

II.2. MERIDIAN HIGHWAY (SH 2) – US 81 – IH 35/35W

INTRODUCTION

The Meridian Highway historically has been the major north–south named highway in Texas since the early 1910s. As originally conceived by the International Meridian Road Association in 1911, it stretched from Canada to Mexico, extending through the nation’s mid-section and the expansive Great Plains region. It initially was planned to enter Texas near Burkburnett and continued south through Wichita Falls, Bowie, Fort Worth, Cleburne, Waco, Austin, San Antonio and Laredo. A major lateral, called the Gulf Division, was planned to extend from Waco to Galveston, passing through Marlin, Bryan, Hempstead, and Houston. (See *Figure 164*.) With the creation of the Texas Highway Department in 1917, the Meridian Highway in Texas was designated as SH 2, signifying that the Texas Highway Commission deemed it to be the state’s second most important highway at the time, after the Bankhead Highway (SH 1). The adoption of the AASHO interstate highway numbering plan added another designation layer onto the Meridian Highway: US 81. That name, rather than SH 2, has endured over time. However, US 81 did not follow the route proposed by the Meridian Road Association precisely. The creation of US 81 in Texas excluded the Wichita Falls–Bowie leg, which was renamed as US 277 and, later, US 370. The Gulf Division also was excluded from the route of US 81; instead, it became SH 6 and, later, US 75. After enactment of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, most of US 81 became IH 35/IH 35W between Fort Worth, Hillsboro and Laredo. The northern most segment of US 81 between Ringgold and Fort Worth was not incorporated into the Interstate Highway System, though. Nonetheless, much of the alignment associated with the Meridian Highway in Texas is now part of IH 35/IH 35W, one of the nation’s busiest interstate highways, and provides a vital trade link to the bordering nations of Mexico and Canada. The highway additionally continues further north and south as part of the Pan-American Highway that stretches from Alaska to Argentina.

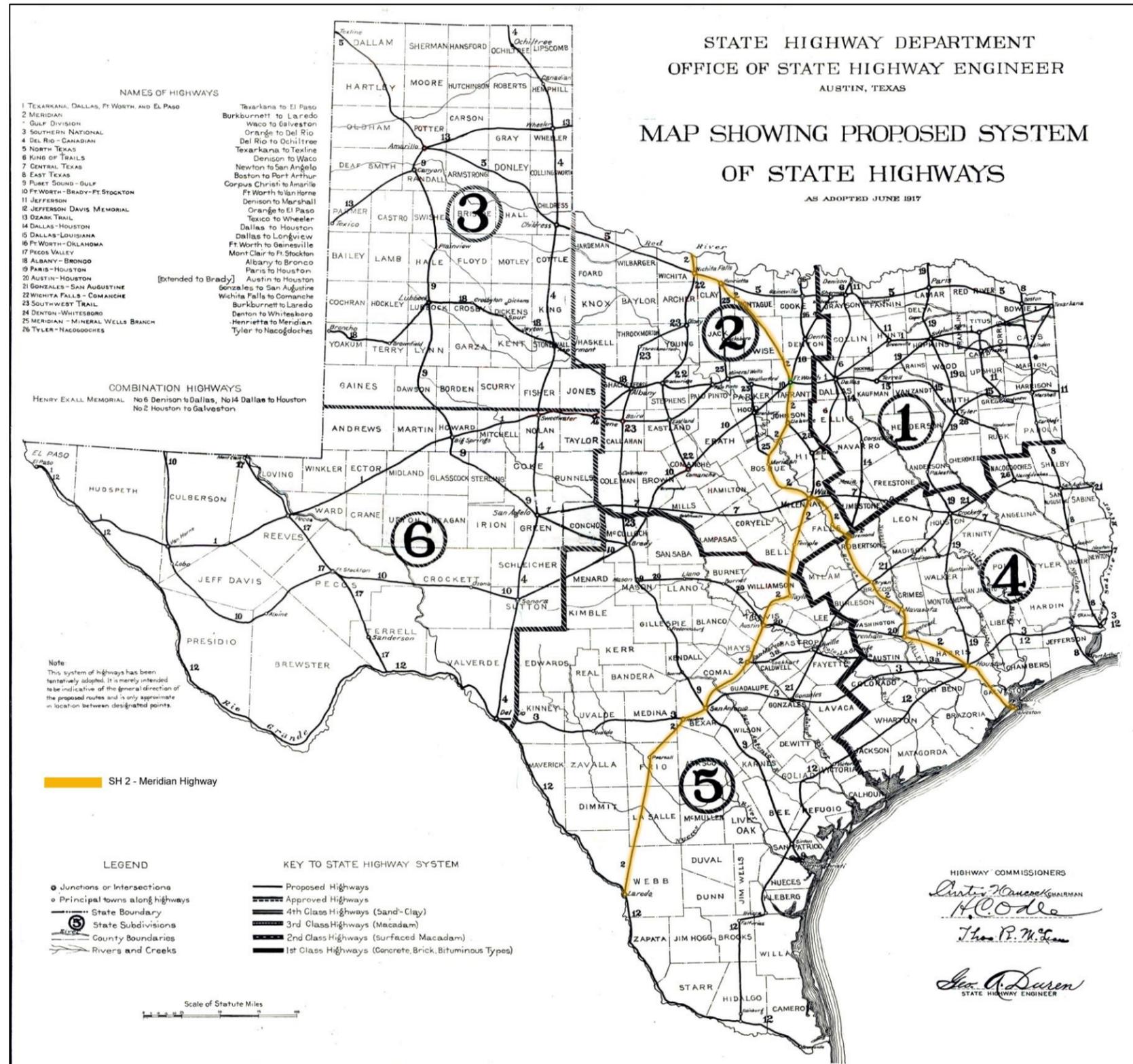
The Meridian Highway has a rich history and generally follows a centuries-old path through the center of the state. Portions of what eventually became the Meridian Highway likely developed from Native American paths that Spanish explorers subsequently used and expanded. Portions of this path later evolved into the Republic of Texas’ Military Road, which U.S. Army survey parties further improved between 1848 and 1860. During the famous cattle drive era after the Civil War, this general route became a major path used to take cattle to northern markets. Since the dawn of the automobile era, the Meridian Highway has been a vital part of the state’s highway network and a conduit of interstate and even international travel through Texas.

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Figure 164. Edited version of the "Map Showing Proposed System of State Highways," 1917, highlighting the route of the Meridian Highway/SH 2.
Source: Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/cgibin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=6254> (accessed February 21, 2014).



EARLY TEXAS ROADS AND TRAILS: 1680–1880

Historic Context

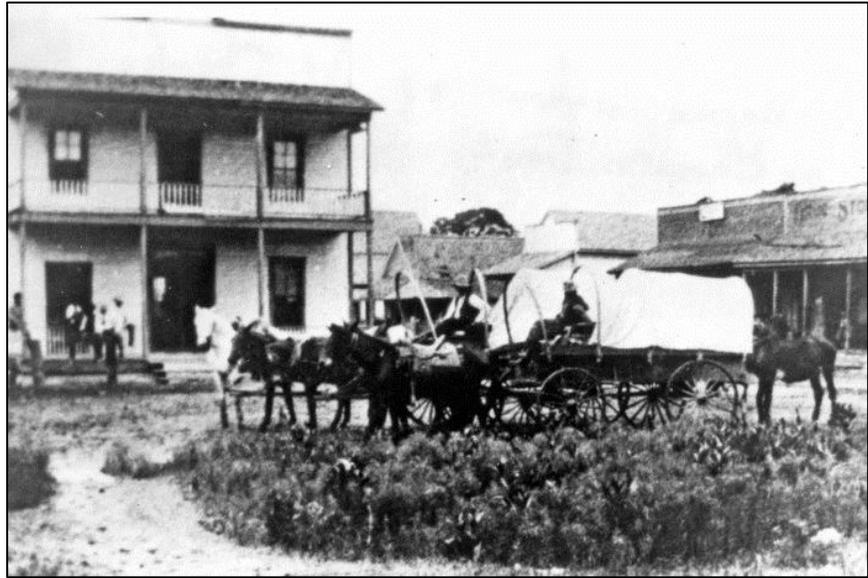
In 1691, Domingo Terán de los Riós crossed the Rio Grande at Paso de Francia, near present-day Eagle Pass, headed north to the future site of San Antonio, and on to the Guadalupe and the Colorado rivers near Austin.⁸³³ Terán's route established a trail to the future site of San Antonio and the Old San Antonio Road (El Camino Real) to East Texas, portions of which may have included sections along or near the Meridian Highway. The Espinosa–Olivares–Aguirre group was one of the first missionary groups to explore Texas from San Juan Bautista, Mexico. In 1709, this party traveled to the future site of San Antonio and scouted north to the Colorado River⁸³⁴ on a path near, or within a few miles of, what later became the Meridian Highway. Cattle and sheep rancher José Vásquez Borrego crossed the Rio Grande near Laredo in 1750, and in 1755 an officer under command of José de Escandón established Laredo.⁸³⁵ Within a few years, a route from San Antonio to Laredo connected the two towns. Portions of the route between San Antonio south to the Atascosa River later may have evolved into the Meridian Highway. The journey of Pierre (Pedro) Vial from San Antonio to Santa Fe in 1786 meandered north to the vicinity of Waco, and portions of his route may have been extended along, or near the path of, the Meridian Highway. The Republic of Texas Military Road (the Preston Road) connected San Patricio with Preston on the Red River. Portions of the route from San Antonio to near Waco are part of, or within a few miles of, the route of the Meridian Highway. In 1849 to 1850, Lieutenant Nathan Michler conducted a survey from Preston through Dallas and Austin to San Antonio. Sections of his route follow a path that later became the Meridian Highway. Even the early north–south cattle trails linking South Texas to markets in Missouri, Kansas, and elsewhere likewise illustrate the importance of this route as a major north–south corridor in Texas. The Driskill–Day Trail, in use prior to the Civil War, ran from Hays County north to Sedalia, Missouri, and became part of the Chisholm and Shawnee trails. Sections of these trails extended along, or within a few miles of, what became the Meridian Highway.

