paso).⁷⁶³ By mid-decade, the growing trend of the Texas Highway Department to promote bypasses as opposed to routes through towns and cities was clear when businessmen in Putnam opposed the highway's relocation from the center of town to a mile north.⁷⁶⁴

The east segment of US 67 generally followed the old Bankhead Highway from Dallas to Texarkana. The route extended from the Texas–Arkansas state line at Texarkana via Maud, Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Vernon, Sulphur Springs, Greenville, Rockwall, and Dallas following the historic path of the Bankhead Highway. At Dallas, US 67 continued southwest on its own path through West Texas. The old Bankhead Highway alignment extended on a more westerly route along US 80.

Physical Evolution

According to Texas Highway Commission meeting minutes and Bureau of Public Roads records, the Texas Highway Department completed several projects on the Bankhead Highway during 1933 to 1944. These projects included upgrading pavements to brick, concrete, and asphalt road types. These records note wider roadway widths for consistent two-way traffic. For example, Project NRM362 in Palo Pinto County noted an upgrade of the roadway to a 20-foot-wide roadway surface and a total roadway width of 36 feet (including curbs and 7.5-foot-wide shoulders).⁷⁶⁵ Another project in Colorado City, Texas, illustrates the upgrade of a wider urban section of roadway, where the asphalt wearing surface was 40 feet wide and the total roadway width was 55 feet wide.⁷⁶⁶ The Texas Highway Department also completed landscaping projects along the Bankhead Highway during this time, such as the landscaping in Bowie County, which used a variety of plants such as Honey Locust and roses.⁷⁶⁷ Additionally, roadside parks were constructed along the Bankhead Highway, such as the Wild Horse Roadside Park in Culberson County (no longer extant). (See *Figures 149* and *150*.) The roadside park had timber fencing, masonry walls, a fireplace, picnic tables, and several different types of plantings.⁷⁶⁸

Development Patterns

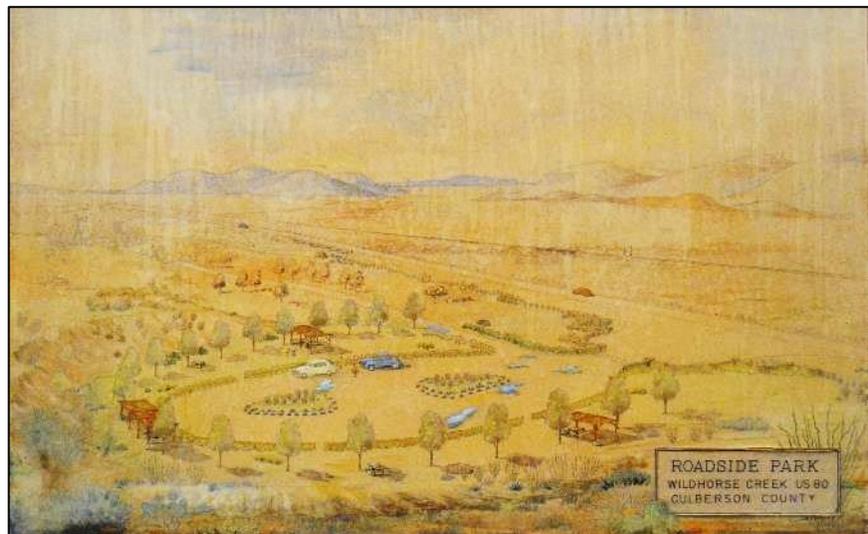
In the period from 1933 to 1944, the Bankhead Highway continued to be used to transport lumber in East Texas, agricultural products along

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Figure 149. Photograph of the Wild Horse roadside park in Culberson County, no date, no longer extant. Note the native plants and building materials. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



