

I.1. INTRODUCTION

For many of us, the experience of driving along an interstate highway in Texas can be a thoroughly modern experience – with traffic, ongoing construction, and views of large-scale new development along the roadside. Perusing historic maps, though, shows us that the routes traversed by today’s modern interstate highways closely extend along routes of the some of the earliest paved highways in the United States and date from the 1910s and 1920s. In some locations, the heritage of our modern highways dates back even further, following railroad lines, stagecoach routes, and sometimes even trails from the Spanish Colonial era and earlier. The following report, *The Development of Highways in Texas: A Historic Context of the Bankhead Highway and Other Historic Named Highways*, seeks to clarify the links between our modern highways and their antecedents, explaining the evolution of our roadways over time.

Although today we think of highways as permanent and fixed in a single alignment, highways historically have been a patchwork of zigzagging roads, with multiple routes all using the same name. Trails and early roads typically fluctuated depending on the location of river fords and ferries, or depending on the political relationships between county officials and roadway organizations. The dynamic quality of the road network—established long before the introduction and widespread use of automobiles—endured well into the twentieth century and characterized the highway experience. Indeed, at the outset of this project, this study sought to determine the “exact” alignment of the Bankhead Highway in Texas. However, research quickly revealed that such an effort was not only elusive and subject to interpretation, but it also ignored the reality of highway evolution that historically has been subject to constant change and improvement.

The report also aims to strengthen our understanding of the truly remarkable transformation of selected highways/routes in Texas over the past century as the dirt trails from the pre-railroad era evolved into paved highways and freeways that supported a colorful array of tourist attractions and roadside resources. This transformation required vision, political will, financing, and technological know-how, all of which are explored within the historic context.

For the purposes of this report, the name “Bankhead Highway” refers to a historic roadway that generally follows a path designated by the Bankhead National Highway Association in 1916, re-affirmed in 1919, and disseminated to the public by way of a published tour guide in 1922. Despite the perceived certainty of this seemingly static route, the

alignment generated controversy among members of the organization, especially among competing interests in Texas and neighboring states, as explored in the context. Moreover, the route changed and evolved over time with the establishment of the Texas Highway Department in 1917, the incorporation of previously established intrastate highways (Fort Worth–El Paso and Dallas–Texarkana) into the national highway, the adoption of the federal highway designation system in 1926, and the creation of Interstate Highway System in 1956. The physical alignment also shifted over time, as desires for increased safety, higher speed, and new road-building techniques and technologies brought about many changes and improvements. Despite these changes, some segments dating back to the late 1910s and 1920s still exist in much the same state and condition and convey a strong sense of the past.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The completion of *The Development of Highways in Texas: A Historic Context of the Bankhead Highway and Other Historic Named Highways* represents the inaugural effort of the larger Texas Historic Roads and Highways Program. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) jointly administer the program, which was established in 2009 by House Bill 2642 with the goals of identifying and commemorating historic highways in Texas, and producing a series of interpretive publications and materials to encourage heritage tourism. Project deliverables include an upgraded version of the THC's online Historic Sites Atlas and the development of an online portal to distribute information to tourists. Funding for this multi-phase project was made possible by Federal Transportation Enhancement funds from the United States Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is administered by TxDOT.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This document describes the general development of historic highways in Texas and targets a wide variety of audiences that includes, among others, governmental agencies and cultural resource management professionals seeking to comply with a variety of federal and state regulations. The report also aims to support local preservation organizations working to designate historic resources, heritage tourism organizations interested in promoting and marketing historic highways, tourists looking for maps of historic routes and highlights along the road, and property owners and developers considering rehabilitation of roadside resources. To assist with future cultural resource management, the report describes the contextual development of highways in Texas at a statewide level. The report also presents specific information regarding six historic named highways of varying degrees of importance and that represent different parts of the state. The registration

requirements section of the report examines the types of properties that are tangible links to the events, trends, and patterns associated with this important theme in history. Together, these narratives provide a framework for evaluating the significance and physical integrity of the historic highways and associated historic roadside resources in Texas for possible listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

To support the application of the historic context and registration requirements, the project also entailed surveying and evaluating the NRHP eligibility of the historic-age (pre-1971) highway-related buildings and structures constructed along the various alignments of the Texas segment of the Bankhead Highway/State Highway (SH) 1 – the first all-weather transcontinental highway in the United States.¹ To aid local preservation efforts, the report provides much of the information required for the completion of future National Register nominations, including historic district nominations or a potential Multiple Property Submission (MPS). Within municipalities that participate in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program with the THC, the information also may be used to complete local landmark designations. Heritage tourism efforts may take advantage of the rich historic maps and images compiled within the report, as well as electronic map files that are compatible with smart phones to provide easy navigation on the road. Lastly, the report provides future recommendations for promoting and rehabilitating roadside resources and includes a list of buildings that are prime candidates for rehabilitation.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

The story of highway development in Texas is a complex layering of history that relies on a multitude of factors, themes, and topics, each of which could be the subject of a separate book or publication. Project historians undertook research at various repositories throughout the state including libraries and archives in Austin, College Station, Fort Worth, Dallas, San Antonio, Lubbock, and Denton. In addition, historians reviewed materials at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, and at the Department of Archives and Manuscripts at the Birmingham Public Library in Alabama, which maintains the papers and files of John Asa Rountree, Sr., the long-time secretary of the Bankhead Highway Association.

The challenge for this effort, however, has been the process of distilling the vast amount of information from the myriad of primary source materials gathered and reviewed for the project and the subsequent preparation of the historic context. This document highlights the most critical events and trends that trace the development, construction, and operation of the highway system in Texas. To that end, the document is organized to include a statewide overview of historic highway

development, detailed information about a sampling of six representative historic named highways, the results of the survey of the Bankhead Highway, and future recommendations.

I. STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT

The statewide historic context is divided into six distinct time periods that track the underlying historical foundations on which the highway system was built, the early visionaries who anticipated how and why such a system should be built, the economic forces involved, and the important role that all levels of government played while planning, implementing and maintaining the highway system. Finally, the statewide context discusses how new ideas about highway planning and design rendered older segments of these historic highways obsolete as a primary means of interstate travel. Within each time period, the statewide overview of highway development trends is followed by a discussion of broad development patterns that emerged along the roadside during the period. The following are the six distinct time periods tracing the historical development of the highway system in Texas:

- I.1. Early Texas Roads and Trails: 1700–1880
- I.2. County Roads and the Good Roads Movement: 1880–1916
- I.3. Initiation of the Highway System: 1917–1932
- I.4. Depression, Mobilization, and War: 1933–1944
- I.5. Postwar Road Expansion: 1945–1956
- I.6. Effects of the Interstate Highway System: 1957–1980

Although this report views highway development through the lens of the named highways that were developed during the 1917–1932 period, the trends and themes presented in all of the time periods have significance in their own right. Moreover, it often is difficult or impossible to isolate these trends from one another. Historic highways are best understood as part of a fluid and evolving highway system.

II. EVOLUTION OF NAMED HIGHWAYS

Following this overview of statewide historical trends, the report then highlights the Bankhead Highway and five of the other named highways that played important roles in the early development of the state’s highway network. These highway-specific narratives illustrate the fluidity that is at the essence of highway development. Each highway’s nomenclature, route, and physical character constantly were in flux. Even the Bankhead Highway, for example, was never referred to exclusively as the “Bankhead Highway.” As the context will detail, the Texas Highway Department was referring to the route as State Highway (SH) 1 as early as 1917. The route itself also constantly was realigned, as

the roadway evolved from a state highway into a U.S. highway, then into the Interstate Highway System.

The representative examples of historic named highways were selected because the Texas Highway Department (the state agency in charge of the highway program and predecessor to the Texas Department of Transportation) deemed them to be among the most important and of the highest priority when the agency initially conceptualized the state highway network in the late 1910s and early 1920s. These highways also present a good cross-section and geographic distribution of highway development within the expansive territory of Texas, extending through differing climatic, demographic, and economic regions. The selected representative named highways include the following:

- II.1. Bankhead Highway (State Highway [SH] 1) – U.S. Highway (US) 80/US 67 – IH 10/IH 20/IH 30
- II.2. Meridian Highway (SH 2) – US 81 – IH 35/IH 35W
- II.3. Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway (SH 3) – US 90 – IH 10
- II.4. Del Rio–Canadian Highway (SH 4) – US 277/US 83/US 62
- II.5. North Texas Highway (SH 5) – US 82/US 87/US 287/US 385
- II.6. East Texas Highway (SH 8) – US 59

Other significant historic named highways also exist from the establishment of the state highway department; however, their proximity to or affiliation with the subject highways often overlap or share a common history and were not included. The King of Trails Highway, for instance, which extends over portions of the Meridian Highway, is one such example.

III. NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION CRITERIA, PROPERTY TYPES, AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Following the discussion of the evolution of named highways, the report presents National Register Evaluation Methods, along with Property Types and Registration Requirements. This section of the document sets forth a framework that will help evaluate the significance and integrity of historic resources identified during field survey for NRHP eligibility. The Evaluation Methods section isolates the themes presented within each time period in the historic context and evaluates the significance of each in relation to National Register Bulletin No. 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Next, each highway-related property type or subtype is described and includes graphic documentation to identify its character-defining physical features. Each property type is linked to relevant significant themes identified in the previous Evaluation Methods section. In addition, the Registration Requirements establish integrity thresholds for each property type by interpreting the National Register's *Seven Aspects of Integrity*.

IV. SURVEY RESULTS

This section of the report summarizes the findings of the field survey of the Bankhead Highway, discussing trends in the survey data. This section of the report also analyzes how the historic context and survey methods were applied to this test case in the field. (Refer to the list of Appendices below for detailed survey results.)

Data Gaps

This section discusses areas that could be flushed out more fully with additional research, both in the historic context and in the survey results detailed in the appendices.

Future Recommendations

To conclude, the final chapter of the report explores future ideas and initiatives that may advance our understanding of the historic development of Texas' highways, as well as to recognize and preserve the legacy of the historic highways for the future. By no means an exhaustive discussion, this narrative serves as the basis for work to be completed in subsequent phases and is intended to function as catalyst or starting point for other recommendations. It can and should be amended in the future.

V. REFERENCES CITED

This report subsequently provides a list of references cited in the historic context, formatted according to the sixteenth edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

APPENDICES

A series of appendices supplement the report by providing additional technical information and detailed field survey data. Appendices include:

- *Appendix A* – The physical evolution of highway construction techniques, materials, and methods;
- *Appendix B* – Maps showing how the various alignments of the Bankhead Highway/SH 1 changed over time;
- *Appendix C* – An inventory table providing reconnaissance-level survey data regarding all properties surveyed; and
- *Appendix D* – Full-page survey forms providing more detailed information and additional photographs for resources listed in the NRHP or recommended either individually eligible or contributing to an eligible historic district.

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¹ Details regarding the field survey are included in the final *Field Survey Methodology*, which was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission on July 31, 2013.