Development Patterns

Some of the earliest settlements in Texas were linked by a north–south trail that later evolved into the Meridian Highway. In North Texas, Gainesville developed as a stagecoach stop in the 1830s, and it is likely that the stage route south to San Antonio resembled the future path of much of the Meridian Highway (see *Figure 165*).⁸³⁶ Further south, a trail linking the settlements from San Antonio to Laredo was present by 1841.⁸³⁷ By 1858, *Colton's New Map of the State of Texas* illustrated a trail closely following the Meridian Highway's route. (Refer to *Figure*

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Figure 165. Photograph showing a stagecoach in front of a hotel in Round Rock, Williamson County, ca. 1860. Scenes such as this would have been typical in Gainesville and other towns with stagecoach stops at the time. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texas.history.unt.edu/ark:/67531/met.aph159983/citation/> (accessed April 2, 2014), crediting The Williamson Museum, Georgetown, Texas.



138 in previous Section II.1.) At that time, settlements noted on the map that existed where the Meridian Highway eventually developed included Fort Worth, Hillsboro, Waco, Belton, Georgetown, Austin, San Marcos, New Braunfels, San Antonio, and Laredo.⁸³⁸

The road network in Texas continued to evolve slowly; however, the railroad construction boom that began during the Reconstruction Period and continued into the twentieth century had a profound effect on transportation in Texas. This system later influenced the development of the Meridian Highway and other highways in the state. Railroads emanating from Houston and Galveston extended into the state's richest and most fertile agricultural lands and served cities that later were on the Meridian Highway. Among the earliest was the Houston and Texas Central (H&TC) Railway, which constructed a line to Millican before the Civil War. A few years after the war, construction resumed and extended to such cities as Bryan, Hearne, and Calvert in the late 1860s. The Missouri, Kansas, and Texas (MK&T) Railroad and the International–Great Northern (I&GN) Railroad were other railroads that provided service to cities along the Meridian Highway.⁸³⁹

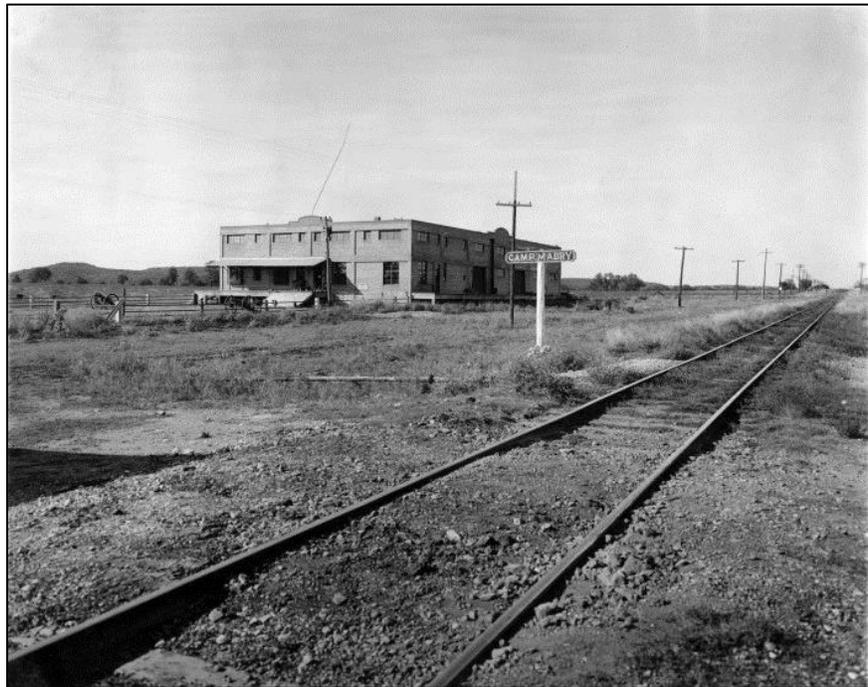
COUNTY ROADS AND THE GOOD ROADS MOVEMENT: 1880–1916

Historic Context

Between 1880 and 1912, the route that would become known as the main route of the Meridian Highway followed the trajectory of the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway from Wichita Falls to Fort Worth and then trended southeast to Waco, Temple, and Taylor, all major commercial and rail centers in Central and North–Central Texas. From Austin to San Antonio, the route lay over the historic military and cattle driving routes of the nineteenth century and the post road of the 1910s.

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Figure 166. Photograph of the I&GN railroad lines running past the Camp Mabry arsenal in Austin, Travis County, ca. 1916. Note that the future route of the Meridian Highway did not follow the I&GN line near Camp Mabry in Austin, instead traveling through the center of the city further to the east. Source: The University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht125172/> (accessed April 2, 2014), crediting the Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



From San Antonio, the route would have continued along the Upper Laredo Road, which was also followed by the I&GN Railroad through the great cattle- and sheep-raising areas of Southwest Texas (*Figure 166*).

In 1911, supporters organized the Meridian Road Association in Salina, Kansas under the leadership of Good Roads booster John C. Nicholson of Newton, Kansas. (See *Figure 167*.) From the beginning, the vision of Nicholson and his fellow members was an international road that would run from Canada to Mexico, and the group reached out to other states to form cooperative associations. Texas formed a Meridian Highway Association in 1911 with three divisions: North Texas (Burkburnett to Waco), San Antonio (Waco to Laredo) and Gulf (Waco to Galveston).⁸⁴⁰ It is possible that the automobile trip taken in 1911 by Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College highway engineering professor Robert Potts, when he logged and mapped a route, was intended to help the Meridian Highway Association's Gulf Division. His trip took him from Waco to Marlin and through Calvert, Hearne, Bryan, Navasota, Hempstead, Houston, and Galveston.⁸⁴¹

Road boosters met in Laredo in 1913 to promote the idea of a road from Winnipeg to Mexico City via Laredo. By 1915, David E. Colp was president of the Texas Division of the Meridian Highway Association, and road officials were making plans to view the road (Refer to *Figure 29* in previous Section I.3 for background information regarding David E. Colp). The highway was avidly supported, and by the end of 1916, the Galveston Division branch of the Meridian had reached Galveston. The road extended as well through Bartlett, Granger, Taylor, Hutto,

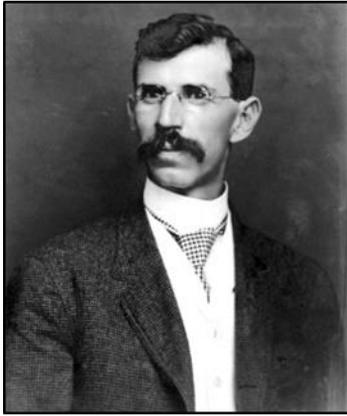


Figure 167. Portrait of John C. Nicholson, leader of the Meridian Highway Association (no date). Source: L. Robert Puschendorf, *Two Trails of the Twentieth Century: John C. Nicholson and Newton, Kansas*, *Kansas History*, vol. 32, no. 3 (Autumn 2009), <http://kshs.org/p/kansas-history-autumn-2009/15556> (accessed April 8, 2014).