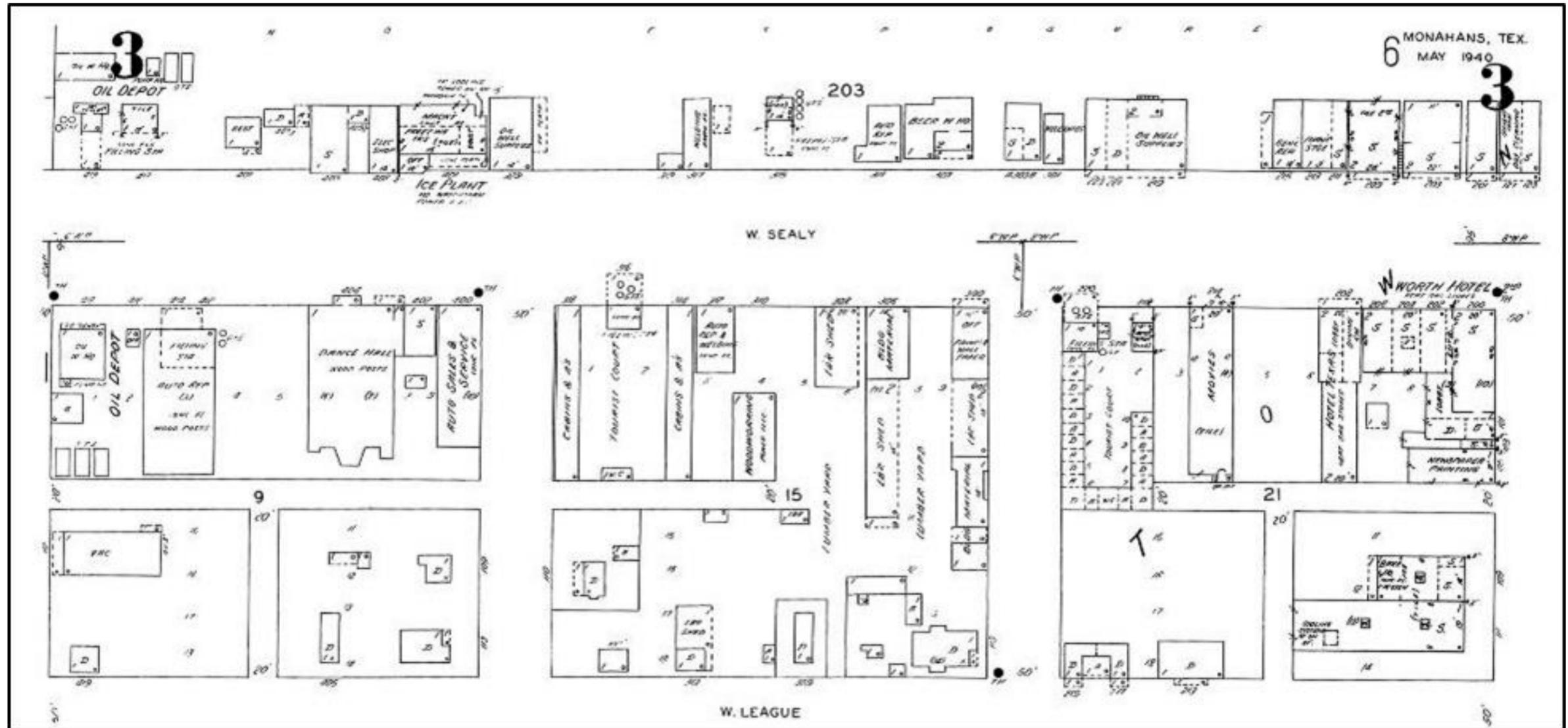
Figure 150. Watercolor painting of the Wild Horse roadside park also depicted in the photograph above. Source: Texas Department of Transportation Maintenance Facility, Van Horn, Texas.



the Blackland Prairie, and beef and petroleum products in West Texas.⁷⁶⁹ The late 1930s saw the continued growth of oil-related towns like Pecos, Odessa, Midland, and Monahans, where Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show intense auto- and tourist-oriented development along the Bankhead Highway. (See *Figure 151*.) The presence of the Bankhead Highway also spurred the growth of industry along the route, providing a means of transportation for receiving unprocessed goods and shipping finished products. In 1937, a carbon black plant opened along a segment of the Bankhead Highway in Monahans, further contributing to the town's growth and economic development.⁷⁷⁰ In the early 1940s, Fort Worth's industries included not only meatpacking, but also flour and feed mills, oil refineries, metalworking plants, garment factories, and cotton seed oil mills, all of which increasingly relied on the highway as a means to transport raw and finished goods.⁷⁷¹ Dallas' industries ranged from the manufacture of farm equipment and the distribution of cotton-processing machinery to finance and

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Figure 151. Detail of a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map depicting the Bankhead Highway/SH 1 (W. Sealy Avenue) through Monahans, Ward County, in 1940. Note the string of tourist courts, hotels, gas stations, and auto sales and service shops to cater to the motoring public. Source: Perry-Casteñeda Library, the University of Texas at Austin.



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Figure 152. Photograph of the Red River Army Depot during World War II, located along the Bankhead Highway in Texarkana, Bowie County. The Army trucks depicted in this photo illustrate the key role that motor vehicles and highways played in the war effort. Source: Rhonda Morrow, "Texarkana Top 10 Historic Events: No. 1: Red River Army Depot is established," *Texarkana Gazette*, <http://www.texarkanagazette.com/news/localnews/2009/06/10/texarkana-top-10-historic-events-no-1-re-66.php> (accessed April 2, 2014).



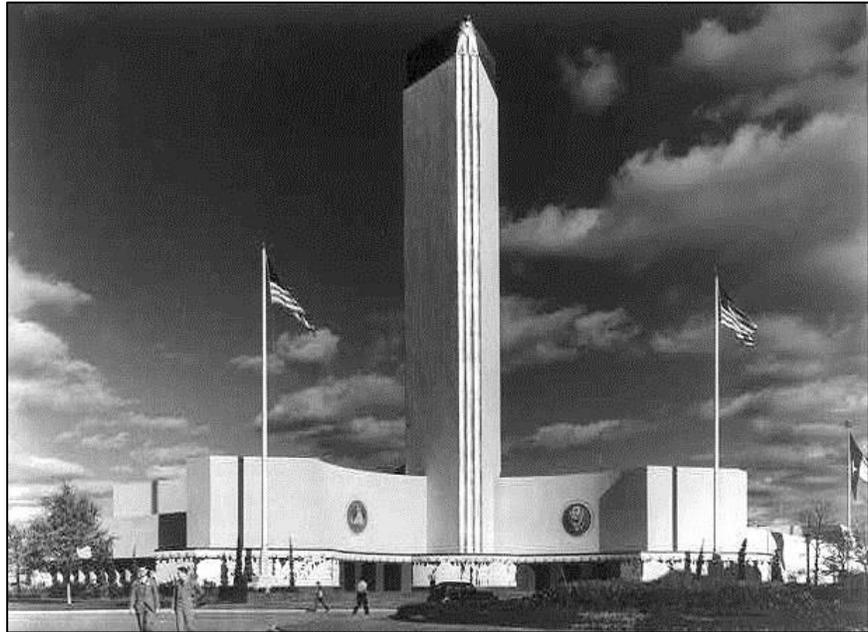
marketing.⁷⁷² In El Paso, the smelting of gold, silver, lead, and copper (from Arizona) became an important industry by ca. 1940.⁷⁷³ Other industries in the city included food packing plants, creameries, oil refineries, smelters, cotton gins, cotton seed mills, cement mills, railroad shops, and textile mills.⁷⁷⁴