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I.2. EARLY TEXAS ROADS AND TRAILS 1680–1880

STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The six historic named and numbered highways examined in this study—the Bankhead Highway, the Meridian Highway, the Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway, the Del Rio Canadian Highway, the North Texas Highway, and the East Texas Highway—trace their origins and development to early roads and trails, some of which are based on routes established by Spanish colonists and even Native American tribes. While these historic paths did not always follow the exact alignments as the named highways investigated herein, they largely fulfilled similar purposes in linking Texas regions with each other and with neighboring states and Mexico. Many nineteenth-century roads, stage and mail routes, and railroads followed portions of these early roads and trails, and sections of some evolved into segments of the six twentieth-century highways. Until Anglo-American settlement began in the late eighteenth century, most roads and trails were pedestrian, equestrian, and pack-animal routes. Wagons traveling on narrow dirt paths created ruts, but also led to the widening of many routes. Railroads frequently were built parallel to wagon roads, and the historic named highways continued this trend, often incorporating sections of earlier routes. When bridge construction on rail and wagon roads became widespread, solid footing on each side of a river or creek determined placement that sometimes changed older alignments. Upon entering towns and cities, regional routes connected with what often were narrower city streets.

TEXAS UNDER SPANISH COLONIAL RULE, 1680–1821

The earliest trails and roads in Texas were animal paths leading through forests and across prairies and dry lands to springs, streams, and rivers, following routes with the fewest obstacles.² Native Americans expanded such routes to incorporate seasonal camp sites, hunting areas, and villages. Prior to and following 1700, Spanish explorers and settlers traveled some of these existing trails, widening them as they moved on horseback with pack trains and soldiers. Spanish-era roads were created through use and brush and tree removal. Among the many journeys were those led by Antonio de Otermín, Alonso de León, Domingo Terán de los Riós, the Espinosa–Olivares–Aguirre group, Pedro Vial, and José Mares. Portions of routes taken by these *entradas* appear to follow general alignments, or are within a few miles of, sections of the historic Texas roads examined in this study.

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Figure 1. Photograph of a segment of the historic Camino Real dating to the 1600s in Mission Tejas State Park, Houston County, Texas, near State Highway 21. Source: National Park Service, El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail, <http://home.nps.gov/elte/photosmultimedia/mission-tejas-state-park.htm> (accessed February 10, 2014).



Spain's presence in Texas was limited by the size of the territory and its distance from settled areas of Mexico, the absence of economic incentives (significant quantities of gold and other minerals), and the successful defensive efforts of its native peoples. The quest to maintain its empire and to defend against French incursions drove Spain to continue its colonization of Texas. Although such efforts yielded little in expected or hoped for material wealth, Spanish colonists nonetheless created a network of primitive roads linking far-flung missions, presidios, and a few settlements with each other and Mexico. Many of the first missions, like those built in East Texas in 1690 and 1691, were on El Camino Real de los Tejas – the royal road connecting East Texas with Mexico City. (See *Figure 1.*)

After 1700, expanding settlement forged an increasingly complex system of local and regional roads among ranchos, missions, presidios, settlements, and river crossings. Some routes, such as El Camino Real and the roads from the Rio Grande near present-day Eagle Pass and Laredo to San Antonio, had multiple alignments known by several names and used different river crossings and intersections with other roads, depending on the seasons and water availability. Among the more significant roads of the Spanish Colonial era were El Camino Real de los Tejas, El Paso del Norte to Ysleta Road, the San Antonio–Laredo Road, La Bahía Road, and the Atascosito–Opelousas Road.³ Between 1700 and 1703, Spain created a supply station called San Juan Bautista, about 35 miles south of present-day Eagle Pass, to support reoccupation of Texas in defense of renewed French presence. San Antonio was founded in 1718, as was an associated mission and presidio, to function as a way station between San Juan Bautista and the East Texas missions. San Antonio quickly assumed significance as a major hub within the evolving road network. Between 1682 and 1793, Spain built 21 missions

and seven presidios, and founded seven settlements: Ysleta, San Antonio, Goliad, Nuestra Señora de Dolores, Laredo, San Elizario, and Nacogdoches.

In 1790, Texas was one of the least populated provinces of New Spain with fewer than two inhabitants per square league, and the settled areas had a total population of just 3,169 people.⁴ That changed with the steady expansion of the United States between 1790 and 1810, the transfer of Louisiana from Spain to France in 1800, the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and the United States' quest for more territory, all of which brought more Anglo-Americans into East Texas. They forged trails and built homesteads, trading posts, and buffalo camps along the Red River, and also moved across the Sabine River, establishing homesteads and small settlements along the lower Trinity and San Jacinto rivers.⁵ These immigrants were the vanguard of an unstoppable migration that populated East Texas and created local and regional networks of primitive roads linking to the northeast–southwest El Camino Real and the east–west Atascosito–Opelousas Road. One of the earliest north–south roads in East Texas was Trammel's Trace, an important route blazed about 1820 between Arkansas and Nacogdoches.⁶ At the end of the Spanish period, local and regional roads in Texas connected with routes into Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, and northern Mexico. (See *Figure 2.*)

TEXAS UNDER MEXICO AND THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS, 1821–1845

When New Spain won its independence after 300 years of Spanish rule and established the Republic of Mexico, it lacked funds for colonization, for defense, and for roads.⁷ Understanding it needed to populate Texas, and perhaps hoping in vain to maintain control through legal immigration, Mexico continued the Spanish *empresario* land grant program. Between 1821 and 1835, a flood of Anglo-Americans settled on 41 grants⁸ in the southeastern and south–central portions of Texas. As they traveled, built farms, plantations, and communities, Anglo-Americans used existing Spanish-era roads but created new networks of local and regional roads connecting their settlements with existing major routes. Immigrants to Stephen F. Austin's grant between the San Jacinto and Lavaca rivers in 1821 were mostly southerners who traveled in wagons, or down the Mississippi River and up the Red River to Natchitoches and then by land on El Camino Real. Others came from New Orleans to Natchitoches by land on El Camino Real. Some journeyed by ship from New Orleans to the mouth of the Brazos River. Still others followed the Opelousas Road from Louisiana.⁹ The settlers founded at least 16 communities within the Austin grant, including the colony's headquarters, San Felipe de Austin (1823), at the Atascosito Road crossing of the Brazos River.

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Figure 2. Map of Texas with Parts of Adjoining States, 1833. Compiled by Stephen F. Austin. Published by H. S. Tanner, Philadelphia. Major Spanish and Mexican-era roads. Source: Map 409a Historic Map Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas.

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Figure 3. Engraving entitled "Ferry Crossing a River in Texas." Source: Texas Heritage Society, crediting Homer S. Thrall's 1879 Pictorial History of Texas, <http://www.texasheritagesociety.org/Ferry-Fees-Republic-of-Texas.html> (accessed February 10, 2014).

After Texas gained independence from Mexico in 1836, the Republic aggressively sought colonists from the United States through land contracts similar to *empresario* grants.⁹ To support settlement and commerce, improve defense, and establish mail service within Texas and with the United States, the Republic planned improved transportation¹⁰ and communication systems, but was only able to fund road surveys. As settlement quickly pushed west and north from East Texas, networks of local and regional roads evolved, and new mail routes provided communication. As in the Spanish period, though, the relative absence of funding ensured they were primitive dirt tracks, most suitable for dry weather travel. New civilian and military roads incorporated previously established trails and paths, and identified new routes to defend an advancing frontier. Some roads defined grant and county boundaries, but they generally avoided obstacles such as water sources, capitalized on level ground, and incorporated year-round river and stream fords. Multiple alignments occurred where natural conditions changed with the seasons, and new settlements fostered alteration of existing routes.

In 1835, Anglo-Americans established a mail system with 15 routes, seven of which merged from the north, northeast, and south–southwest in San Felipe de Austin.¹¹ In the absence of bridges, ferries operated at many strategic river crossings, and steamboats transported cotton for limited distances on the Trinity, Sabine, and Neches rivers and on the Rio Grande to gulf ports. (See *Figure 3*.) In the late 1830s, a few stage lines moved passengers and mail between Houston and area communities, and by 1839, a stage linked Houston with Washington-on-the-Brazos and Austin. A few wealthy citizens traveled by carriage on selected routes including the Opelousas Road,¹² but in general, existing road conditions were inadequate for the needs of a new nation striving to profit in U.S. markets. The Republic was unable to provide much financial help, and initially assigned responsibility to county courts for roads. The county courts used, with limited success, crews of adult men and convicts to build and maintain roads.¹³ But by 1837, the Republic transferred road responsibilities to a Commissioner of Roads.¹⁴

The Republic chartered its first railroad, the Texas Railroad, Navigation and Banking Company, on December 16, 1836.¹⁵ Other railroad charters followed, but lack of government financing prevented both railroad and waterway construction. Similarly, the Texas Congress approved the surveys of new roads, but typically lacked the financial resources to build and construct many. Among the new roads approved during this era included the Military Road from San Patricio to the community of Preston on the Red River via San Antonio and Austin, the Chihuahua Trail from Presidio to northeast Texas, and the Central National Road between the Red River and Dallas County.^{16, 17}

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Figure 4. Painting entitled “Fort Davis,” depicting a stage coach and soldiers departing Fort Davis, located along the Upper Military Road. Source: *Texas Beyond History*, crediting Mrs. Melvin Warren, <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/forts/davis/camp.html> (accessed February 10, 2014).



TEXAS ANNEXATION AND STATEHOOD, 1846–1860

The United States annexed Texas on December 29, 1845, as the 28th state. However, Texas continued to struggle to fund, build, and service its road network. At the time of annexation, the state had no identified graded, graveled, or paved roads, and just one bridge.¹⁸ Nonetheless, Texas' statehood encouraged yet another wave of migration from the southern United States, as well as immigration from across Europe. In 1848, Texas adopted standards governing road construction,¹⁹ and gave control to the counties. Despite this policy shift, little changed from Republic days, and by the 1850s, businessmen's groups and communities were financing toll bridges because of the lack of government funding.²⁰ Although neither the State of Texas nor the counties had sufficient funds to construct and build roads, the U.S. Army invested heavily in Texas roads and, between 1846 and 1860, created a web of military routes that supported defense, settlement, and commerce and developed new links with neighboring states and territories.^{21,22} A network of routes opened between 1849 and 1855 in the Rio Grande Valley west of Laredo, in Southwest Texas, and west of Preston in North Texas. Three major wagon routes resulted: one from San Antonio through Del Rio to Fort Stockton and El Paso – the Lower Military Road; another from San Antonio to Fredericksburg to Fort Lancaster and west to El Paso – the Upper Military Road; and the third from Preston to Big Spring, Fort Stockton, and on to El Paso – the Military Stage Route.