Pflugerville, and Austin, where it connected with the Austin to San Antonio part of the road. In late 1916, officers of the Association were participating in meetings with other named highway associations, and there were plans for a nonstop automobile run between Galveston and Laredo, and Winnipeg.⁸⁴²

Physical Evolution

The route that would eventually become the Meridian Highway was likely constructed of earthen, sand-clay, and gravel materials of good-quality limestone, especially in Central Texas. In rural locations, the route was likely poorly graded and lacked adequate drainage. In Williamson County, local histories indicate that the stagecoach road between Georgetown and Salado, which would become the Meridian Highway, was earthen and poorly drained.⁸⁴³ In the larger cities of Fort Worth, Waco, Austin, San Antonio, and Laredo, moderate-quality materials (such as macadamized roads) were likely constructed leading into and within the cities. It is possible that high-quality materials (such as brick, concrete and bituminous concrete) were constructed on the Meridian Highway within these urban areas.

Development Patterns

During the period from 1880 until 1916, railroad lines were completed along the entire future route of the Meridian Highway. From ca. 1870–1890, the Texas portion of the MK&T Railroad was completed between Galveston and the Oklahoma border. The railroad traveled roughly parallel to the future route of the Meridian Highway in Central and North Texas, between Taylor and Ringgold. The adjacent land was rich Blackland Prairie, and the arrival of the railroad spurred further development of farming along the route.⁸⁴⁴ Cotton and corn were the dominant crops, and cotton gins and mills to process them were constructed along the MK&T line. (See *Figure 168*.) Further south, the I&GN Railroad completed its line between Austin and Laredo by 1881. Again, this route roughly paralleled the future route of the Meridian Highway.⁸⁴⁵ Industrial development along the I&GN in Taylor, Austin, New Braunfels, and San Antonio typically included cotton gins, compresses, and cottonseed oil mills that became common in many parts of the state. In addition, some cities boasted textile factories that processed the cotton grown in the Blackland Prairie and the wool and mohair produced in the nearby Hill Country.⁸⁴⁶ The population in San Antonio boomed during this period, as a result of both European immigration and migration of Anglo Americans from the Southern United States.⁸⁴⁷ South of San Antonio, however, the arid land remained largely undeveloped.

Besides often having agricultural processing facilities, land near depots attracted other kinds of commercial enterprises such as hotels, retail

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Figure 168. Photo of a cotton gin in Austin, ca. 1900. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph124035/> (accessed May 2, 2013), crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Austin, Texas.



stores, warehouses, and lumber yards that collectively became important hubs of activity. In later years, the Meridian and other highways deliberately extended through these nodes to take advantage of the many amenities and commercial opportunities they offered. However, the ongoing influence and importance of railroads was largely unchallenged during this period, which greatly influenced land development patterns and the physical evolution of cities, both large and small. Since railroads quickly became the primary means of shipping raw and finished goods into and out of communities, early Good Roads proponents sought to exploit this situation and appealed to farmers to support road bond programs to build better roads so that they could realize greater profits. (See *Figure 169*.)

In addition to serving as an important corridor for the shipment of goods, the railroads along the future path of the Meridian Highway also carried tourists who sought to enjoy the many resort-, recreational-, and health-related opportunities that existed along their respective paths. For example, San Antonio, which offered rail service from multiple lines, attracted tourists to its Hot Wells health resort, as well as its many historic attractions. (See *Figure 170*.) Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of San Antonio from 1893 show plentiful hotels and boarding houses clustered around the Main Plaza and Alamo Plaza. On Alamo Plaza, the Menger Hotel opened its doors in 1858 and continued to thrive, constructing an additional east wing in 1881.

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Figure 169. Cartoon capturing a sentiment that Good Roads boosters used to generate public support for bond indebtedness, especially among agriculturalists in rural areas. Although originally printed in a Good Roads movement publication entitled *Missouri-Kansas Highways*, the sentiment was felt nationwide. Source: L. Robert Puschendorf, *Two Trails of the Twentieth Century*: John C. Nicholson and Newton, Kansas, *Kansas History*, vol. 32, no. 3 (Autumn 2009), <http://kshs.org/p/kansas-history-autumn-2009/15556> (accessed April 8, 2014).

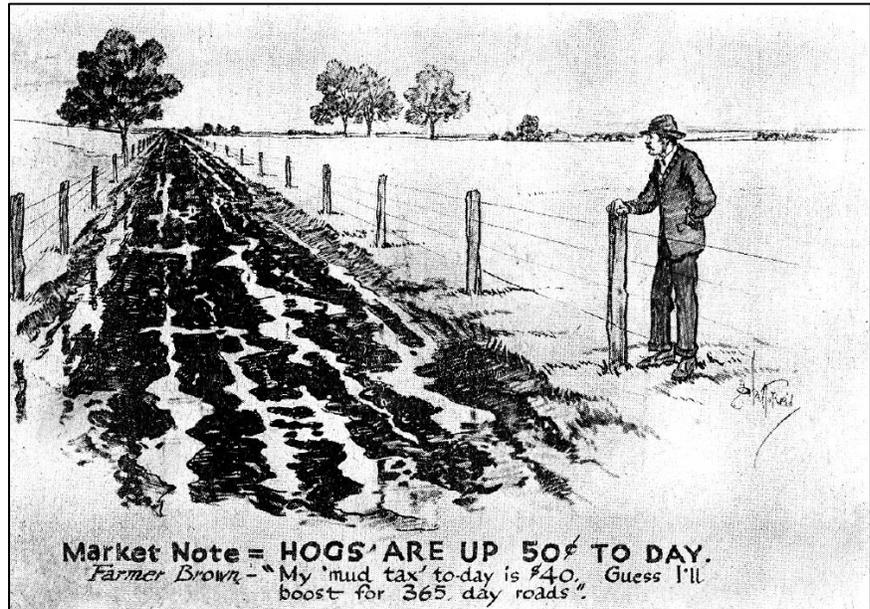
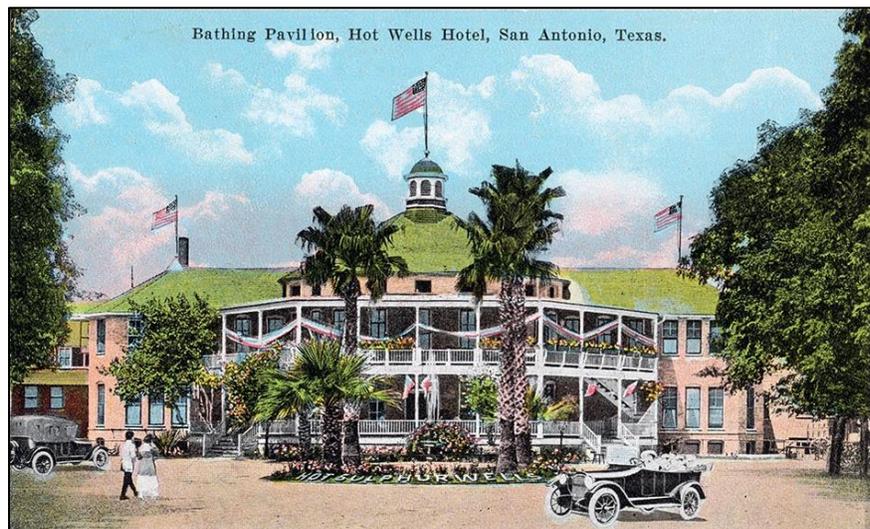


Figure 170. Postcard of the bathing pavilion at the Hot Wells resort in San Antonio, ca. 1910. Source: Gregg Eckhardt, "The Hot Wells Hotel and Spa," *The Edwards Aquifer Website*, <http://www.edwardsaquifer.net/hotwells.html> (accessed April 2, 2014).