Military traffic along the route also increased during the build-up prior to World War II. The existing World War I-era military installations located along the route, such as Fort Bliss and Camp Bowie, led to the Bankhead Highway's designation as a route of primary military importance. In turn, this designation led to the allocation of federal funds to improve and upgrade the highway and access roads, which also factored into decisions regarding the location for new military installations constructed during mobilization.⁷⁷⁵ Multiple examples exist along many segments of the Bankhead Highway. For example, the Red River Army Depot was constructed west of Texarkana in 1941 to store and supply ordnance for the Army (*Figure 152*).⁷⁷⁶ In Abilene, a new army post, Camp Barkley, was established in 1940. The U.S. Army began operations in 1941 at Hensley Field in Dallas, and North American Aviation began manufacturing military aircraft on an adjacent site at the same time.⁷⁷⁷ Hensley Field was designated Naval Air Station Dallas in 1943, signifying the site's increased military significance. In Fort Worth, by 1943, military installations included the U.S. Navy Seaplane Base, Eagle Mountain Lake Marine Corps Air Station, Hicks Field, Meacham Field, the U.S. Army Bombardier Field, and Tarrant Field – altogether causing a population increase of 177,662 between 1940 and 1943.⁷⁷⁸

The Bankhead Highway also played an important role in tourist travel in Texas in the 1930s, especially because the site of the Centennial

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Figure 153. Photograph of the Federal Building at the Texas Centennial Exhibition at Fair Park in Dallas. Source: Texas Centennial Exposition, Dallas, Texas: Federal exhibit building, photograph, from the Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2005694686/> (accessed May 7, 2013).



Exhibition in Dallas was located directly along the route. As early as 1933, local garden clubs began to beautify sections of the Bankhead Highway between Dallas and Fort Worth in preparation for the event.⁷⁷⁹ In 1936, the City of Dallas levied municipal bonds to renovate and expand the existing state fair grounds on the route of the Bankhead Highway to hold the exposition. Architects George L. Dahl and Paul Cret designed the street layout, landscaping, and 30 buildings and structures. Their conceptual design for the site used both formal, axial esplanades and curving auxiliary pathways, combining the City Beautiful ideals of urban planning popularized during the early twentieth century with the emerging popularity of more picturesque, curvilinear design concepts of the day. The accompanying buildings and structures were designed using the Spanish Romanesque and Art Deco architectural styles that were fashionable at the time (*Figure 153*).⁷⁸⁰

During the 1940s, historic sites and state parks drew tourists along the Bankhead Highway. Tourist guides from 1940 touted natural and historic resources, including the Spanish missions in the El Paso area at San Elizario, Socorro, and Ysleta.⁷⁸¹ Dude ranches also became popular, especially in the Big Bend area.⁷⁸² These and other tourist attractions also inspired roadside architecture, and Spanish Colonial Revival Style gas stations and tourist courts became common features along the Bankhead Highway in West Texas.

The statewide trend toward industrialization and urbanization was exemplified along the route of the Bankhead Highway as well. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of Dallas from 1940 show that industrial and commercial buildings replaced many previously residential areas along the highway. As jobs moved to the cities, the highway increasingly was

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Figure 154. Dangerous reverse curve and railroad crossing along US 67, west city limits of Texarkana, Bowie County. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.



used for commuter traffic, and by 1940, many residents of the area between Dallas and Fort Worth lived in rural areas but commuted into the cities for work, and over the years these farms evolved into suburbs.⁷⁸³ The DeGolyer Estate and Camp Estate—the current site of the Dallas Arboretum—exemplify this trend. These two properties are both located on the shore of White Rock Lake along Garland Road, the historic route of the Bankhead Highway. Prior to its purchase by Everette and Nell DeGolyer in 1939, the 44-acre property composing the DeGolyer Estate had been a dairy farm. The DeGolyers constructed a Spanish Colonial Revival house on the property, along with elaborate gardens.⁷⁸⁴ DeGolyer was a petroleum geologist and geophysicist who worked with numerous oil companies and government offices in downtown Dallas, likely commuting daily into downtown on the Bankhead Highway.⁷⁸⁵ On the 22-acre adjacent site, Dallas lawyer Alex S. Camp and his wife, Roberta Coke Camp, built an 8,500-square-foot house in 1938. The house was designed by noted Houston architect John Staub to accommodate the couple's social and philanthropic events.⁷⁸⁶