Following annexation, the U.S. Army sought to defend settlements from attacks by Comanche and other tribes and built the first line of forts manned by Federal troops in 1849. In the 1850s, a second line of 14 forts was constructed farther west.²³ New roads linked these posts, serving commercial and military traffic and civilian mail delivery.²⁴ (See *Figure 4*.) Meanwhile, Americans in California demanded mail service from the United States, and in 1851 a mail stage route connected San

Antonio to New Mexico through El Paso.²⁵ The 1857 Post Office Appropriations Act funded the Butterfield Overland Mail and the San Antonio–El Paso Mail route, linking Texas with Missouri and California.²⁶

Railroad construction began near Houston in 1852,²⁷ and as building progressed, the need for stronger and more stable bridges resulted in the use of new design, materials, and technologies.²⁸ Texas counties and cities issued bonds for railroad construction, and the State offered incentives such as land grants and loans.²⁹ The Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railway Co., the first railroad in Texas, ran from Harrisburg to Galveston, and by 1860, five lines that originated in the Houston area served cities along and near the coast. Another line ran from Victoria to Lavaca.³⁰ These railroads offered passenger service and transport of agricultural products to coastal shipping points. In 1853, the U.S. Congress passed the Pacific Railroad Survey Bill, which provided \$150,000 for a survey of the best routes from the Mississippi Valley to the Pacific. Routes across the Panhandle and from Preston to El Paso were identified.³¹ In the 1852 Rivers and Harbors Act, Congress appropriated funds for harbor surveys at coastal ports, but achievements were limited as the shallow bays along the Gulf Coast quickly re-silted.³²

With Texas' statehood, immigration surged and settlement pushed west. Between 1846 and 1860, hundreds of new towns developed, and many new counties formed. By 1860, settlement extended as far northwest as the new counties of Cooke and Montague and south to Corpus Christi Bay, and the state's population exceeded 600,000 people. Houston and Galveston joined San Antonio as the primary trading centers of the period.³³ The business of freight hauling with wagons linked interior areas to coastal ports. Primary freighting hubs were Galveston, Houston, Matagorda, Indianola, Port Lavaca, Corpus Christi, and Jefferson.³⁴ By 1860, stage and mail coaches linked Houston with most of the state and connected north Texas with San Antonio and El Paso. Stage lines also moved passengers to such out-of-state locations as Vicksburg, Memphis, and Saint Louis; a coastal steamer also offered weekly passenger service from Galveston to New Orleans.³⁵

CONFEDERACY AND POST-CIVIL WAR ERA, 1861–CA. 1880

At the start of the Civil War, U.S. troops withdrew from Texas, leaving civilians with little protection from Native American attacks. Road building halted during the Civil War, and economic stagnation set in as the civilian population largely focused on supporting the Confederacy. Texas had no major battles and thus sustained little war-related damage to its roads and railroads.³⁶ With Texas' re-entry into the Union, the U.S. Army reoccupied the frontier forts and reestablished and expanded the pre-war military road network. Military exploration and road building focused on the Panhandle and the Trans-Pecos regions, where infantry

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Figure 5. Photograph of cowboys crossing a river along the Chisholm Trail (no date). Source: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/outdoor-learning/resources/keep-texas-wild/vaqueros-and-cowboys/texas-cattle-drives> (accessed February 10, 2014).



and cavalry combat commands mapped territory during Indian campaigns. Between 1846 and 1879, the U.S. Army had an enormous impact on Texas transportation systems and its economy, and was the largest investor in the state. The U.S. Army Topographical Engineers and the U.S. Army Geographical Engineers brought \$13 million to the Texas economy through pay and logistical operations including road surveys and construction, and harbor and waterway improvements. The Quartermaster's Department had an approximate budget of \$20 million for transportation-related activities in Texas.³⁷ Many of the original Army routes in the Trans-Pecos region and Southwest Texas laid the foundation for modern highways.

In the pre-Civil War era, cattle taken to markets followed a number of routes including the East Texas Beef Trail through San Augustine County, and the Atascosito–Opelousas Road. The Civil War produced an abundance of cattle in Texas and a limited supply elsewhere. In 1865 and 1866, drives again moved cattle into Louisiana. However, when that market became glutted, cattlemen turned north and west.³⁸ Drives increased both in number and in the quantity of animals moved to lucrative markets available through the Kansas railheads. Early north–south routes³⁹ included the 1866 Goodnight-Loving Trail in West Texas and the Driskill-Day, Chisholm, and Shawnee trails, which ran from South and Central Texas north to the Red River.⁴⁰ (See *Figure 5.*) The Dodge City Trail, also called the Western Trail or the Tascosa Trail, was the standard cattle route through the Panhandle after 1876. Millions of cattle used these trails, but once railroads arrived and the invention of barbed-wire fences limited open-range ranching, cattlemen moved their livestock shorter distances from ranches to towns with rail service.⁴¹

Between 1867 and 1873, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad built lines north from Houston to Denison, and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas (MK&T) Railway built lines south to Denison. The lines met there in 1873, and Texas had its first connection to the national rail network.⁴²

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Figure 6. Illustration of the Waco suspension bridge, 1871. Source: Texas State Library and Archives, Prints and Photographs Collection, 1993/202-8, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/highways/goodroads/page1.html> (accessed February 10, 2014).



By the mid-1870s, rail lines linked older settlements and the state's major towns and cities, and as the rail network expanded, railroad companies created new towns through surveys and land sales.

The Houston & Texas Central Railroad reached Dallas in 1872, and the Texas & Pacific Railway extended service to the city a year later, making Dallas into an important rail and commercial hub in that region. San Antonio, an important Army administrative center and agricultural service hub for South Texas, was aided by the 1877 arrival of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway,⁴³ and later, the Southern Pacific Line. Roads converged in Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio, and with the coming of railroad service, the separate geographic foci of each furthered growth in each city.⁴⁴ Throughout settled areas, towns with rail stops became shipping points, and communities with rail service grew faster than those without.

Despite advancing railroad lines in the post-Civil War era, improvements to harbors, and some use of steamboats, transportation largely remained the domain of wagons and stagecoaches, which moved agricultural products, mail,⁴⁵ and passengers to railheads and to locations without rail service. As in the pre-war era, existing non-military roads were poorly maintained, if at all, and permanent bridges were rare. A few groundbreaking examples of iron road bridges were built, including the landmark 1869 Waco Suspension Bridge. (See *Figure 6*.) It and other permanent bridges transformed small- and medium-sized towns into bustling commercial centers, and cities into regional market hubs.⁴⁶ In 1873, the state authorized counties to provide for roads through poll taxes and direct taxes on property, but little improvement resulted. Often described as wide, muddy quagmires in wet weather and deeply rutted, dust-choked routes in dry weather, Texas roads were more of a vexation than a boon to commerce and travelers. Without a centralized road department to provide financing, set standards, and oversee construction and maintenance, Texas roads remained fragmented and unreliable routes in varying conditions.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS ALONG ROADS AND TRAILS

RESPONSE TO SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Early Texas settlements were closely linked to the development of early roads and trails. In turn, the development of roads and trails was closely linked to settlements. For example, San Antonio de Bexar became the most prominent settlement in Texas during the eighteenth century largely because of its location at the juncture of El Camino Real and the Old San Antonio Road. Many other early settlements were located along these key roads, such as Stephen F. Austin's colony along El Camino Real. In the 1820s, the newly independent Mexican government issued land grants to encourage additional American settlements in East Texas, which fostered an expansion of trails and stagecoach lines.⁴⁷ Similarly, the establishment of missions and forts further out along the Texas frontier contributed to greater development of the road network linking these important nodes of activity and settlement.

Beginning in the 1830s, the Republic of Texas encouraged immigration from Europe and the United States by providing large land grants to groups of settlers. However, these land grants often were not yet accessed by roads or trails. As a result, rather than following existing roads, these pioneers often settled where fertile land was available for farming, even if it was difficult to access. Settlers in East Texas often forged their own trails, often following rivers. Similarly, during the 1840s and 1850s, German immigrants often arrived at the port at Indianola, then traveled westward to New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, and beyond.⁴⁸ An 1856 map entitled *Jacob, J. De Cordova's Map Of The State Of Texas* shows no established road along this route, but a rough road had developed by 1863 according to *Colton's Map of the Southern States*.⁴⁹ Even today, no major highway provides a direct route between New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, the two major hubs of German settlement of mid-nineteenth-century Texas.

By the 1860s and 1870s, the development of rail transportation and ports also was integrally linked to the preexisting road network. For example, some of the earliest railroad lines in Texas, such as one segment of the MK&T, closely followed the alignment of the Old Spanish Trail. The growth of the port in Galveston in the 1860s and 1870s likewise benefited from its proximity to the Old Spanish Trail and its link to the MK&T via the Galveston, Houston, and Henderson rail line.

TRANSPORTATION OF PEOPLE AND GOODS

Mineral Resources

From ca. 1700 until ca. 1820, the Spanish government's main incentive for the construction of roads in Texas was the extraction of mineral

resources. Beginning ca. 1680, silver mines operated near El Paso, and minerals were transported into the interior of Mexico along the Old Spanish Trail and Camino Real.⁵⁰ When the Spanish government realized that Texas' mineral potential failed to meet expectations, the incentive to improve roads waned.

Agricultural Production

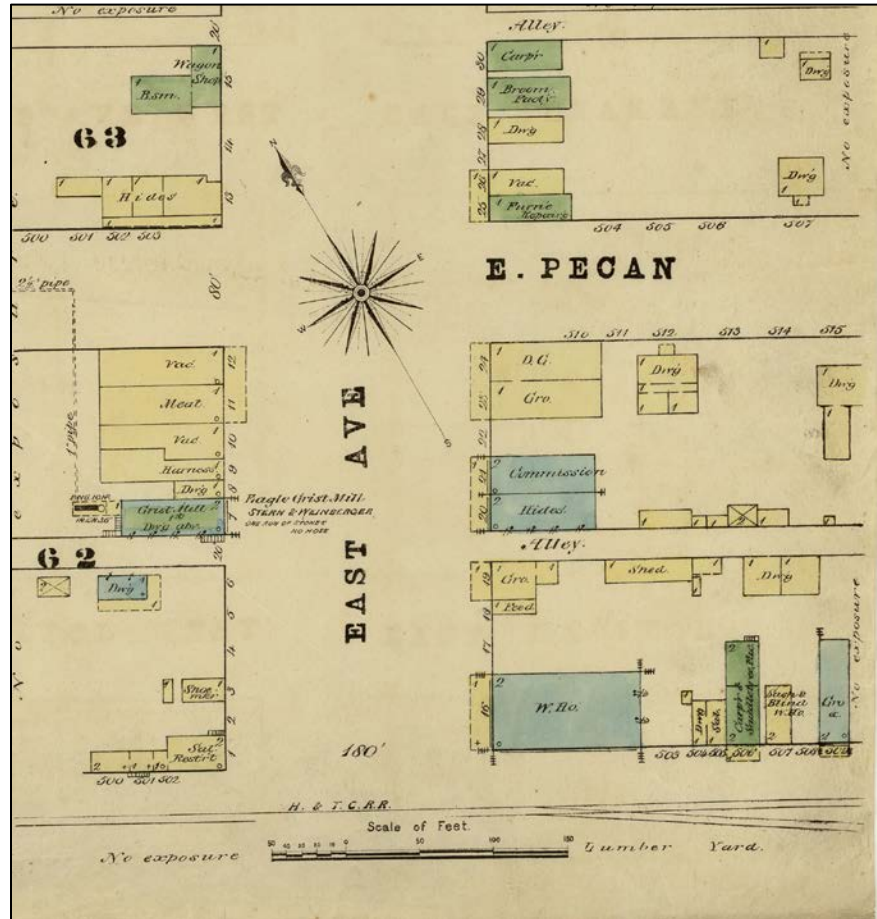
Texas' potential for abundant agricultural production was evident to the state's earliest settlers, but the relative lack of improved and reliable transportation routes to markets inhibited the growth of the agricultural economy. In the 1830s, New Orleans was the main market for Texas' agricultural products, but the overland journey via the Old Spanish Trail was long and difficult.⁵¹ Settlers in Stephen F. Austin's colony would even drive cattle overland to New Orleans, despite the numerous waterways, swamps, and other obstacles along their path, so that they could obtain higher prices than they could in Texas.⁵² Overland cattle drives along rough, loosely defined trails were the primary means of transporting cattle to market through the 1860s and into the 1870s, although the destinations to the north, such as Abilene, Kansas, supplanted New Orleans as the main market for cattle because of the rapidly expanding transcontinental railroad infrastructure. In fact, the need for a more efficient means of bringing cotton (the state's leading cash crop) and cattle to market was a primary motivator for the construction of railroads in Texas in the 1870s.⁵³ This development placed greater demands for a road network allowing farmers and ranchers to bring their goods and livestock to locales with rail service.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ALONG ROADS AND TRAILS