INITIATION OF THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1917–1932

Historic Context

In June 1917, the Texas Highway Commission designated the Meridian Highway as SH 2 and described its route as entering Texas at Burkburnett, then going to Wichita Falls, Fort Worth, Meridian, and Waco. At Waco, the main route headed south to Temple, Taylor, Austin, San Antonio, and Laredo. (Refer to *Figure 35* in previous Section I.4.)

The Meridian Highway also included the Gulf Division, which branched off from the main route at Waco and extended southeast to Marlin, Calvert, Bryan, College Station, Navasota, Hempstead, Houston, and Galveston. The Texas Highway Commission also included another segment (known as the Mineral Wells Branch of the Meridian Road) that left the main roadway at Henrietta and continued on through Jacksboro, Perrin, and Mineral Wells, where it intersected with SH 1. It continued east along the same road to Weatherford but turned at Weatherford and continued to Granbury, Glen Rose, and Meridian, where it reconnected with the main line.⁸⁴⁸ The Texas Highway Commission later designated another branch that entered Texas from Oklahoma at a location just east of Ringgold, Montague County, and extended to Bowie, where it connected to the historic main roadway. This small segment (Ringgold to Bowie) eventually replaced the Burkburnett to Bowie segment as the northernmost section of the Meridian Highway.

As with many of the named highways, construction on the Meridian seems to have lagged during World War I, despite the importance of roads in moving troops and agricultural products and the proximity of the Meridian to numerous Army installations. Newspaper articles indicate that interest in the Meridian had revived by early 1920. The highway, which was the major north–south running route through Texas and the only one that could claim to be international, was continuously being improved with federal-aid funding. With David E. Colp in San Antonio as the president of the Texas Division, Good Roads promoter G. A. McNaughton of San Marcos in Hays County, and Fred Robinson as commissioner of the Gulf Division in Waco, the Meridian Highway Association was well represented in Texas and apparently effective, despite the remoteness of the headquarters in Newton, Kansas. Colp worked particularly hard in 1921 to convince South Texas counties in the vicinity of Pearsall to pass bonds that could be used to complete an unfinished segment of the Meridian.⁸⁴⁹

By August 1920, Rollen J. Windrow, the State Highway Engineer, announced that construction on segments of the road was well underway. Of the 886 miles encompassed in the Meridian Highway and its branch, 311 miles were under construction. An additional 394 miles were covered by a new project agreement, giving a total of 705 miles that were or would soon be under construction within the foreseeable future if road materials continued to be available and shipping costs did not increase to a level that hampered building. Of the 311 miles actually under construction in 1920, 172 miles were gravel, 129 miles were gravel with bituminous topping, and 10 miles were concrete.⁸⁵⁰

By 1920, the route of the Meridian Highway had changed from its 1917 designation by the Texas Highway Commission, probably in an effort to create a main route between Fort Worth and Austin that was shorter

than the one laid out in 1917. Specifically, the main trunk left Fort Worth and traveled south to Alvarado, Hillsboro, Waco, Temple, Salado, Bartlett, Georgetown, Manor, and Austin. The route that had left Fort Worth and gone to Waco by way of Meridian, and the route that left Temple and went to Austin by way of Taylor, became loops.⁸⁵¹

In 1921, the Commission designated parts of SH 2 as elements in the Major State Highway System. (Refer to *Figure 46* in previous Section I.4.) On the main line, those parts embraced the segments from Burkburnett to Burleson, from Waco to Temple, and from a point several miles north of Austin to Laredo. Segments 2-A from Burleson to Waco and 2-C from Temple to its intersection with SH 2 north of Austin also were parts of the System. On the branch between Waco and Galveston, now called the Gulf to Colorado branch, the System included Waco to Bremond and Bryan to Galveston. That branch was excluded from the list of primary roads of the Federal Aid Highway System as defined by the Commission on November 24, 1924.⁸⁵²

As with the Bankhead and other long distance highways, some parts of the Meridian proved difficult to finance. Good Roads advocates found it particularly necessary to focus their attentions on some of the counties between San Antonio and Laredo, describing the segment between Frio and LaSalle counties as the only part of the Meridian Highway that had not been financed. Talk in 1921 about extension of the road across the border into northern Mexico probably helped spur enthusiasm on the Texas side, and Good Roads advocates such as McNaughton helped keep construction on the Meridian before the public, meeting with Mexican officials and Governor Neff, and with officials from the other states through which the Meridian passed. American representatives toured the proposed route in Mexico as well.⁸⁵³

Bonds in the southwest Texas segment passed in 1921 so that road work could begin. Considerable work had been done on the Gulf Division between McLennan and Galveston counties, as well. There, distances between towns had been shortened by eliminating turns, bridges had been widened, and communities such as Waco, Navasota, and Houston had built tourist camps. Travelers on the Gulf Division could expect to drive over rock asphalt, gravel, shell, and earth roads. In contrast, drivers in Wichita County, which funded more durable roads that could hold up to oil field traffic, could enjoy an 18-foot-wide concrete highway and a shortened route between Wichita Falls and Burkburnett, near the Oklahoma border.⁸⁵⁴

By the end of 1922, work to erect signs on the main route of the Meridian also had progressed. Businessmen understood the value of the signs as good guides for tourists, and some work marking the highway through the Bosque River Valley near Waco and in the vicinity of Marlin had already occurred by 1922. The San Antonio to Laredo portion was

marked by November 1922, and a crew was working in the vicinity of Belton about the same time. Along the route, the Association aimed to erect markers at least as frequently as every mile on rural highways and install two to three markers per block in the cities. The Association also planned to publish a tourists' directory with write-ups of cities and businesses that would bring thousands of tourists to cities like Belton. That guide was published in early 1923, and boosters hoped that its distribution throughout the United States would bring much favorable publicity to Texas.⁸⁵⁵

The Texas Highway Commission approved funding for multiple projects on the Meridian Highway in the early to mid-1920s. But there were differences between the Commission and the Meridian Road Association about what constituted the route, or even the name. In December 1923, for example, the Commission described the route as passing through Ringgold, Bowie, Decatur, Fort Worth, Burleson, Itasca, Hillsboro, Waco, Temple, Belton, Georgetown, Round Rock, Austin, San Marcos, New Braunfels, San Antonio, Pearsall, Cotulla, and Laredo. That route was affirmed in both April 1924, when the Commission named SH 2 as part of the Preferred System of Highways, and November 1924, when it was designated a primary road of the Federal Aid Highway System.⁸⁵⁶

The Commission, from time to time, when pressured by highway associations, chose to rename the Meridian Highway. For example, in February 1922, the segment between San Antonio and Laredo became part of the Jefferson Davis National Highway; several years later, the Commission designated SH 2 from Laredo to the Red River "The Pat Neff Highway," a change that must have been puzzling to travelers who had been following the official markers of the Meridian Highway that the Association had installed along the main north-south route of the highway by early 1923.⁸⁵⁷

The Meridian Road Association, like other highway associations in the 1920s, tended to be expansive in its self-identified route.⁸⁵⁸ A major branch, for example, left the trunk at Waco and trended southeast to Houston and Galveston. One division went to Brownsville, which also was a terminus of King of Trails over SH 12. Yet another branch in North-Central Texas went by way of Cleburne and through the Bosque River Valley near Waco. In 1924, the Texas Highway Commission designated the main route of SH 2 from the Texas-Oklahoma state line to Fort Worth, Hillsboro, Waco, Austin, San Antonio, and Laredo as a primary road in the Federal Aid Highway System. (Refer to *Figure 49* in previous Section I.4.) No branch routes were included.⁸⁵⁹ Thereafter, the Meridian remained a high priority for funding because it was the only north-south running transcontinental highway that linked both Canada and Mexico. (See *Figure 171*.) Additional value accrued to the route because of the work done in Mexico to create an International Pacific

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Highway from Canada to Argentina. By 1928, the route from Canada to Mexico City was complete.

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Figure 172. Photograph showing the path of the Meridian Highway along Guadalupe Street, Austin, 1927. Source: The University of North Texas, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph123900/> (accessed April 9, 2014), crediting the Austin History Center.



The adoption of the AASHO highway numbering system in 1926 resulted in a new overlay designation onto SH 2. The new highway designation, US 81, quickly supplanted SH 2 and Meridian Highway as the name most Texans and others began using to refer to this route. US 81 also was integrated into the Pan-American Highway, which eventually extended from Winnipeg, Canada to Cape Horn at the southern tip of Argentina.