Prior to 1940, the route of the Bankhead Highway still extended through historic city centers and downtowns, but by the early 1940s, a new trend in urban design and highway planning trend emerged that led to the construction of bypass routes in densely populated and developed areas.⁷⁸⁷ The priority of the Texas Highway Department was to improve safety, and by about 1940, the agency produced numerous photographs documenting congested and unsafe conditions where the highway passed through downtowns. (See *Figures 154, 155, and 156.*) For the most part, though, realignment projects aimed at improving these conditions were put on hold following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor until the conclusion of World War II. One exception was the section of US 67 between Rockwall County Line and Dallas, which was

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Figure 155. US 67. Narrow roadway and railway through Redwater. Many photos are stamped with a Reproduction date of October 1940. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.



Figure 156. Undated photograph showing the route of the Bankhead Highway (US 67) through downtown Mount Pleasant, taken some time prior to 1940. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.



realigned in 1942 in order to eliminate substandard railroad crossings and bypass downtown Garland.⁷⁸⁸

POSTWAR ROAD EXPANSION: 1945–1956

Historic Context

In the postwar era, the old Bankhead Highway route in Texas was primarily maintained along US 67 and US 80, and many segments were incorporated into the new U.S. highway system. Most changes were made in urban areas to accommodate the highway system's evolution into freeways and urban expressways. The most important developments in the physical evolution of the Bankhead Highway during

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Figure 157. Photograph illustrating the alignment of US 80 as it directly approached downtown Dallas from the east, 1942. Source: Arthur Rothstein, "View of Dallas, Texas, going eastward on U.S. Highway 80," Prints and Photographs Collection, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000006434/PP/> (accessed April 2, 2014).



the period were related to preliminary plans to integrate the roadway into the still-evolving concept of the Interstate Highway System. However, most of the plans relied on the alignment of existing highways.

The Texas Highway Department began considering the routing and alignment of US 80 in relationship to the proposed interstate system shortly after the enactment of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 in December of that year. By March 1945, Bureau of Public Roads Division Engineer J. A. Elliott, whose jurisdiction included the state of Texas, expressed the Department's desire to have the new interstate cross the Louisiana–Texas state line near the location where US 80 crossed the border.⁷⁸⁹ In May, Elliott summarized a telephone conversation with State Highway Engineer Greer regarding the interstate. Per Greer, representatives from Fort Worth and Dallas were generally in favor of routing an interstate along US 80.⁷⁹⁰ Fort Worth representatives were already willing to furnish the required right-of-way in some areas. In Dallas, however, there was some question as to how the interstate might be routed through the downtown area (*Figure 157*). Dallas city officials also wanted an interstate to go around Fair Park; however, the Texas Highway Department opposed such a route. Meanwhile, various improvement projects continued on the highway. For example, a Department grading crew added 10-foot gravel shoulders to what was still being called the Bankhead Highway between Merkel and Trent in the spring of 1945.⁷⁹¹

Not all Texans supported the interstate route; a May 1946 advertisement by the Highway Information Committee likened an expressway through Fort Worth on Lancaster Avenue (US 80/180) to an

atomic bomb.⁷⁹² (Refer to *Figure 105* in previous Section I.6.) That routing would necessitate demolition of three to four miles of a heavily commercial and industrial area, including at least 66 businesses and the Bowen Bus Terminal. The local Highway Information Committee presented lists as to why Fort Worth did not want or need the express highway as well as a list of “hidden costs and reckless destruction” that the project would bring. They were concerned that the express highway would be “a single enormous over-rated project which would be of no service at all to many parts of the city. . . .”⁷⁹³

In the summer of 1946, the Public Works Agency of the Public Roads Administration conducted a “Location Inspection” of US 80 in Howard, Mitchell, Nolan, Taylor, Callahan, and Eastland counties.⁷⁹⁴ The inspection considered adjacent development, other highway connections, urban routes, and railroad and stream crossings. Further, L. S. Coy, lead engineer with the agency, and the other inspectors proposed several improvements on the highway in anticipation of future interstate requirements. Surveys such as these along the entire route informed the routing of the possible interstate highway on the US 80 alignment.