During Texas' early history, development was very sparse, even along roads and trails. From ca. 1700 through ca. 1820, roads were rough with few travelers and very few road-related buildings or even roadway features – just markings on trees to provide directions.⁵⁴ The primary developments in the era were missions, which were oriented inward rather than toward the roadway in order to provide security. In the mid-nineteenth century, forts were constructed using a similar, inward-facing plan. Increased settlement during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century contributed to a more complex and intricate road system that served a growing population. County courthouses, rather than missions, became hubs of activity in the evolving democratic society, and this trend affected land-use patterns. The establishment of stores, inns, livery stables, blacksmith shops, and other businesses along the roads that extended to courthouses catered to both local citizens and travelers and set the stage for subsequent development during the automobile era many years later. By the 1870s, maps began to illustrate important civic buildings such as county courthouses along roadways, especially in locations where roadways and railroads intersected.⁵⁵

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Figure 7. Detail of a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Austin from 1877 illustrating road-related businesses along East Avenue, where one of the state's first expressways was constructed after World War II. Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/txu-sanborn-austin-1877-1.jpg> (accessed February 10, 2014).



Greater concentration and more dense development in urban settings led to the publication of detailed fire insurance maps that provide insightful glimpses into land-use pattern and graphic documentation of the kinds of buildings and businesses in the state's larger communities. For example, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Austin from 1877 illustrate road-related properties such as wagon shops, saddlers, hotels, and warehouses along East Avenue, which later was widened and improved as part of an inter-regional highway in the 1940s and 1950s and later incorporated into the interstate highway system as IH 35. (See Figure 7.)

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² Texas Department of Transportation. "Historic Road Infrastructure of Texas, 1866–1965," National Register of Historic Places Draft Multiple Property Submission, 2013, Section E.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 85–95. By the early 1700s, El Camino Real continued east to present Natchitoches, Louisiana. In Texas, State Highway 21 follows a portion of the Spanish-era route, but diverges from it significantly in several locations. A. Joachim McGraw, John W. Clark, Jr., and Elizabeth A. Robbins, eds. *A Texas Legacy, The Old San Antonio Road and the Caminos Reales: A Tricentennial History, 1691–1991* (Austin: Texas Department of Transportation, 1991), p. 9.

⁴ Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519–1821*, p. 219.

⁵ William C. Pool. *A Historical Atlas of Texas*. (Austin: The Encino Press, 1975), pp. 35–37.

⁶ J. T. Williams. "The National Road of the Republic of Texas," in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 3, (January 1944), p. 218.

⁷ David J. Weber. *The Mexican Frontier 1821–1846: The American Southwest under Mexico*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), p. 282.

⁸ Aldon S. Lang, and Christopher Long. "LAND GRANTS," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mp1101>, (accessed April 24, 2012), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁹ S. G. Reed. *A History of the Texas Railroads and of Transportation Systems under Spain and Mexico and The Republic and The State*, (Houston: St. Clair Publishing, 1941), pp. 3–4.

⁹ Pool, p. 61.

¹⁰ Howard J. Erlichman. *Camino del Norte: How a Series of Watering Holes, Fords, and Dirt Trails Evolved into Interstate 35 in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University, 2006), pp. 70–76.

¹¹ Ellen Marshall, *Some Phases of the Establishment and Development of Roads in Texas, 1716–1845* (master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1934), pp. 57–60.

¹² William Ransom Hogan. *The Texas Republic: A Social and Economic History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), pp. 57–61.

¹³ Texas Department of Transportation, Section E.

¹⁴ Marshall, p. 70.

¹⁵ Reed, pp. 10–12.

¹⁶ Texas Department of Transportation, Section E.

¹⁷ Roy L. Swift, and Leavitt Corning, Jr. *Three Roads to Chihuahua: The Great Wagon Roads that opened the Southwest 1823–1883*, (Austin: Eakin Press, 1988), p. ix.

¹⁸ Marshall, pp. 99–100.

¹⁹ Texas Department of Transportation, Section E.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ W. Turrentine Jackson. *Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road Surveys and Construction in the Trans-Mississippi West 1846–1869* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 36–37.

²² Thomas T. Smith. *The U.S. Army and the Texas Frontier Economy 1845–1900* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), pp. 138–139.

²³ Pool, pp. 101–103.

²⁴ Smith, pp. 162–163.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

²⁶ Texas Department of Transportation, Section E.

²⁷ Reed, pp. 48–49.

²⁸ Texas Department of Transportation, Section E.

²⁹ George C. Werner, "RAILROADS," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eqr01> (accessed May 01, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

³⁰ Pool, p. 115.

³¹ Smith, p. 143. Research did not identify rail lines using these routes, nor discover any abandoned rail lines.

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³² Smith, p. 143.

³³ Kenneth W. Wheeler. *To Wear a City's Crown: The Beginnings of Urban Growth in Texas 1836–1865* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 47.

³⁴ Reed, pp. 42–44.

³⁵ D. W. Meinig. *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 61.

³⁶ Texas Department of Transportation, Section E.

³⁷ Smith, pp. 145–148, 13.

³⁸ Alonzo Bettis Cox. *The Economic History of Texas during the Period of the Reconstruction (1865–74)* (master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1914), pp. 137–138.

³⁹ Texas Department of Transportation. "Historic Road Infrastructure of Texas, 1866–1965," Section E.

⁴⁰ Pool p. 121.

⁴¹ Cox, *The Economic History of Texas During the Period of the Reconstruction*, p. 143.

⁴² Werner, "RAILROADS," *The Handbook of Texas Online*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁴ Wheeler, *To Wear a City's Crown*, p. 166.

⁴⁵ Texas Department of Transportation, Section E.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ 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).

⁴⁸ Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., Historic Resources Survey of New Braunfels, submitted to the Texas Historical Commission, 2008.

⁴⁹ Colton, J. H.; Creuzbaur, Robert; De Cordova, Jacob, *J. De Cordova's Map Of The State Of Texas*, 1856, Map (New York: J.H. Colton and Co., 1856), from the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, <http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~1777~180017:J--De-Cordova-s-Map-Of-The-State-Of> (accessed April 30, 2013); J. H. Colton & Co., *Colton's Map of the Southern States, showing also parts of adjoining states and territories...* 1863, Map (New York: J.H. Colton & Co., 1863), from the Library of Congress, Map Collection, <http://www.loc.gov/item/99447109> (accessed January 2, 2013).

⁵⁰ Anderson, John Q. "SILVER MINING," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dks02> (accessed January 24, 2013).

⁵¹ Texas State Library and Archive Commission, "From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: The Texas Highway Department Blazes Texas Trails 1917–1968."

⁵² Skaggs, Jimmy M., "CATTLE TRAILING," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ayc01> (accessed April 29, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁵³ Texas State Library and Archive Commission, "From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: The Texas Highway Department Blazes Texas Trails 1917–1968."

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *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).

I.3. COUNTY ROADS AND THE GOOD ROADS MOVEMENT: 1880–1916

STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

On February 19, 1895, Captain J. S. Daugherty, Texas' representative on the central committee of the National Good Roads Association, addressed the Good Roads Convention in Houston. (See *Figure 8*.) His powerful opening statement identified the "great question" of the time as "annihilating space by improved methods in the transmission of thought and power and the transportation of material." The first, through telegraphy, immediately communicated the need for material from the production centers of the world, where costs depended on "climatic conditions, fertility of soil, the use of machinery, the quality of seed, methods in production, methods in preparing for market, mediums of exchange, and transportation facilities."⁵⁶

Daugherty then turned the attention of the conventioners to the subject of transportation as he argued persuasively that railroads, waterways, and harbors were insufficient to keep the United States from being driven from world markets. In the South, farmers were being urged to destroy their cotton crops and produce for home consumption. Daugherty believed that if the South cut down its cotton crops and produced what it consumed at home, it would become closed to the western world as a market. Railroads also would suffer as a result. Dependence on railroads alone would not bring farmers prosperity. He then concluded, based on data provided by the National Farmers' Congress and Roy Stone of the Office of Road Inquiry in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, that "good public roads" had the potential to offer relief to agriculturists, make the United States competitive in the world, and help create the wealth necessary to build the roads.⁵⁷

Daugherty's message, an address at the meeting by Stone (who remarked on the state's failure to make headway in highway construction), and the opinions of local individuals who had concerned themselves with road funding and construction in Texas, resulted in passage of a series of resolutions at the convention. The most notable of them urged the State of Texas to establish a commission to be known as the State Road Board. The board would identify materials in Texas that were available for permanent roads and "exercise general supervision over plans for road construction conducted with State aid."

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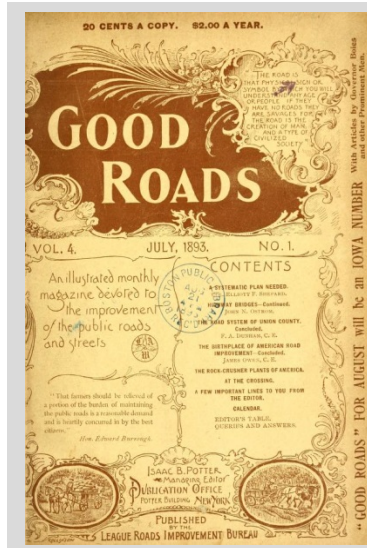


Figure 8. Cover of the Good Roads publication from July 1893. Source: Boston Public Library, <https://archive.org/details/goodroads416leag> (accessed January 30, 2014).