Physical Evolution

A promotional guide for the Meridian Highway from ca. 1926 includes maps and distances between cities on the Meridian Highway from Winnipeg to Mexico City. The maps also note how many miles of the Meridian Highway are in each state and the distribution of roadway surface types. In Texas, there were 930 miles of the road; 237 miles were paved (or in the process of being paved at the time of publication), 450 miles were sand or gravel, and 243 miles were improved earthen roads. As expected, the maps indicate that the roads through and near the largest cities, such as Fort Worth, Waco, Austin, and San Antonio, were paved (*Figure 172*). The promotional guide also notes that the Meridian Highway is the “straightest and easiest road to travel across the United States” and all streams are bridged except one under construction in South Dakota.⁸⁶⁰ By the end of 1928, nearly the entire length of the Meridian Highway in Texas, except for approximately 20 miles in LaSalle County between San Antonio and Laredo, was improved and paved.⁸⁶¹



Figure 173. Photograph of the Stephen F. Austin hotel in downtown Austin along the early path of the Meridian Highway, ca. 1924. Literature published by the Meridian Highway Association and similar groups for other named highways emphasized modern hotels and other amenities along their respective paths that would attract auto enthusiasts and tourists alike. Source: *The University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History*, <http://texas.history.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph125167/> (accessed April 2, 2014), crediting the Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Development Patterns

By 1916, the Meridian Highway consisted of multiple “laterals” – roughly parallel routes running north–south across the state. Already by 1916, the tourism industry was well developed between Fort Worth and San Antonio. A guidebook from 1916 noted 50 modern hotels in Fort Worth, “limitless picnic and pleasure grounds” and “endless retreats and caves and caverns” in Mineral Wells, good fishing in the Bosque River, access to both the MK&T and I&GN railroads at Georgetown, and a “tourist’s paradise” in San Antonio, including Brackenridge Park and the missions.⁸⁶² Electrical lights along the road between Fort Worth and Taylor were planned by 1916, to be powered by the Texas Light & Power Company in Fort Worth (which also provided power to towns along the way).⁸⁶³

During the 1920s, the entirety of the route was paved as SH 2, and the Texas Highway Department landscaped the right-of-way with Bermuda grass planted on the berms.⁸⁶⁴ By 1928, the *Official State Highway Map of Texas* noted numerous tourist attractions along the highway, and also sought to attract industry to the cities located along the route. In Austin, the publication advertised the Stephen F. Austin Hotel (*Figure 173*), Driskill Hotel, Texan Hotel, and tourist sites including the University of Texas, State Cemetery, Mount Bonnell, Elisabet Ney Studio, and Confederate Home. It also cited Austin’s potential for future industrial growth based on water power, “high-class unutilized labor supply,” low taxes, and railroad access, noting that the city already was home to the largest chili canning plant in the world and largest book binding plant in the south.⁸⁶⁵ A similar guidebook published by the Humble Oil Company in 1928 noted Waco’s parks, city hall, Cotton Palace, and Tourist Camp. In Austin, it noted the country club (present-day Hancock Golf Course), University of Texas, state capitol, city hall, court house, chamber of commerce and tourist bureau on West 6th Street, the Deep Eddy Camp, the Barton Springs Free Tourist Camp, and a tourist camp on Congress Avenue just south of the Colorado River. In San Antonio, the guide showed parks, Fort Sam Houston, the post office, the courthouse, the MK&T Railroad station, and the I&GN Railroad station.⁸⁶⁶

As with other contemporaneous highways, the Meridian Highway provided opportunities for other entrepreneurs seeking to open businesses that catered to the growing number of motorists traveling along its path. Gas stations, tourist camps, tourist courts, and restaurants were among the many new architectural forms that increasingly fronted onto the path of the Meridian Highway as it approached and extended through urban centers along its path.

DEPRESSION, MOBILIZATION, AND WAR: 1933–1944

Historic Context

The Great Depression and World War II eras were busy years on the Meridian Highway where, as with the Bankhead, the Texas Highway Department completed road construction and improvements with federal aid monies targeted to help stimulate the economy, provide jobs for unemployed workers, and support military mobilization and preparedness at a time of world crisis. In February 1934, for example, the Texas Highway Commission agreed to construct SH 2 through Hays County at the request of the Hays County Commissioner's Court (see *Figure 174*).⁸⁶⁷ In turn, the Commissioner's Court acquiesced to act as agent for the State Highway Department to obtain the necessary right-of-way on SH 2. The minute order further stipulated that work would not be completed immediately; instead, it would wait until the order was accepted by the Hays County Commissioner's Court, and a contract executed between the Texas Highway Commission, the commissioner's court, and the City of San Marcos. In November 1934, the Commission ordered Travis County to commence condemnation proceedings against property owners who would not sell their land for right-of-way to accommodate the straightening and widening of Little Walnut Creek at its intersection with SH 2.⁸⁶⁸ Slightly north, on the other hand, the Commission made progress in their agreement to proceed with the location of the highway (and its relocation at Jarrell) between Georgetown and the Bell County line.⁸⁶⁹

The hard surfacing of SH 2 through the entire state was completed when the Federal Aid Program of 1938 funded surfacing of 10.3 miles between Stoneburg and Ringgold in Montague County.⁸⁷⁰ While Texans celebrated modern aspects of the highway, they also honored its history. An article providing a comprehensive background of El Camino Real in Texas in the December 1938 issue of *Texas Parade* boasted portions of SH 1/US 81 from below Austin (San Marcos) to Cotulla as remaining significant and identifiable parts of the historic thoroughfare.⁸⁷¹

By 1939, the SH 2 designation was deleted from the state highway system in favor of US 81. Minute Order No. 16701 from the Texas Highway Commission meeting of September 26, 1939, describes the route as extending from the Texas–Oklahoma state line from Ringgold to Bowie, Decatur, Fort Worth, Burleson, Itasca, Hillsboro, Waco, Temple, Belton, Georgetown, Round Rock, Austin, San Marcos, New Braunfels, San Antonio, Pearsall, and Cotulla to Laredo at the International Boundary Line. They noted an alternate route through Fort Worth, from a point on the highway approximately two miles south of the city limits of Fort Worth and thence northward along or near the old Burleson Road, South Pecan Street, Morningside Drive, South Main

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Figure 174. SH 2 at San Marcos in Hays County, May 20, 1933. Source: Box 1, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



Street, and into the business section of the city. Also at this time, US 81 was realigned at Austin with a portion of the roadway moved eastward within the city limits. The pre-1939 alignment was re-numbered Loop 275.⁸⁷²

Physical Evolution

Like the Bankhead Highway, the Meridian Highway benefitted from the implementation of multiple improvement projects during the 1933 to 1944 period. Since it linked several of the state's largest cities, numerous upgrade projects were recorded on this roadway. While upgrading SH 2 to be safer and to accommodate consistent two-way traffic, the Texas Highway Department completed several projects focused on the attractiveness of the roadway. The Guadalupe River Bridge in New Braunfels was a graceful open-spandrel arch bridge with Art Deco styling.⁸⁷³ (See *Figure 175*.) Additionally, several landscaping and beautification projects were completed along the Meridian. For example, a 1934 project in Travis County resulted in the landscaping of over 10 miles from the Hays County line to the southern limits of Austin.⁸⁷⁴ Additionally, in April 1935, a statewide list of landscaping projects indicated that three of the 10 projects listed targeted locations on SH 2 in Travis, Hays, and Williamson counties.⁸⁷⁵

Development Patterns

The Meridian Highway continued to be a major north-south route for the transportation of agricultural and industrial products during this

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Figure 175. The open-spandrel arch bridge that carried SH 2 over the Guadalupe River in New Braunfels has decorative Art Deco detailing and graceful engineering design. Source: "On Texas Highways" Texas Parade, Vol. 1, No. 4 (September 1936): 22.