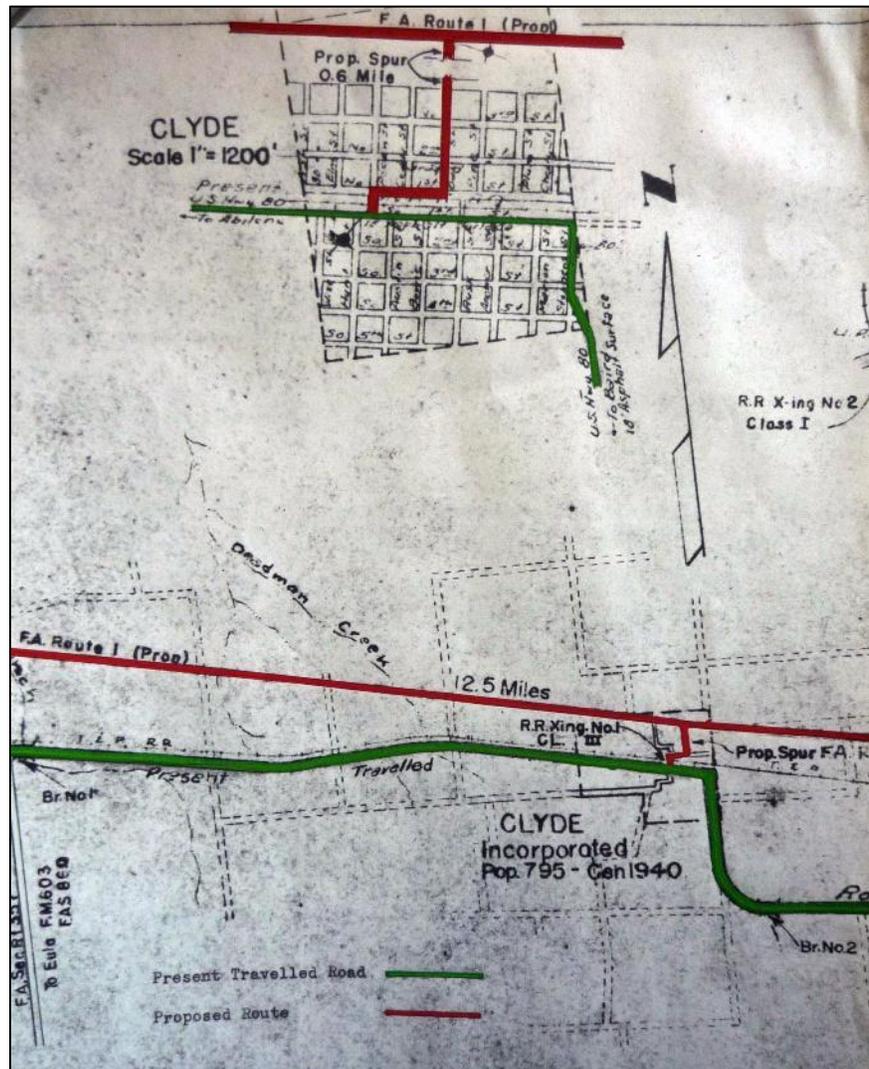
By April 1947, the Public Roads Administration determined that the interstate highway should follow US 80 west of Fort Worth via Weatherford, Cisco, Abilene, Sweetwater, Big Spring, Midland, and on to El Paso. The interstate highway would not include US 180 (former US 80A – the route from Weatherford through Mineral Wells, Breckenridge, and Albany to Abilene), but the alternate route would remain on the Federal Aid System.⁷⁹⁵

The proposed highway, however, did feature a spur at Greenville as well as loops at Cisco, Baird, and Roscoe. In 1947, a proposed re-routing of the highway north of Clyde necessitated the addition of a 0.6-mile spur to connect the proposed and former routes of the highway and to provide the city with a traffic outlet to the proposed route of F.A.P. Route No. 1.⁷⁹⁶ (See *Figure 158*.) In 1948, the Department was promoting continued upgrading of US 80 through various work projects – grade separations, a railroad track depression, and street widening for extra traffic lanes.⁷⁹⁷

In the early 1950s, the Texas Highway Department continued improvements and activity on the proposed interstate. In January 1950, the Texas Highway Commission accepted a bid for pavement widening and drainage on a 0.9-mile stretch of US 80 in Midland.⁷⁹⁸ On August 20, 1952, through Minute Order No. 32494, the Commission cancelled the remaining portion of what the agency still called SH 1 in downtown Dallas (from the Oak Cliff subdivision to the Dallas County Courthouse), re-designating and renumbering the alignment as State Loop (SL) 260, a U.S. business route of US 80.⁷⁹⁹

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Figure 158. Drawing illustrating a proposed spur at Clyde, Texas, connecting US 80 and proposed F.A.P. Route No. 1. This image shows the growing trend of planning for and constructing spurs and loops that bypassed commercial centers of all-sized cities during the postwar era. Source: Box No. 2987-88, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912-50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



With the upgrades for the future interstate, the Bankhead Highway, as some Texans still referred to the route, remained a vital roadway through many Texas cities. Postcards from ca. 1950 of downtown Sweetwater depict a vibrant downtown with ample angled parking along Broadway Street, the local city street on which this “Broadway of America” was routed.⁸⁰⁰

Upon the 25th anniversary of the Bankhead’s completion, contemporary newspaper and magazine articles featured nostalgic recollections of the old Bankhead Highway while boasting its modern amenities and status as the “only all-weather, all-year highway in the nation that goes from coast to coast,” as well as plans for “expressway-type thoroughfares” on some sections of the highway.⁸⁰¹ In some areas such as Taylor County, local governments held bond elections for funds to buy the right-of-way to modernize the Bankhead Highway through

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Figure 159. Photograph of an existing section of US 80 in West Texas that would need upgrading to meet new standards for the Interstate Highway System, 1953. Source: Richard M. Morehead, "Bankhead's Broadway Through Texas," *Texas Parade*, vol. 14, no. 4 (October 1953), Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.



expansion and, sometimes, realignment.⁸⁰² Still, the Texas Highway Department was cautious, warning that it would take the Department's entire construction budget for one year to put the entire route of the highway into "first class condition" because most of it should be four lanes wide.⁸⁰³ In particular, the Department called for improvements needed in the Dallas metropolitan area, in Marshall, through the Longview-Gladewater oil district, and around El Paso. By 1955, work was underway for a four-lane freeway near Colorado City along US 80.⁸⁰⁴