The Good Roads Movement

As bicyclists began advocating for better-quality paved roads ca. 1880, a loosely structured movement coalesced around the cause of “Good Roads.” One grassroots cyclists’ organization, the National League for Good Roads, was founded in 1892. In the same year, the League of American Wheelmen began publishing a magazine called *Good Roads*, which continued to be published until ca. 1926. After the turn of the twentieth century, as automobile ownership increased, the movement began to shift its focus from cycling to driving. The American Automobile Association (AAA) was founded in 1902. The National Good Roads Association—arguably the movement’s most politically influential organization—was organized ca. 1907. John Asa Rountree became secretary in 1911, and he appointed Senator John Hollis Bankhead as president in 1913. (Rountree and Bankhead will be discussed in further detail in the next section.) The Association was instrumental in delineating the Bankhead Highway and securing its funding. Around the same time, the Texas Chapter of the Good Road Association was organized officially. Prior to the establishment of the Texas Highway Department in 1917, the Texas Good Roads Association led the way in planning for road construction in Texas and lobbying for county road bonds to finance construction.

The balance of the resolutions dealt with acquisition and transportation of road materials, use of convict labor for road construction, a requirement that state aid to counties be dependent on submission and approval of plans for the proposed work by the State Road Board, and coordination with the governor, state penitentiary board, and legislature. Finally, a resolutions committee recommended immediate organization of a State League for Good Roads.⁵⁸

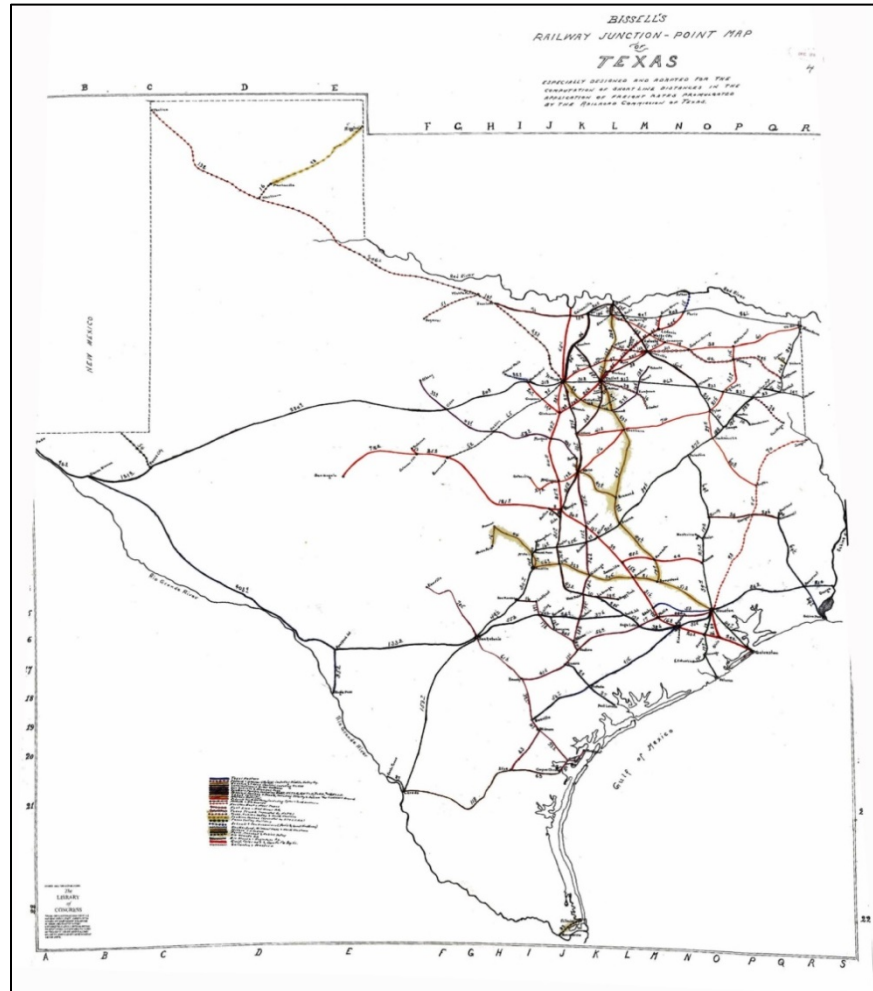
Embedded in the convention’s resolutions were visionary but pragmatic solutions to what had become a major problem for the state’s rural and urban populations. Road building and transportation by road in late-nineteenth-century Texas were fundamentally local phenomena – locally conceived, planned, and funded, and dependent on local materials. The state’s economy, on the other hand, was experiencing phenomenal growth, thanks to agricultural production and increasing commercial integration with the rest of the United States. The resulting tension, and the lack of political will to resolve it, eventually led between 1880 and 1916 to the establishment of county-level relationships with the United States Bureau of Agriculture’s Office of Road Inquiry, development of university road engineering programs, explosion in the number of Good Roads organizations, and formation of numerous lobbying groups. Those groups continued as a powerful force in road building as late as the 1920s.

1880–1910

Texas, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, had a railroad-dependent, dynamic economy whose agricultural base was shifting from self-contained production to commercialized agriculture that encouraged industrial development. Money and markets became indispensable, and a widespread reliable transportation system was essential.⁵⁹ As in much of the rest of the United States, where state and

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Figure 9. Bissell's Railway Junction-Point Map of Texas. Bissell's map depicts rail lines in Texas in 1891. After about 1910, roads such as the Fort Worth–El Paso (Bankhead), Meridian, North Texas, and southern route of the Old Spanish Trail generally followed a number of the lines. Source: Copied from Texas Department of Transportation historic maps.



federal interest and federal interest and knowledge regarding highway improvement had all but disappeared, roads in Texas were the responsibility of counties.⁶⁰

At the same time that public and government support for roads was “in the doldrums,” railroads entered a quarter century of unparalleled expansion. By 1890, United States trackage totaled 161,171 miles.⁶¹ In Texas, where railroads laid 4,548 miles of track between 1875 and 1885, trackage increased another 50 percent between 1885 and 1890, when Texas had the seventh largest population and the third greatest amount of railroad mileage (*Figure 9*). By the opening years of the twentieth century, Texas ranked first in railroad mileage.⁶² As a result, Texans relied almost entirely on railroads, which Article X of the 1876 Constitution had declared to be “public highways and common carriers.”⁶³

Indeed, railroad technology in the late nineteenth century was so dominant that there were no authoritative textbooks about highway engineering. Instead, the science of railroad engineering dominated the

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Figure 10. Photograph of cotton picking, dated sometime between 1881 and 1899. Source: The Portal to Texas History, crediting Mesquite Public Library, Mesquite, Texas, <http://texas.history.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph388707/m1/1/?q=cotton%20date:1870-1890> (accessed February 13, 2014).



educational field. As a result, “the foundations for many of the early professional concepts and content of highway engineering science came from railway engineering origins . . . particularly in the areas of design and construction of structures.”⁶⁴

A burgeoning population that almost tripled and cotton production that increased fourfold between 1870 and 1890 (*Figure 10*), in addition to a transportation network that largely failed to touch rural areas where 80 percent of Texans lived,⁶⁵ eventually drew the attention of legislators, educators, and proponents of agricultural interests. A legislative act in 1883 authorized counties to levy a road tax on property owners of 15 cents per \$100 valuation. However, property owners proved resistant to a tax for road purposes, even though they had passed constitutional amendments to that effect.⁶⁶

In 1887, legislation permitted counties to issue bonds for bridge construction.⁶⁷ Within two years, however, it was clear that the funding was insufficient, and a constitutional amendment was submitted to voters that would allow counties to levy an *ad valorem* road tax of up to 15 cents per \$100 valuation after a majority of qualified property tax-paying individuals voted to approve the tax. The amendment, which passed in 1890 by a vote of 129,391 to 71,637, also “authorized the legislature to pass local laws for maintenance of roads.”⁶⁸ In the 1880s and early 1890s, some of the support for legislative change in Texas and elsewhere stemmed from public concern about the perceived social and commercial isolation of agriculturists. But economic concerns took precedence over social ones because everyone agreed that poor country roads added to the costs of agricultural production.⁶⁹

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Figure 11. Photograph showing the “pioneer-stage” of road construction with only local and county funding, Bluegrove, Texas, ca. 1905. Source: *The Portal to Texas History*, crediting Clay County Historical Society, Henrietta, Texas, <http://texas.history.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph16523/citation/> (accessed February 13, 2014).



The impact that practical road building technology might have on local, state, and national economies drew the attention of prominent academicians in Texas at a relatively early period. In 1889, shortly before Vanderbilt, MIT, and Harvard began to offer courses in highway engineering,⁷⁰ two professors at The University of Texas wrote and spoke about road-building technology. The first of these was Robert Hill, a geologist who had spent much of his career mapping Central Texas geology, and was responsible for two geological surveys of Texas and significant publications on the Blackland and Grand prairies. His careful examination of the Blackland Prairie led him to conclude that it was “one of the most extensive continuous agricultural regions in the United States.” If there was an adequate transportation system in place that could overcome the drawbacks of the clay soil that impeded travel, the region would soon become one of the leading areas in Texas. Hill systematically listed the reasons roads were a necessity, including their role in providing transportation alternatives to railroads, and he referred to experiments that had yielded information about the effects of different road materials on the force required to draw a one-ton load. He then defined what constituted a good road—drainage, cross section, foundation, and surface—and he pointed to the importance of maintenance, comparing a road to “an expensive machine, which is subjected to constant exposure and very rough usage.”⁷¹

Hill noted that the current Texas laws governing road construction were founded in the “pioneer stage” and were completely insufficient to address current needs (*Figure 11*). In his opinion, the legislature needed to determine a classification of highways based on each natural region of the state and the road building materials available there. The legislature also needed to develop an equitable system of obtaining revenues for road construction, and Hill recommended road bonds, since it was future generations that would most benefit from work done in the present. Finally, Hill emphasized the absolute necessity of involving engineers who had the necessary technical education to design roads. He then recommended setting up appropriate programs



Figure 12. Stereograph of an early League of American Wheelmen race using “Penny-farthing” bicycles, photographer George Barker, ca. 1890. Source: The Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a13135/> (accessed February 13, 2014).

within states’ agricultural and mechanical colleges that were supported by the federal government.⁷²

Hill’s colleague at The University of Texas, T. U. Taylor, also spoke out on the topic of roads in Texas in 1889. A preeminent civil engineer, Taylor delivered an address that was published by the University, reiterating Hill’s assertions about the economic necessity of adequate county roads. He described the various methods then used to support road construction throughout the United States and described in detail two of the most commonly used road types: Telford and Macadam.⁷³

Although they were the results of different academic backgrounds, the similarities between Hill’s and Taylor’s treatises suggest that they were familiar with general road-building technology and the shortcomings of U.S. highway construction. As Frank M. Stewart wrote in 1934, “Roads and highways in the United States were so thoroughly neglected from about 1830 to 1890 that they rightfully earned universal recognition as the worst roads in the world. . . .” Emphasis had been placed, instead, on railroad construction, and until the decade of the 1890s the necessity for roads “had been neither particularly pressing nor evident to Americans.”^{74,75}

What tipped the balance in favor of investment in road construction was a combination of three factors: first, a nearly universal understanding that the expensiveness of transporting agricultural goods to market was rooted in a lack of good roads to link remote agricultural regions to railroads; second, the commercial manufacture of bicycles by Bostonian Albert Pope, who helped start the League of American Wheelmen (*Figure 12*); and third, the inauguration of free delivery by the federal Post Office Department to rural areas that were reachable by road.⁷⁶ Pope’s efforts created and served a burgeoning population of city dwellers who loved the freedom the bicycle gave them in their leisure time. He underwrote the opening of the nation’s first specialized highway engineering program at MIT in 1890, and he nurtured the League of American Wheelmen, its *Good Roads* magazine, which started publication in 1892, and the National League for Good Roads, which was founded in 1892.⁷⁷ (See the Good Roads sidebar earlier.)