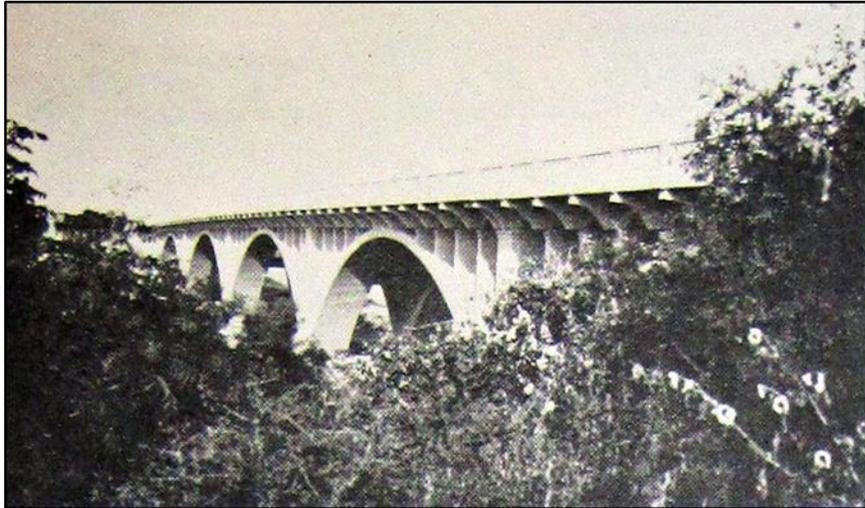


Figure 176. Photograph of the Meridian Highway in Comal County, 1933. Source: Texas State Library and Archive Commission, "From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: The Texas Highway Department Blazes Texas Trails 1917–1968," <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/highways/index.html> (last modified November 14, 2011).



period. Important industries on or near the highway continued to include a diverse range of businesses such as meatpacking in Fort Worth, textile mills in New Braunfels, and flour mills in San Antonio (Figure 176).⁸⁷⁶ In Laredo, the smelting of ore from Mexico and South America rose to importance by 1940.⁸⁷⁷ Like the Bankhead Highway, the Meridian Highway also was designated as a primary route of military importance. Because both the Bankhead Highway and the Meridian Highway passed through Dallas and Fort Worth, the military installations in these cities had the advantage of access to the Meridian Highway as well as the Bankhead.⁸⁷⁸ The Marine Corps Air Station Eagle Mountain Lake was a military base constructed near US 81 at Avondale during World War II that was used training facility for gliders. In San Antonio, Randolph Field was constructed in 1940 near a segment of the Meridian Highway to serve as the "West Point of the Air." The desirability of these posts' locations was augmented by the military's already strong presence in San Antonio and complemented operations at Kelly Field, Brooks Field, and Fort Sam Houston – the largest Army

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Figure 177. Photograph of the Alamo Plaza Hotel Courts located in the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas near the Elm and Rose street intersection, Dallas County (no date). Source: Tom Benning, "Alamo Plaza, an Oak Cliff landmark, falls to wrecking ball today," *Dallas Morning News*, December 14, 2010, <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/community-news/dallas/headlines/20101214-alamo-plaza-an-oak-cliff-landmark-falls-to-wrecking-ball-today.ece> (accessed April 9, 2014).



post in the nation.⁸⁷⁹ In 1942, the Army opened Fort Hood several miles west of the Meridian Highway in Bell and Coryell counties, near Belton. During the war years, the post consisted of largely temporary construction and open land for tank destroyer training, but in subsequent decades it would grow into one of the largest military installations in the world.

In urban settings, the Meridian Highway and the amount of traffic along it contributed to greater decentralized and linear patterns of commercial development, which became more common during the period. Land along the outskirts of cities attracted owners and operators of the growing numbers of tourist courts, gas stations and auto-friendly restaurants that greeted motorists entering urban areas via the Meridian and other highways. In contrast to commercial development in city centers, this new auto-oriented development was much more dispersed and provided more room for customers and patrons to park and service their vehicles.

Among the most successful and innovate entrepreneurs whose livelihood was directly linked to the automobile and commercial development of the period was Edgar Lee Torrance of Waco. In 1929, he conceived the idea of motel chains of similar forms that would be recognizable to the traveling public. His Alamo Plaza Hotel Courts on E. Elm Street in East Waco (on or near the Meridian Highway) evoked the sense of the Alamo with its use of a Mission style parapet. During the Great Depression, he opened similar operations through Texas and the South and is credited as a pioneer in the lodging industry (*Figure 177*).⁸⁸⁰

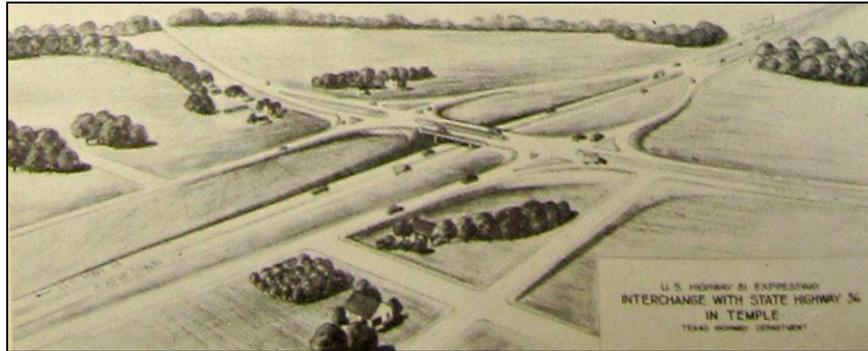
POSTWAR ROAD EXPANSION: 1945–1956

Historic Context

During the post-World War II period, the Texas Highway Department made significant plans for interregional travel on or near the Meridian Highway (SH 2/US 81) corridor, particularly at Austin and San Antonio. Just as in Fort Worth and Dallas, State Highway Engineer Dewitt C. Greer

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Figure 178. Drawing illustrating U.S. Highway 81 Expressway Interchange with State Highway 36 in Temple Source: *Texas Parade*, October 1948, p. 30, Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



noted that Central Texas was generally in favor of routing an interstate along US 81.⁸⁸¹ On September 25, 1945, voters passed a \$5.7 million bond issue put forward by the San Antonio–Bexar County Planning Board to finance right-of-way purchases for an interregional highway.⁸⁸² The interregional highway was to relieve traffic in the downtown core and link downtown San Antonio with the airport, provide safer travel facilities, increase property values, and spur housing development along the route.⁸⁸³

In February 1946, the City of Austin likewise began debating the merits of voter-approved bonds to purchase the 200-foot right-of-way that the federal government needed for the proposed interregional highway on US 81 through the city.⁸⁸⁴ As the project required widening the existing highway, the city needed to finance the purchase of adjacent property on several local roads. Austinites eventually voted to approve \$940,000 in bonds for the new highway.⁸⁸⁵ As plans for the interstate highway continued to be developed, US 81 was designated as a Blue Star Memorial Highway from Fort Worth to Laredo in September 1947.⁸⁸⁶

By October 1948, the Texas Highway Department maintained that four traffic lanes were needed on US 81 between San Antonio and Fort Worth. The department placed particular emphasis on the proposed work in San Antonio, where the expressway was eagerly anticipated and would link to other expressways carrying the traffic of US 90 (Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway) and US 87.⁸⁸⁷ The same article noted, however, that work on the section of the highway between Temple and Belton was postponed because of the inability to acquire the required right-of-way (*Figure 178*).⁸⁸⁸

In the fall of 1950, the route of US 81 was revised slightly to eliminate the alternate from south of Fort Worth into the city's downtown business core.⁸⁸⁹ Widening of the highway between San Antonio and Fort Worth was "under commitment" in April 1953 when US 81 was featured in a *Texas Parade* article.⁸⁹⁰ The Texas Highway Department proceeded with projects on segments of the highway in other counties where work was deemed most crucial. At this time, most of the construction had been completed in Bexar, Travis, McLennan, Hill, and

Tarrant counties.⁸⁹¹ Within Austin, the new, improved freeway was named “Interregional Highway.” Improvements were ongoing between Hillsboro and Waco, between Temple and Belton, as well as in or on the immediate outskirts of Austin, Fort Worth, and San Antonio.⁸⁹² As a main artery carrying long-haul trucks and vans, local traffic, and tourist traffic in and out of Mexico as well as serving as a strategic military road with links to posts in San Antonio and Fort Hood, the development of US 81 was crucial in this period. Finally, this major highway, running through 12 counties and serving about 30 percent of Texas’ population, was on its way to interregional standards. (Refer to *Figure 99* in previous Section I.6.)