Physical Evolution

Some sections of the former Bankhead Highway route were encompassed into or bypassed by other roads, such as US 67 and US 80, which were in some instances upgraded from two-lane roadways to four-lane undivided and divided highways. However, there were still several sections of the former Bankhead route that were two-lane highways. In a 1953 *Texas Parade* article, author Richard Morehead noted that bringing the former Bankhead Highway's entire route up to 1950s standards (e.g., a four-lane divided highway) would cost more than the entire Texas Highway Department's annual budget (*Figure 159*).⁸⁰⁵

Articles written during the 1944 to 1955 period documented what the road looked like at the time, particularly west of Dallas. Morehead stated that traffic counts within Dallas were 20,000 vehicles a day on the road, and approximately 13,000 vehicles a day used the road between Dallas and Fort Worth, creating significant congestion along the highway. Morehead noted that the construction of a new toll road between the two cities may help to relieve the congestion. Between Ranger and Eastland, a nine-mile segment of the roadway was in the process of being realigned.⁸⁰⁶ Another *Texas Parade* article published in 1948 noted that reconstruction and widening projects were underway between Cisco and Sweetwater.⁸⁰⁷ Morehead's 1953 account noted that between the oil-rich cities of Midland and Odessa, the four-lane divided

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Figure 160. Photograph of route of US 80 through Abilene, looking west on South 1st Street at Poplar Street, ca. 1946. The highway extended along a path that paralleled the T&P Railway (visible on the right side of the image). The highway contained a relatively dense collection of gas stations, tourist courts, motels restaurants, and drive-ins that catered to travelers. Source: Boxes 2986-3017 - Corresp. FAS (Federal Aid) Tex., 1918–1948. Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads. National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



highway was “a source of pride to the highway department.”⁸⁰⁸ In West Texas, Morehead stated that traffic volumes between Pecos and El Paso did not warrant an upgrade of the roadway; however, as traffic approached Fabens in El Paso County from the southeast, traffic volumes grew considerably. While congestion in El Paso along US 80 was significant, the road was situated directly adjacent to trees (perhaps orchards) and irrigation canals that made the acquisition of additional right-of-way expensive.⁸⁰⁹ This section of US 80 was highlighted by another author’s 1952 article due to its high accident rate, and was used as an example of why four-lane divided roads were imperative to travelers’ safety.⁸¹⁰

Development Patterns

As the postwar economy of Texas grew, so did traffic on the Bankhead Highway.⁸¹¹ In 1946, a Bureau of Public Roads study investigating the need to widen and realign US 80 cited the presence of industries along the route, especially oil in West Texas (*Figure 160*).⁸¹² New oil fields in the Permian Basin accounted for much of this growth. Prior to World War II, drilling for oil in the Permian Basin was not economically feasible, in part, because the cost of transporting oil from the remote location was so high. In World War II, the demand for oil escalated to a point that made drilling in the Permian Basin worthwhile. With infrastructure for exploration and drilling in place, oil production in the area increased rapidly in the postwar years, and Midland and Odessa boomed.⁸¹³ Midland’s population increased from 9,352 in 1940 to 21,713 in 1950, and to 62,625 by 1960. Odessa’s population rose from 9,573 in 1940 to 29,495 in 1950, and would continue to rise to 80,338 by 1960.⁸¹⁴

The explosive growth of military installations, military-industrial complexes, and associated residential suburbs in the Dallas–Fort Worth metropolitan area furthered the need for expansion of the highway.⁸¹⁵

For example, during World War II, military aircraft plants were constructed in the Dallas and Fort Worth areas. After the war, these plants continued to manufacture both commercial and military aircraft, and the surrounding communities grew.⁸¹⁶ The Bureau of Public Roads had recognized the need to expand the Bankhead Highway in these metropolitan areas as early as 1946, when they proposed constructing controlled-access divided highways on new alignments to improve the Bankhead Highway and the Meridian Highway (US 81/377) through Fort Worth.⁸¹⁷ Construction of the expressway stalled until 1949, though, partly because of opposition from local business owners.⁸¹⁸

By the mid-1950s, residential suburbs had developed along the path of the Bankhead Highway outside cities and population centers across the state, as shown by United States Geological Survey (USGS) maps. Examples included Wake Village west of Texarkana; subdivisions surrounding White Rock Lake east of Dallas; throughout Grand Prairie and Arlington between Dallas and Fort Worth; on the western edge of Abilene; as well as Hacienda Heights, Del Norte Heights, and Lakeside east of El Paso; and Mission Hills and Coronado Hills west of El Paso. Most of these followed street patterns typical of the postwar curvilinear suburb.