Most importantly, Pope and the League of American Wheelmen lobbied Congressmen and other influential public servants who were advocating for Good Roads legislation. Their efforts bore fruit in 1893, the year Charles E. and J. Frank Duryea demonstrated America’s first horseless buggy (see *Figure 13*), and Rural Free Delivery (RFD) of mail was authorized by an Act of Congress.⁷⁸ On March 3, 1893, a Congressional Act was approved that appropriated \$10,000 “to enable the Secretary [of] Agriculture ‘to make inquiries in regard to the systems of road management throughout the United States, to make investigations in regard to the best methods of roadmaking, to prepare publications on the subject suitable for distribution and to enable him to assist the

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Figure 13. Image of Duryea Automobile, 1897. Source: *The 1893 Duryea Automobile In the Museum of History and Technology*, by Don H. Berkebile, from *The Gutenberg Project*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/30055/30055-h/30055-h.htm> (accessed February 4, 2014).

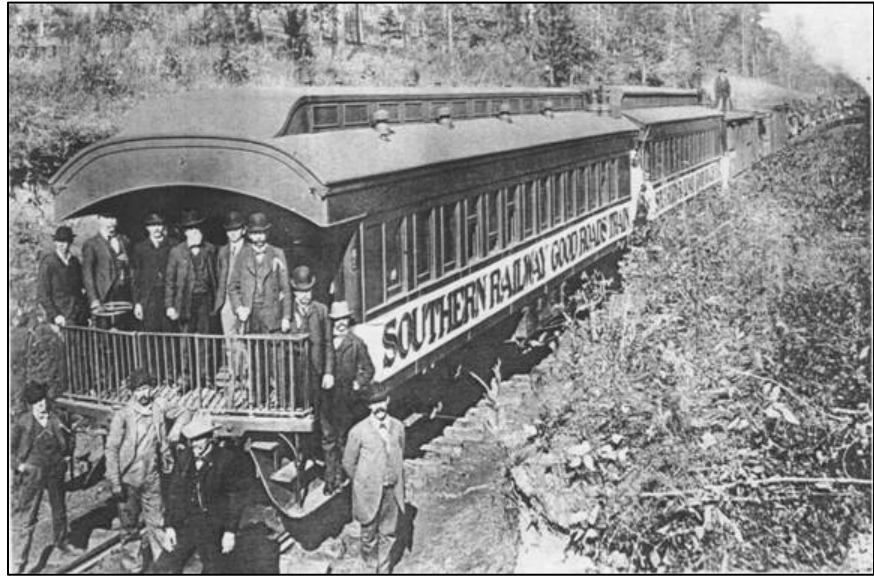


agricultural colleges and experiment stations in disseminating information on this subject.” The Secretary of Agriculture subsequently created the Office of Road Inquiry, which consisted of a special agent, an engineer, and a small clerical force.⁷⁹

Congressional appropriations of only \$10,000 between 1893 and 1896 and \$8,000 between 1896 and 1900⁸⁰ assured that the Office’s activities would be limited. For this and other reasons, the activities of the National Good Roads Association and its growing number of affiliates throughout the United States became increasingly important. The Office of Road Inquiry published proceedings of many of the Association’s meetings and often sent representatives to their programs. The Association kept the topic of Good Roads front and center for the general public by promoting “Good Roads trains.” These trains “carried speakers, road machinery, samples of road material,” and other educational items (see *Figure 14*). The Association also encouraged and nurtured the formation of innumerable city- and county-level organizations interested in roads, as well as formal Good Roads associations, including many in Texas.⁸¹ Increasingly, these associations that were devoted to the cause of road construction generally, and the Good Roads associations that promoted construction of specific named highways assumed leadership roles within each of the states and across state lines.

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Figure 14. Photograph of the Good Roads train, ca. 1901. Source: National Park Service, Route 66 in Missouri Survey and National Register Project, <http://www.nps.gov/rt66/histsig/missouricontext.htm> (accessed February 4, 2014).



The focus of the Office of Road Inquiry on investigation and education aided several states in their efforts to resurrect principles of sound highway engineering and to create foundations for modern scientific highway construction. Interaction of the Office with the few states that had created state highway departments also convinced the Office at a very early date that state control, rather than federal, was the better model for efficient highway administration.⁸²

As part of its investigations into the specifics of road construction, the Office of Road Inquiry disseminated information to the various states and road associations and then, in 1897, constructed what it called an object-lesson road. (See *Figure 15*.) Operating under the “seeing is believing” principle, the Office oversaw construction of a road in front of the New Jersey Agricultural College and Experiment Station. General Roy Stone, who had spoken at the 1895 Good Roads Convention in Houston and was in charge of the Office of Road Inquiry, initiated the object-lesson road program because he believed that it would stimulate interest in road building generally.⁸³

In 1900, the Office of Public Roads Inquiry (formerly the Bureau of Public Roads) supplemented the object-lesson road program by establishing a laboratory for testing road-making materials in cooperation with the Bureau of Chemistry.⁸⁴ It also created educational exhibits at all the great national and international expositions, road conventions, and state and interstate fairs. Materials the office generated were used to instruct highway engineering students.⁸⁵

Despite all the activity on a national level by the end of the nineteenth century, there is little evidence of direct contact between the Bureau of Public Roads or Office of Public Roads Inquiry in Washington, D.C., and local officials and Good Roads promoters in Texas. The reasons for the

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Figure 15. Photograph showing an example of an object lesson road [no location, no date]. Source: "Back in Time: The Object Lesson Road" by Rickie Longfellow, Federal Highway Administration, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/back0607.cfm> (accessed February 4, 2014).



delay are not clear. On a positive note, professors at the University of Texas lectured and published on road engineering as early as 1889, and by 1899 the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas faculty included a Professor of Engineering who was knowledgeable about road and bridge construction.⁸⁶ Automobiles arrived in Texas as early as October 1899, and auto races became a featured attraction at the heavily attended State Fair of Texas in Dallas by 1902. (See *Figure 16* and *Table 1*.) The first tentative steps were taken to organize the Dallas Automobile Club two years later.⁸⁷ The 1903 state legislative session resulted in passage of an act that empowered counties to issue bonds for roads and other specified internal improvements. A constitutional amendment favorable to highway bonds passed in the 1903 election.⁸⁸ Furthermore, even though Texas lagged in road construction from a national perspective, by 1904 the state was ranked first among 14 southern states with 121,409 miles of highway; it was ranked fourth with 2,128 miles of improved surfaced roads.⁸⁹

Not all counties embraced the idea of issuing road bonds (the Dallas County commissioners did not call the county's first bond election until 1903). The small amount of revenue from bond issues in 1904, when expenditures for roads by agencies of the state totaled \$4,138,395.79 of which \$1,594,545.00 were labor taxes and \$936,395.79 were from bond issues, also highlighted the reluctance of county governments to raise funds by this method or for citizens to vote in favor of bonds.⁹⁰ On a state level, bills to establish a Bureau of Highways or Texas Highway Department were considered in 1903, 1909, and 1911, but failed, while creation of the office of a state highway engineer was considered in 1905 and 1907, but rejected.⁹¹

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Figure 16. Photograph of an early automobile race [no location, no date]. Source: The Portal to Texas History, crediting Hardin-Simmons University Library, Abilene, Texas, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph55305/?q=car%20race> (accessed February 13, 2013).



Table 1. Road Statistics and Events

Date	Event
October 5, 1899	Edward Green and George Dorris drove first motorized horseless carriage into Dallas. ⁹²
1902	Auto races held at the State Fair of Texas. ⁹³
1903	Approximately forty automobiles were in Dallas. ⁹⁴
1904	Texas road mileage = 121,409 Texas surfaced road mileage = 2,128 ⁹⁵
1909	Texas road mileage = 128,971 Texas improved road mileage = 4,896 860 automobiles were in Dallas. ⁹⁶
1910	14,286 vehicles were in the 180 counties that registered cars. 1 in 542.7 individuals owned a registered motor vehicle in Texas (36th in the U.S.). ⁹⁷
	\$8,915,500.00 in bonds was approved by vote. ⁹⁸
1912	2,900+ automobiles were in Dallas. \$4,776,900.03 county road and bridge bonds were approved by vote; Tarrant County accounted for \$1,600,000.00 of the total. Texas had \$16,939,592.00 in outstanding county road bonds (fourth in the U.S. behind Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania). ⁹⁹
1913	Approx. 32,000 motor vehicles were in Texas. ¹⁰⁰
1913–1914	\$6,598,819.00 in road bonds was approved by vote. A total of 138 counties had voted for road or bridge bonds; five largest amounts approved were in Tarrant, Harris, Galveston, Dallas, and Bexar counties. ¹⁰¹
1914	Approx. 40,000 motor vehicles were in Texas. Texas improved road mileage = 10,526.79 \$9,920,079.11 was applied to the roads and bridges total in Texas. ¹⁰²
April 1, 1916	138,866 registered motor vehicles were in Texas; 1 automobile per 25 people. Roads and streets expenditures in Texas were approx. \$18,000,000.00. ¹⁰³

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*Figure 17. Photograph of an oyster shell object lesson road constructed near Mobile, Alabama ca. 1905, using techniques similar to those used near Beaumont. Source: Project Gutenberg, *The Future of Road-making in America*, by Archer Butler Hulbert, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/33706/33706-h/33706-h.htm#imagep137> (accessed February 13, 2014).*



The pattern in Texas began to change slowly after 1900. Some of the earliest interest in the services offered by the Office of Public Roads Inquiries appears to have come from a Good Roads committee in Beaumont affiliated with the local Chamber of Commerce. In 1904, the committee informed the director of the Office about an upcoming Good Roads convention in Beaumont and local efforts to test various types of road materials. The committee representative requested that the Office send a representative and pointed out that shell was abundantly available as a road material (*Figure 17*). The Office of Public Roads apparently sent a “Special Agent and Expert” immediately, and he remarked on the great interest that existed in the Beaumont area because of the work. In early November, the agent reported that he had completed a 16-foot-wide road using equipment provided by the Austin–Western Company. He would be moving on to Baton Rouge, where he would be instructing students, presumably at the state’s experiment station, using the “Clemson College plan.”¹⁰⁴

The Beaumont work, which resulted in construction of a 3,154-foot-long, graded shell road, was followed in 1905, 1908, 1909, and 1910 by projects that appear to have been initiated by the counties or by local Good Roads committees. In 1905, for example, Washington County citizens already had voted for road bonds. At the request of Congressman A. S. Burleson, a representative of the Office of Public Roads inspected the area and inventoried the materials that were available for road construction (sand, gravel, and rock) as far as 82 miles away. He recommended that the County could avoid wasting valuable bond money on poorly designed roads that would deteriorate quickly by hiring a skilled road engineer to develop plans prior to road construction.¹⁰⁵

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Figure 18. Photograph showing workers applying a seal coat to an object lesson road ca. 1905, illustrating the labor-intensive process of road construction. Source: "Back in Time: The Object Lesson Road" by Rickie Longfellow, FHWA, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/back0607.cfm> (accessed February 13, 2014).