Physical Evolution

Since US 81 extended through several major cities in the state and carried high volumes of traffic, the Texas Highway Department upgraded much of the highway during the immediate postwar era. A 1953 *Texas Parade* article, for example, noted that US 81 was in the process of being widened to a four-lane divided roadway from Fort Worth to San Antonio. The author of the article called the road the “main street of the Lone Star state,” and he noted that the heavy use of long-haul trucks have made the road one of the country’s main transportation routes.⁸⁹³ The road also provided connections to the military installations in San Antonio and the “Army’s newest pride” of Fort Hood (approximately 20 miles west of US 81 at Belton).⁸⁹⁴ As a result, some of the first controlled-access freeways in the state were constructed on the highway, such as the segment through downtown Austin. This new segment featured a four-lane roadway with high curbs, narrow lanes (less than 12 feet wide) and little room for expansion. Throughout the entire state, the section that was noted most often as being problematic by articles of the time was the eight-mile section between Temple and Belton. While construction plans and funding were ready in 1948, Bell County had difficulty obtaining the right-of-way needed to expand the road.⁸⁹⁵ The 1953 *Texas Parade* article referenced above stated that the segment of road in Bell County was “so clogged with cars it sometimes took more than half an hour to negotiate the short but narrow, winding bit of archaic highway.”⁸⁹⁶

Another significant improvement of the immediate postwar era was a new engineering design developed for the convergence of major highways with US 81 at Hillsboro and Belton to eliminate stops and improve safety at these busy highway intersections. In Hillsboro, US 81 and US 77 converged, and the Department built new grade-separated structures and construction of a new interchange to allow for safer and more efficient traffic flow through the area. (See *Figure 179*.) In Belton, the construction of a new grade-separated structure at the US 81/US 190 intersection aided the traffic flow to Killeen and Fort Hood.

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Figure 179. US 81/US 77 interchange in Hillsboro, constructed in the early 1950s to alleviate congestion at the convergence of the two roads. Source: Thomas E. Turner, "Main Street of Texas: Face Lifting of US 81 Will Take a Long Time," *Texas Parade* Vol. 13, No. 11 (April 1953): 17.



Such improvements presaged the kinds of highway designs that became more popular during the period of interstate highway construction from the late 1950s to the late 1970s.

Development Patterns

The Meridian Highway experienced growth of traffic in the postwar period. During the war, military installations were major contributors to this growth. The increase in military personnel at San Antonio's bases contributed to a 61 percent increase in population between 1940 and 1950.⁸⁹⁷ Expansion of permanent Army facilities at Fort Hood exacerbated the already congested traffic between Fort Worth and Austin.⁸⁹⁸

After the war, increased travel to Mexico further increased traffic along the highway. Commercial traffic between Texas and Mexico had declined during World War II, both because American industries were focusing on war production rather than commercial goods and because the United States sought to limit border crossings for security reasons. After the war, with loosening of border restrictions and improvement of highways, travel between Texas and Mexico reached an all-time high for both commerce and tourism.⁸⁹⁹ The Mexican government advertised heavily to attract tourists, placing advertisements in newspapers across Texas.⁹⁰⁰ The bulk of this traffic passed through Laredo via San Antonio, along the Meridian Highway.

In 1947, major realignment, widening, and grade-separation projects were proposed in cities, especially in Fort Worth, Austin, and San Antonio.⁹⁰¹ (See *Figure 180*.) By 1951, widening and re-alignment projects were underway statewide, and construction of grade-separation structures in Fort Worth had been completed.⁹⁰²

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Figure 180. Photograph of US 81 through Austin, ca. 1953, prior to acquisition of additional right-of-way and construction of grade separations. Source: "Main Street of Texas," Texas Parade vol. 13 no. 11 (April 1953): 19.



EFFECTS OF THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1957–1980

Physical Evolution

Portions of the Meridian Highway, like the Bankhead Highway route, were incorporated into the Interstate Highway System during this time period. The majority of the route from Laredo to Hillsboro became part of (or paralleled) IH 35 in 1959, and its design also followed AASHO guidelines. From Hillsboro to downtown Fort Worth, the alignment followed US 81 and was known by that name until 1968 when the highway's designation was changed to IH 35W. North of downtown Fort Worth to the Oklahoma border, the former Meridian Highway alignment continued in a general northwest direction that included US 387 up to Bowie in Montague County. At that point, US 81 veered off in a more northerly direction to the Red River and Oklahoma, while US 377 continued in a more northwesterly route to Henrietta, where it intersected with US 82 (the old North Texas Highway). Most of US 81 between Fort Worth and the Oklahoma border was a two-lane undivided highway that extended through the downtowns of cities along its path. IH 35W was constructed during the 1960s and met up again with IH 35E in Denton, where it continued northward as IH 35.

Development Patterns

When IH 35 was constructed from 1946 to 1969, the interstate was routed along the edge of downtowns when it passed through urban areas like Fort Worth, Waco, Austin, and San Antonio. (See *Figure 181*.) In these cities, new high-rise office towers and parking structures were constructed to serve growing industries like oil and banking and other business interests. Outside each urban area, suburban communities sprouted along the path of the highway. North of Dallas, for instance, the population of Carrollton multiplied from 1,450 in 1950 to 40,591 by

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Figure 181. Photograph of the Austin Expressway, Austin, Texas, with caption stating, "Designated as U.S. Route 81, the expressway is a part of the Interstate System. In the background are the State Capitol and the University of Texas Campus." Source: Box 318, Prints: Highway Transport, 1951–1959, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



1980, and the population of Denton grew from 21,372 in 1950 to 48,063 in 1980.⁹⁰³ These suburban communities were planned along the model of the postwar curvilinear suburb, with auto-oriented shopping centers, schools, and community centers integrated into a community plan with residential subdivisions.⁹⁰⁴ Many of the residents in communities like Carrollton or Denton commuted into downtown via the interstate, but increasing job opportunities were located in the suburbs. Auto-parts distribution and food processing provided jobs within Carrollton, and the construction of nearby Dallas–Fort Worth Airport in 1974 stimulated the growth of the airline industry in Denton.⁹⁰⁵ Similarly, as the University of Texas at Austin grew rapidly in the 1960s, high-tech industries built facilities in the city’s suburbs, with IBM locating in Austin in 1967, Texas Instruments in 1969, and Motorola in 1974.⁹⁰⁶

Even as planning for the construction of the limited-access interstate was underway, development of roadside attractions continued. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the Aquarena Springs in San Marcos attracted tourists traveling along the highway with an amusement park, glass bottom boats, and underwater theater with mermaid performances.⁹⁰⁷ (See *Figure 182*.) Billboards advertised the approaching tourist attraction for miles in advance, so that tourists would know when to exit off the limited-access interstate.

Another major tourist attraction near IH 35 was HemisFair Park in San Antonio, constructed as the site of the 1968 World’s Fair. The site selected for the fair was located between IH 35 and IH 37, in an area

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Figure 182. Postcard showing tourists waiting to board glass-bottom boats at Aquarena Springs, no date. Source: Postcard Roundup, <http://www.postcardroundup.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/aquarena-rppc-dock.jpg> (accessed May 14, 2013).



considered “blighted” under the Federal Urban Renewal Plan.⁹⁰⁸ Construction of both the interstate highways and the fairgrounds aimed to revitalize the area and regenerate local tax revenues.⁹⁰⁹ In preparation for the fair, the City of San Antonio cleaned up and redeveloped the River Walk, or *Paseo del Rio*, which had been constructed initially in the 1920s. During the 1970s, the City of San Antonio capitalized on this tourist infrastructure by drawing conventions to the city and continuing to give incentives for the construction of new hotels and tourist amenities.⁹¹⁰

CONCLUSION

The Meridian Highway is one of the oldest and most important highways in Texas. Its beginning dates to 1911 with the formation of the Meridian Highway Association in Kansas to promote an international highway that extended from Canada to Mexico. Such an ambitious scheme during the early years of automobile travel revealed the foresight and grand vision of its founders. The Meridian Highway quickly attracted the attention and support of Good Roads boosters in Texas, such as David E. Colp of San Antonio and G. A. McNaughton of San Marcos, who actively promoted its many benefits to potential motorists, tourists, and entrepreneurs. In 1917, the newly established Texas Highway Commission quickly incorporated the Meridian Highway into the new state highway system, and designated it as SH 2. It was the most significant north–south highway in the state and passed through such major cities as Fort Worth, Waco, Austin, San Antonio and Laredo. Improvements over time enabled motorists to travel faster and more safely, and the many amenities and tourist attractions along its path increased traffic as the twentieth century progressed. Over time, congestion impeded traffic flow to such an extent that by the late 1940s, large sections of the Meridian Highway were subject to new and

innovative highway engineering solutions that dramatically changed its character. The construction of controlled-access thoroughfares and other improvements were made as part of an early interstate highway scheme, known more commonly as interregional highways, that became more widespread following the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 and the ensuing interstate highway construction program. Much of the Meridian Highway now is part of IH 35 and it continues to be one of the state's—indeed, the nation's—most important highways.