EFFECTS OF THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1957–1980

Physical Evolution

During this period, parts of the Bankhead Highway route were subsumed into the interstate system. In West Texas, most of the route became part of IH 10 or paralleled IH 10 from El Paso to the juncture of IH 10 and IH 20, east of Kent. From that location, many sections of the old Bankhead Highway route became part of or paralleled IH 20 through Odessa, Midland, Big Spring, and Abilene. Between Weatherford and Fort Worth, the Bankhead Highway became part of IH 30 and continued eastward through or near Dallas, Greenville, and Sulphur Springs. At Mount Pleasant, IH 30 deviated from the old Bankhead alignment and continued along a more northerly route and extended along a segment of US 82. The segment of US 67 between Mount Pleasant and Texarkana was not part of the Interstate Highway System and remained as US 67. (Refer to *Figure 117* in previous Section I.7.) The portions of the Bankhead Highway that were incorporated into the interstates followed the AASHO's design guidelines noted earlier in this section.⁸¹⁹ In particular, along IH 20 east of Big Spring, the roadway was widened from 22 to 24 feet with two travel lanes in each direction, paved shoulders, and a 40-foot median. The right-of-way for this segment was 260 feet.⁸²⁰ (See *Figure 161*) The route along state highways would likely be two- or four-lane highways, and the alignment on local streets would likely be two-lane or four-lane streets. Where the Bankhead

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Figure 161. This photograph from the May 1961 *Texas Highways* magazine shows a section of IH 20 in West Texas. Note the wide center grassy median and shoulders on the outside edge of pavement, both typical of interstate design in the 1950s. Source: Good Roads Association Collection, Box 11, Folder 10, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, College Station, Texas.



Highway follows US 67, it would have likely been a four-lane divided highway particularly by 1980.

Development Patterns

As expressways and, ultimately, interstate highways were completed along the route of the Bankhead Highway, new urban growth ensued. The earliest section of expressway along the Bankhead Highway, the Dallas–Fort Worth Turnpike, was completed in 1957. As the expressway skirted downtown Dallas and Fort Worth to the south, new skyscrapers were constructed in the heart of downtown. With fewer stops and faster speeds, the expressway also made the commute into Dallas and Fort Worth easier, which encouraged increased suburbanization and sprawl.⁸²¹ The fastest-growing areas along the Bankhead Highway in the late 1950s and early 1960s were also connected by this stretch of expressway, including suburban cities like Grand Prairie and Arlington, where new residential subdivisions following the postwar curvilinear suburb pattern sprung up along the highway.⁸²²

Commuters were not the only source of growth, though; the confluence of highway access, railroad access, available land, and labor supply also allowed industry to grow in these areas. Cold War-era military production of aircraft and missiles continued at the World War II-era North American Aviation facility at the Grand Prairie–Dallas city limits, which was taken over by Chance–Vought Aircraft and later by other aviation-related businesses.⁸²³ In Arlington, a General Motors assembly plant began operations in 1954, and the Great Southwest Industrial District opened in 1956. (See *Figure 162*.) Over the next several decades, the industrial park hosted the operations of companies including Commercial Tooling, which manufactured aircraft components; the ARA Corporation, which manufactured air conditioning equipment; U.S. Steel; Contemporary Office Furnishings, Inc.; and numerous others.⁸²⁴ As the Interstate Highway System was constructed, intercity travel increased along the route, and tourist attractions developed in response. The Dallas Cowboys football team incorporated in 1960, playing at the Cotton Bowl, right on the historic route of the Bankhead Highway.⁸²⁵ In 1961, the Six Flags over Texas

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Figure 162. General Motors 1960s, Photograph, no date. The construction of this plant in Arlington proved to be a boon to the local economy. The plant was strategically located on the old Bankhead Highway route and abutted the Southern Pacific Railroad, which enabled the shipment of raw goods and finished products by both truck and rail. Source: <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph65049/m1/1/sizes/> (accessed May 23, 2013), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Arlington Public Library and Fielder House, Arlington, Texas.



amusement park opened with roller coasters that were visible from the highway to lure tourists. The success of Six Flags marked the park as one of the best examples of a tourist attraction of its day, and the planners of HemisFair in San Antonio fashioned many aspects of the design of the World's Fair site after Six Flags.⁸²⁶

In West Texas, the petroleum industry continued to prosper, especially in Midland and Odessa.⁸²⁷ US 80 extended through historic downtowns of both cities. By 1957, downtown Midland boasted high-rise office towers with over a million square feet of space that served as home to over 450 petroleum companies.⁸²⁸ The building boom, combined with the construction of IH 20, drove up the demand for concrete, leading to the construction of a new concrete plant in Odessa in 1958.⁸²⁹ The availability of locally manufactured concrete no doubt contributed to its widespread use as a building material, and the downtowns of Midland and Odessa feature excellent examples of modern and contemporary architecture showcasing architectural elements made possible by the use of reinforced concrete, such as cantilevers and organic, curving building forms. (See *Figure 163*.) In the late 1960s, IH 20 was constructed to the south of downtown Midland and Odessa. In 1966, the City of Midland annexed land along the interstate right-of-way in order to have zoning authority over roadside development.⁸³⁰

In the 1970s, energy production along the route of the Bankhead Highway expanded to include coal production in Coleman and Erath counties, as well as the Monticello Mine in Titus County.⁸³¹ The area encompassing the Monticello Mine lay on either side of the historic route of the Bankhead Highway, and USGS topographic maps show the

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Figure 163. Postcard of downtown Midland, no date. Source: <http://www.cardcow.com/238847/downtown-midland-skyline-texas/> (accessed May 23, 2013).