Other projects near Mexia (1908–1910), Taylor (1908), Nacogdoches (1908), Paris (1909), Hallsville (1909), and Colorado City (1909) also were built under the direction of the Office of Public Roads and called Object Lesson Road projects. The project near Mexia on the Tehuacana Road involved construction of a 1,200-foot-long road with grading that varied from 30 to 40 feet. It had a 16-foot-wide strip of limestone macadam that was approximately eight inches thick in the center; culverts were of the wood floor stringer and dirt abutment type. The inspector from the Office of Public Roads reported that the people in the county were sufficiently pleased with the road to talk about a bond issue that was large enough to build 100 miles of road in and around Mexia. However, the inspector noted, a bond election would not occur until the dry weather conditions associated with a two-year drought ceased.¹⁰⁶ The inspector's comment highlighted the very pragmatic relationship that prevailed among weather, agriculture, and the financial capacity of counties to plan for and carry out successful bond elections. It also suggested fundamental and practical reasons why states that relied solely on county-level funding never would succeed at carrying out integrated, large-scale road or highway construction projects.

In all, a total of 15 such roads were built in Texas by the end of 1909 (*Table 2*). Details from Object Lesson Road projects in various counties show that the lengths of the roads varied from 600 feet to 15,700 feet. Surfaced width varied from 12 to 27.4 feet, with 15 to 18 feet being the most common. Road surfaces included shell, chert gravel, limestone gravel, earth, and sand-clay.¹⁰⁷ A wide variety of machinery and other equipment was used, but the construction work was labor-intensive nonetheless (*Figure 18*). In some areas, road materials were readily available; in other areas, such as that around Paris, surfacing material had to be brought from up to 100 miles away, a drawback that documented the ongoing importance of rail transportation to early road

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building. Public response to the Object Lesson Roads appears to have been uniformly positive, and some county commissioners moved ahead to build plants that produced road materials as well as in road building equipment. In some counties, citizens were sufficiently impressed to move ahead with bond elections, but persistent drought that impacted agricultural production and the willingness of citizens to tax themselves was a more accurate prediction of whether county road building actually occurred.

*Table 2. Roads Built Under the Direction of the Department of Agriculture in Texas.*¹⁰⁸

Place	Kind of Road	Length Graded (feet)	Width Graded (feet)	Length Surfaced (feet)	Width Surfaced (feet)	Depth (inches)
Beaumont	Shell	3,154	40	3,154	16	7
Texarkana	Chert			200		
Texarkana	Gravel	4,334		3,134	12	7
San Antonio	Limestone	1,460		1,469	27.4	6
Taylor	Gravel	3,094	30	3,985	16	7
Colorado	Sand-clay	2,400		2,400		
Tyler	Sand-clay	2,740	26	2,100	15	5½
Tyler	Sand-clay	2,640	26	2,640	15	5½
Troupe	Sand-clay	2,600		2,000	15	4-8
Terrell	Sand-clay	5,280	32	5,280	18	8
Terrell	Sand-clay	7,900	25	7,900	18	8
Bay City	Earth	15,700	32			
Hall[s]ville	Sand-clay	4,400	24	4,400	16	6
Mineola	Sand-clay	600	25	600	18	8
Paris	Sand-clay	3,716		3,716	18	6
Nacogdoches	Sand-clay	13,010	28	10,890	15-18	5½

While most county officials were only lukewarm in their support for the Good Roads initiative and state legislators could not be convinced to go further than debate about its merits, private individuals and organizations moved ahead with increasing momentum after 1900. In 1906, the Associated Secretaries of Commercial Clubs of Dallas appointed a committee whose job it was to arouse interest in Good Roads, not just in Dallas, but throughout Texas.¹⁰⁹ Two years later, the executive committee of the Texas Commercial Secretaries met, also in Dallas, and appointed a committee to promote formation of “county, district, and state good roads associations.” The work of that committee is sometimes credited with the passage of a 1909 Texas law that built on the 1905 constitutional amendment and provided for the creation of county road districts. The road districts could be independent of any other county-level subdivision. This new independence and resulting flexibility “cleared the field for the good road crusade” and made it possible for counties to gerrymander to create districts that were favorable to the passage of road bonds.¹¹⁰

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Figure 19. Photograph of early automobile visitors to the Padre Island seashore in June 1913. On Padre Island and across the state, the movements to build good roads and to build state parks to protect scenic treasures went hand in hand. Source: National Park Service, crediting the PAIS Archives, http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/pais/adhi3.htm (accessed February 13, 2014).



1910–1916

Beginning in 1910, the Good Roads crusade in Texas leaped ahead, fueled by the work and campaigns of numerous Good Roads associations, the complementary efforts of chambers of commerce and automobile clubs in small towns and large cities, the organizational prowess of state-wide clubs such as the Federation of Women's Clubs, and strengthening ties with national Good Roads associations. The role of Good Roads associations was crucial to the formation and passing of road bonds and the maintenance of relationships with the Office of Public Roads. Their intensive lobbying efforts, with those of the Federation of Women's Clubs, tipped the balance in the state-wide effort to create a highway department in Texas. The growing visibility of motorized vehicles on Texas roads aided the crusade, as well, as did the development of departments, engineering courses, and testing laboratories at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas and the University of Texas.

The Good Roads crusade in Texas had a pragmatic, governmental face. It also had a cultural face as the movement slowly metamorphosed from one seeking to serve the needs of agricultural communities to one promoting travel and tourism. Between 1910 and 1916, the aims of the movement broadened to reflect the visions and cultural values of organizations and individuals. Among the new emphases were visions of great transcontinental highways running both east and west, and north and south; promotion of memory and history through the naming of specific roads; and identification of issues that were tied to the scenic value of the Texas landscape (*Figure 19*). These included access to the out-of-doors and integration of roadside landscaping. After 1916, they included access to public parks and efforts to eradicate billboards and



Figure 20. Photograph of John Hollis Bankhead, Senator from Alabama, ca. 1911. Bankhead was born on a plantation in Alabama in 1842 and served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, earning the rank of captain. He entered the Alabama state legislature in 1865, serving intermittently until 1881. After a stint as warden of the state penitentiary from 1881–1885, Bankhead served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1886–1906. He then represented Alabama in the U.S. Senate from 1907–1920. Bankhead was a vocal advocate for transportation, roadway construction, and waterway construction. In 1913, he became president of the Good Roads Association. His leadership was instrumental in the passage of the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act. Bankhead died in 1920. His survivors included son John H. Bankhead II, U.S. Senator; son William B. Bankhead, Speaker of the House; and granddaughter Tallulah Bankhead, actress. Source: The Encyclopedia of Alabama, crediting The Alabama Department of Archives and History, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/fa ce/Article.jsp?id=h-1495> (accessed February 24, 2014).

other signage that impaired the public's enjoyment of the roadscape. All of this work occurred within the context of a national push to upgrade the Office of Public Roads Inquiry in Washington, D.C., and to pass a law in Congress that would support highway construction. Until 1908, that effort was spearheaded by Representative A. C. Latimer of South Carolina. Thereafter, senators Dorsey W. Shackelford of Missouri and John Hollis Bankhead of Alabama became the primary advocates for federal spending to build the country's transportation infrastructure through the funding of roads (*Figure 20*).¹¹¹

Beginning around 1910, the general public began to recognize that professional engineers were essential to planning and executing road work. In that year, the board of directors of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas created a chair of highway engineering. Faculty member James Nagle had been a proponent of Good Roads for more than a decade; he was joined by Robert J. Potts, who held the highway engineering chair for four years. Potts's duties went far beyond teaching a new generation of civil engineers. He was charged with "arous[ing] interest in the construction of improved highways by lectures, conferences, and articles." In addition, if requested to do so, he was to advise county commissioners and officials associated with Good Roads organizations about "the best methods of location, construction, and maintenance of highways and furnish general estimates of cost."¹¹²

Potts got to work immediately on the promotional aspects of his job and wrote in August 1910 to L. W. Page, Director of the Office of Public Roads. Realizing that the State Fair in Dallas was an excellent venue for educating the public about roads, Potts and the College's Division of Highway Engineering proposed laying out a Good Roads Park, which would consist of streets and roads 30-feet wide. Samples of pavements and county roads would be installed by contracting firms as a way of advertising their work and showing road materials. Potts hoped that Page would send one of his engineers to lay out an "ordinary earth road," and Page responded favorably.¹¹³

A year later, Potts undertook a high visibility road trip. Leaving from Denison and driving through Dallas County, Waco, Bryan, and Houston, he used the event to map and log a north-south route from the Red River to the Gulf.¹¹⁴ The route corresponded to some parts of what would eventually become a branch of the Meridian Highway, in particular the segments from Waco southeast through Marlin, Calvert, Hearne, Bryan, Navasota, and Hempstead to Houston and Galveston. (See *Figure 21*.)

Potts also published studies, including one about the benefits associated with construction of good roads, and he probably was associated with the organization of the Texas Engineering Experiment Station. In 1913,

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Figure 22. Laboratories of the Bureau of Economic Geology and Technology, University of Texas. The Bureau's laboratories included one for road material testing, which opened in 1914. Source: James P. Nash, Road Materials of Texas, Bulletin of the University of Texas no. 62 (Austin: A. C. Baldwin & Sons, 1915).



conglomerates. He concluded that there were 11 types of road building rocks in Texas. His purpose in conducting the study reflected the challenges road builders faced due to lack of transportation capacity: Nash sought to “aid the road builder in the selection of the proper material for each locality.” In some cases, builders might choose to select other suitable materials such as granite and wood blocks, brick, concrete, and bituminous materials,¹¹⁷ but each of these involved some amount of manufacturing.