⁸³³ Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519–1821*, pp. 94–95.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁸³⁶ Texas State Library and Archive Commission, “From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: The Texas Highway Department Blazes Texas Trails 1917–1968,” <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/highways/index.html> (last modified November 14, 2011).

⁸³⁷ 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).

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁹ *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).

⁸⁴⁰ Mead & Hunt, and Heritage Research, Ltd., *Nebraska Historical Buildings Survey*, p. 73.

⁸⁴¹ Dunn, “The Development of Automobile Roads in Dallas County,” p. 19.

⁸⁴² *Belton Journal*, February 24, 1916, p. 1; *Galveston Daily News*, January 1, 1913, p. 3; *ibid.*, April 19, 1916, p. 5; *San Antonio Light*, August 20, 1916, p. 5; *Wichita Falls Daily Times*, March 26, 1915, p. 6; *ibid.*, December 12, 1915, p. 15.

⁸⁴³ John L. Leffler, *Historic Williamson County: An Illustrated History* (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 2000) p. 18; Clara Stearns Scarbrough, *Land of Good Water: A Williamson County, Texas, History* (Georgetown: Williamson County Sun Publishers, 1990) p. 146.

⁸⁴⁴ East Texas Chamber of Commerce, *East Texas*, Book, 1923; digital images, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph130179/> (accessed September 13, 2012), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/>; crediting UNT Libraries, Denton, TX.

⁸⁴⁵ *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).

⁸⁴⁶ Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., Historic Resources Survey of New Braunfels, submitted to the Texas Historical Commission, 2008.

⁸⁴⁷ Fehrenbach, T. R., “SAN ANTONIO, TX,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hds02> (accessed May 02, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁸⁴⁸ Minutes of the Texas Highway Department, Volume 1, p. 19.

⁸⁴⁹ *Galveston Daily News*, January 11, 1921, p. 9; *San Antonio Light*, April 7, 1921, p. 8; *ibid.*, December 19, 1921, p. 18.

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⁸⁵⁰ *Galveston Daily News*, August 29, 1920, p. 14.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵² Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 2, pp. 75, 290.

⁸⁵³ *San Antonio Express*, June 8, 1921, p. 5; *San Antonio Light*, June 12, 1921, p. 33; June 23, 1921, p. 10; *Galveston Daily News*, June 5, 1921, p. 14.

⁸⁵⁴ *Galveston Daily News*, April 2, 1922; *San Antonio Express*, November 15, 1922, p. 6; *San Antonio Light*, December 19, 1921; *Wichita Daily Times*, September 10, 1922, p. 3.

⁸⁵⁵ *Belton Journal*, November 2, 1922, p. 8; *ibid.*, November 6, 1922, p. 1; *Laredo Times*, October 1, 1922, p. 12; *ibid.*, November 19, 1922, p. 70; *San Antonio Express*, May 28, 1922, p. 57; *ibid.*, June 4, 1922, p. 61; *ibid.*, March 18, 1923, p. 28.

⁸⁵⁶ Minutes of the Texas Highway Commission, Book No. 2, pp. 220–221, 290; *ibid.*, Book No. 3, p. 13.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Book No. 2, p. 125; *ibid.*, Book No. 3, p. 11; *San Antonio Express*, January 1, 1923, p. 17.

⁸⁵⁸ There also was disagreement within the Meridian Association. Nicholson wrote to Ayres in 1923, for example, that Colp was showing the Meridian Highway passing through Wichita Falls when, in fact, the Association had abandoned that “for the direct route through Terrall [*sic*] [,] Okla[homa] many years ago.” John C. Nicholson to H. B. Ayres, July 30, 1923, [Highways] Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives.

⁸⁵⁹ Minutes of the Texas Highway Department, Volume 2, p. 290.

⁸⁶⁰ “Meridian Highway International,” n.p., n.d., Old Spanish Trail Collection, St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, Texas.

⁸⁶¹ Letter from John C. Nicholson, March 7, 1928, Old Spanish Trail Collection, St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, Texas.

⁸⁶² McNaughton, G. A, *The Meridian Road in Texas* (San Antonio, Texas: International Road Association, Texas Division, 1916), From the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, David E. Colp Collection, Box 2H448.

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁴ Box 3047 - Corresp. PS & E Texas, 1917-23, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

⁸⁶⁵ Texas State Highway Commission; *Official Highway Map of Texas*; 1928; From Stephen F. Austin State University, East Texas Research Center; <http://digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/EastTexRC/id/12322/> (accessed January 03, 2013).

⁸⁶⁶ *Highways of Texas* (Houston, Texas: Humble Oil Co., 1928), from the files of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio, Texas.

⁸⁶⁷ *Official Minutes of the State Highway Commission*, Book No. 10, February 13, 1934, 357 ½. In Hays County, the Old San Antonio Road followed SH 2 from a point north of the Blanco River in San Marcos to the Comal County line.

⁸⁶⁸ *Official Minutes of the State Highway Commission*, Book No. 12, November 9, 1934, p. 9.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁰ Amey, p. 18. The program also funded a new bridge over the Nueces River in LaSalle County, *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸⁷¹ Bruce Boone, “*El Camino Real*,” *Texas Parade*, volume 3, no.7 (December 1938): 4.

⁸⁷² Minute Order No. 16701, September 26, 1939.

⁸⁷³ Interestingly, the Guadalupe River Bridge in New Braunfels was dedicated to Louis W. Kemp of Houston, who collected and preserved historical documents and contributed to the preservation of important historic properties in Texas according to Texas Highway Commission Minute Order 10397.

⁸⁷⁴ Texas Highway Commission Meeting Minutes, Minute Order 8913 (January 10, 1934), Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, TX.

⁸⁷⁵ Texas Highway Commission Meeting Minutes, Minute Order 10648 (April 6, 1936), Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, TX.

⁸⁷⁶ Writers’ Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Texas, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State* (Austin: Texas State Highway Commission, 1940): 5, 61–62.

⁸⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

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⁸⁷⁸ Box 2994 - Corresp. FAS (Federal Aid) Tex., 1942–43 & 1944, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁸⁷⁹ Writers' Program of the WPA, pp. 5, 73.

⁸⁸⁰ Harold T. Purvis, "TORRANCE, EDGAR LEE," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fto38> (accessed April 07, 2014), uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association

⁸⁸¹ J. A. Elliott, "Memorandum for Files," May 18, 1945, Box No. 2990-91, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁸⁸² "Get Action on Interregional Highway Enterprise," *San Antonio Express*, November 8, 1945: 4A, <http://newspaperarchive.com/> (accessed February 1, 2013).

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁴ Homer Riley, "People May Decide Super-Highway Plan," *Austin American-Statesman*, February 12, 1946, Box No. 2989-90, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁸⁸⁵ MCGRAW Marburger & Associates, "Overview: South Congress Avenue Preservation Plan," May 30, 2003, available from <http://historicbouldincreek.org/PDF/sconhistory.pdf> (accessed June 18, 2013), 16.

⁸⁸⁶ "Highway Commission Designates Fifty-One Roads to Cost \$2,293,707," *Dallas Morning News*, September 11, 1947, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 3, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX

⁸⁸⁷ "Design for Traffic," p. 24.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁸⁸⁹ Texas Highway Commission, Administrative Order, October 26, 1950.

⁸⁹⁰ Thomas E. Turner, "Main Street of Texas: Face Lifting of US 81 Will Take a Long Time," *Texas Parade* Vol. 13, No. 11 (April 1953): 17–18.

⁸⁹¹ "Main Street of Texas," *Texas Parade* vol. 13 no. 11 (April 1953): 19.

⁸⁹² "Main Street of Texas," pp. 17–18.

⁸⁹³ Turner, "Main Street of Texas," pp. 17–18.

⁸⁹⁴ Turner, p. 18.

⁸⁹⁵ "Other Cities," p. 28; Turner, p. 18.

⁸⁹⁶ Turner, p. 18.

⁸⁹⁷ Fehrenbach, "SAN ANTONIO, TX."

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⁹⁰² "Main Street of Texas," p. 17.

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