loss of roadside buildings along the historic highway between Mount Pleasant and Winfield in the vicinity of the Monticello Mine.⁸³²

CONCLUSION

Since its designation by the Texas Highway Department as SH 1 in 1917, the Bankhead Highway has been known by a variety of names. All or parts of this roadway have been known or designated as SH 1, SH 1A Broadway of America, US 67, US 80, US 80A, US 180, IH 10, IH 20, and IH 30. Nonetheless, one aspect of its history has remained constant since its creation; the highway has been one of the most important transportation corridors in the state's history and it continues to play an important role in its economy and future development. Many segments continue to serve interstate tourists and commercial traffic, while other sections now cater to a more localized market. The associated built environment reflects this rich history. While some of the buildings and structures continue to be used in their original capacity, others have been repurposed, abandoned or even demolished. The survivors represent a rich legacy in the history of the state and highway transportation.

⁷¹⁴ Chipman, *Spanish Texas: 1519–1821*, pp. 62, 106.

⁷¹⁵ Capt. R. B. Marcy. *Map of the Country between the Frontiers of Arkansas and New Mexico, embracing the section explored in 1849, '50, '51 & '52* (U.S. War Department), from the Historic Map Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Map # 1025.

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⁷¹⁶ Jackson, *Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road Surveys and Construction*, p. 38.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.

⁷¹⁸ Smith, *The U.S. Army and the Texas Frontier Economy*, p. 157.

⁷¹⁹ John Allison Rickard. *The Cattle Ranch Industry of the Texas South Plains* (master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1927), pp. 95–97.

⁷²⁰ J.H. Colton & Co., *Colton's New Map of the State of Texas*, 1858, From the Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, map # 0445a, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=0445a> (accessed January 22, 2013).

⁷²¹ *Texas New Yorker's Railroad Map of Texas*, 1874, Map, From the Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, map # 0945, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=0945> (accessed January 22, 2013).

⁷²² *Municipal Journal*, October 19, 1916, Vol. XLI, no. 16, p. 503.

⁷²³ *Railroad and County Map of Texas*, December 1893, Map (Chicago: Rand McNally Co., Inc., 1892 [sic]), from the Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, map # 7878, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=1688> (accessed January 3, 2013).

⁷²⁴ Martin, Robert L., *The City Moves West: Economic and Industrial Growth in Central West Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969): 25.

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⁷²⁷ "Site of Thurber Brick Plant," Official Texas Historical Marker Text and Application, submitted to the Texas Historical Commission, 1994.

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⁷²⁹ North Bishop Avenue Commercial Historic District National Register Nomination, submitted the National Register of Historic Places, 2004, on file at the Texas Historical Commission, http://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/viewform.asp?atlas_num=2094000607&site_name=Kessler%20Park%20Historic%20District&class=2001 (accessed May 3, 2013).

⁷³⁰ William R. Hunt, "MINERAL WELLS, TX," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hem04> (accessed April 22, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁷³¹ "City of Arlington," Official Texas Historical Marker Text and Application, submitted to the Texas Historical Commission, 2004-2006.

⁷³² *Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1917, p. 18; *ibid.*, June 3, 1917, part 4, p. 9.

⁷³³ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, pp. 19–21.

⁷³⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, February 15, 1918, p. 3; *ibid.*, April 18, 1919, pp. 1–2; *ibid.*, April 27, 1919, Automobile Section, p. 1.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, May 27, 1921, p. 2.

⁷³⁶ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 2, pp. 75, 290.

⁷³⁷ A. H. Belo Corporation, *The Texas Almanac*, pp. 316–317.

⁷³⁸ *Big Spring Herald*, February 9, 1931, p. 1; *Dallas Morning News*, October 17, 1926, part 6, p. 2; *ibid.*, September 11, 1927, part 3, p. 2; November 14, 1927, part 2, p. 12; December 16, 1927, part 1, p. 11; July 11, 1930, part 1, p. 10; *The Big Spring Herald*, June 24, 1927, p. 18; *ibid.*, July 29, 1927, p. 1.

⁷³⁹ One reference in the *Mohawk-Hobbs Grade and Surface Guide* notes that a section of the Bankhead Highway will be open in the spring of 1926. Therefore, it is assumed this publication dates to around 1925.

⁷⁴⁰ *Mohawk-Hobbs Grade and Surface Guide* (New York: The Mohawk Rubber Company, 1926), T. Lindsay Baker Files, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas, 5–6.

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⁷⁵¹ Glenn Justice, “MONAHANS, TX,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfm05> (accessed April 17, 2013).

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⁷⁵³ *Dallas Morning News*, “Plan to Complete Beautification of Bankhead Highway,” January 18, 1925, part 4, p. 6, from <http://www.proquest.com>.

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⁷⁵⁵ *Big Spring Herald*, “Garden Club Hears Talk on Flower Boxes,” May 8, 1931, p. 5, from <http://newspaperarchive.com/>.

⁷⁵⁶ “Bankhead Highway through Garland.”

⁷⁵⁷ John M. Hendrix to Tom Connally, January 21, 1934, Box 3011, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

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⁷⁶⁰ Minute Order no. 16701, September 26, 1939.

⁷⁶¹ “On Texas Highways,” *Texas Parade*, volume 5, no. 6 (November 1940): 30.

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