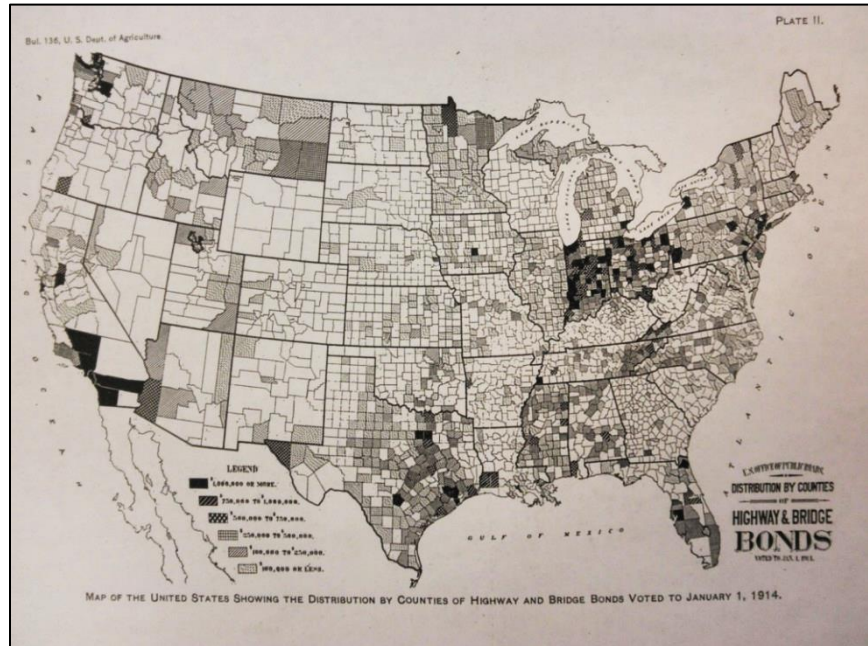
Nash, the Dean of Engineering, Taylor, and other professional engineers such as those who had formed the Texas Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers, produced and distributed publications that were helpful to counties, associations, and road builders. They also spoke frequently at road association meetings about the practical and technical aspects of road construction. The Texas Good Roads Association annual meeting for 1915, for example, included presentations of technical papers about road construction. Attendees recommended “that county commissioners’ courts create highway engineering departments to have authority over the construction and maintenance of highways in the county. This department should be in charge of a competent man trained in highway construction.”¹¹⁸

Not only were these meetings helpful to neophytes; they also created and strengthened ties among the professional communities of professors and practicing engineers, members of Good Roads associations, and the lay persons responsible for road bonding, planning, and construction on a county level. Increasingly, counties understood the value of receiving the assistance of professional engineers in the planning and oversight of specific projects. While a number of the largest cities had engineers on staff, counties tended to seek necessary engineering help from the Office of Public Roads. For example, employees of the Office conducted detailed studies of a

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Figure 23. Highway and bridge bond elections in the United States until January 1, 1914, by county. Tables accompanying the map show that Texas had voted the fourth largest amount of bonds up to January 1, 1914; two of the four states that issued greater amounts of bonds derived the greatest amount from state-issued bonds. They also show that Texas voted by far the greatest dollar value of bonds during 1912–1913. Approximately 28 percent of Texas counties voted for bonds in 1912–1913; as of January 1, 1914, a cumulative total of over half of Texas counties had voted for bonds. Proceeds of the 1912–1913 bonds built 856.5 miles of sand-clay roads; 1,014.5 miles of gravel roads; 114 miles of macadam roads; and 60 miles of bituminous macadam roads.

Source: Laurence I. Hewes and James W. Glover, Highway Bonds: A Compilation of Data and an Analysis of Economic Features Affecting Construction and Maintenance of Highways Financed by Bond Issues, and the Theory of Highway Bond Calculations, Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Agriculture No. 136 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), Plate II, pp. 47, 62–85.



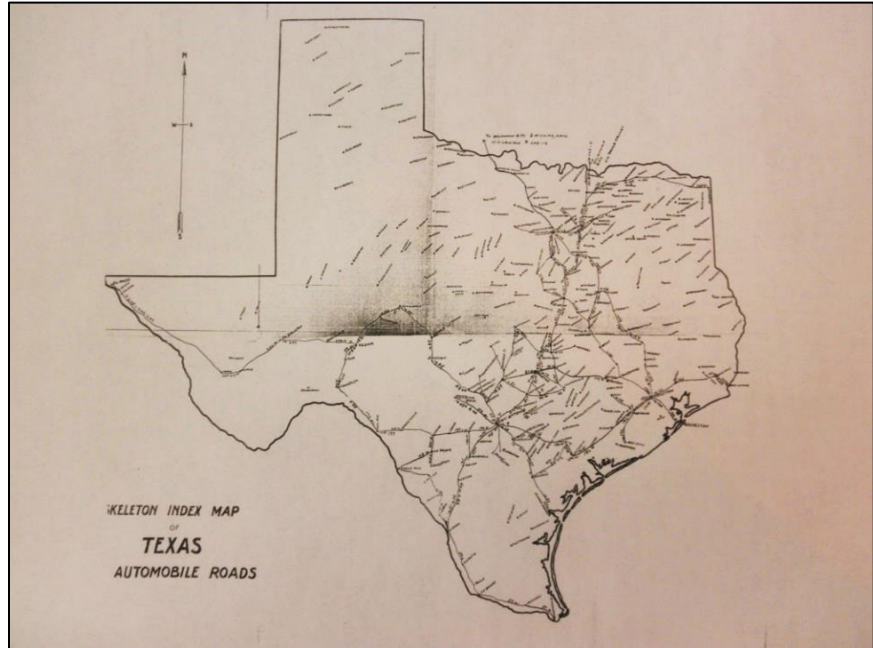
proposed highway route from San Antonio to Corpus Christi in 1910. They also assisted with a road improvement project in Montague County, involving a system of roads and bridges; road improvements in the city of Crockett, where the County had employed a civil engineer; a project to build 60 miles of new road in Wichita County; a proposed project in Orange County, where \$200,000 worth of road bonds had been approved by a vote of five to one; and McCulloch County, where \$75,000 worth of bonds had been passed.¹¹⁹

In McCulloch County, at the recommendation of an Office of Public Roads employee, the County paid an engineer \$500 to prepare surveys, plans, and estimates, and the commissioners' court hired a superintendent to oversee the project. The process was orderly and logical, a significant improvement over earlier practices in Texas. But some members of the commissioners' court opposed the advice of the representative from the Office of Public Roads because the "modern methods of construction" he advocated involved what they judged to be "excessive costs."¹²⁰ That concern was widespread. As a result, concerns about cost that were associated with standards and activities the Office and local professionals considered to be necessary for adequate engineering, together with a lack of interest in regular road maintenance, continued to stand in the way of construction of comprehensive road systems on county and state levels.

Outreach from the Office of Public Roads to county officials greatly assisted progress, beginning in 1912 when Congress passed the Post Office Appropriation Act. The Office's budget of approximately \$200,000 that was intended to underwrite experimental and education work was supplemented by an appropriation of \$500,000. This

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Figure 24. Skeleton Index Map of Texas Automobile Roads, 1914–1915. Source: Bexar County Highway League, *Official Log Book for Texas, 1914–1915* (San Antonio, Texas: D. E. Colp, [n.d.]), *Collections of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo Library, San Antonio, Texas*.



significant legislation, which was a forerunner of the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act, got the federal government directly involved in public road building on a local level. The Secretary of Agriculture and Postmaster General were charged with selecting post roads for improvement. In turn, the state or local subdivision where the improvement was planned was responsible for matching the federal funding at a ratio of two to one.¹²¹

Passage of the Post Office Appropriation Act; the commitment of Texas' universities to train road engineers and disseminate reliable information to counties and Good Roads organizations; and the willingness of certain segments of the Texas population to tax themselves in order to fund road projects all helped to increase the mileage of improved roads beginning in 1912. (See preceding *Figure 23*.) An official log book for the principal automobile routes depicted the maze of connected roads across Texas that invariably met in and radiated from the largest cities – Fort Worth, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston (*Figure 24*).

Road engineering, the development of road materials and equipment, and the dissemination of information improved considerably after 1910. But the federal government and Texas legislature were reluctant to initiate far-reaching legislation or a series of governors to sign it. That reluctance meant that in Texas, a state with no state-level highway commission, funding and planning remained at a county and, sometimes, at a precinct level. At the same time, individuals and organizations that understood the economic and social benefits of good roads were motivated by grand schemes for road networks that, as Captain J. S. Daugherty had expressed it in 1895, “annihilate[ed] space.” Good Roads advocates of all types conceptualized on a grand scale,

whether it was a road that reknitted North with South or even joined continents, or others that celebrated America's grand scenery, memorialized historical figures, or romanticized the distant past. The tools they used to promote the cause of Good Roads included promotional auto tours, clubs, high-profile meetings, publications of road logs and maps, lobbying of county- and state-level officials, and outreach to local citizenry. They all were focused on convincing the state legislature to create a highway department or lobbying counties to pass bond issues to fund segments of what the Good Roads associations hoped would someday form great transcontinental highways. Importantly, the Good Roads advocates recognized and strongly supported the roles of trained highway engineers.

In twentieth-century Texas, the earliest organized proponents for Good Roads were automobile clubs, such as the San Antonio Automobile Club, which was formed at the Phoenix Club in 1903 and started with 13 members. Club outings went to local landmarks and places of scenic beauty such as the Medina River and New Braunfels.¹²² A similar San Antonio organization was the Rockhill Club, which was active by about 1910.¹²³ The Dallas Automobile Club, initially founded in 1904, re-formed in 1910 when it merged with the Dallas Automobile Owners Club.¹²⁴ Such clubs worked in concert with high profile automobile tours, such as the Glidden Tour, which were widely advertised public spectacles. Dallas was on the seventh annual Glidden Tour in 1910, when the participants entered Texas at Texarkana and drove through Clarksville, Paris, Bonham, and McKinney. This route eventually would become the North Texas Highway (State Highway No. 5).

Also in 1910, a representative from the Ohio Pathfinder organization named Guy Finney drove from New York to San Francisco by way of Texas, where he followed the earlier Glidden Tour route from Texarkana to Dallas. The party then drove to Abilene and El Paso,¹²⁵ covering approximately the route that later would be designated the Southern National Highway (see *Figure 25*), Fort Worth-to-El Paso Highway, and Bankhead Highway. In 1912, a national publication, *The Automobile*, reported the "first road run for farmers and ranchmen ever held in the world." It would be a history-making event that would tour to all the main cities in Texas and cover about 1,000 miles.¹²⁶ Similar attention-getting events included trips for the American Automobile Association (AAA) by "pathfinder" A. L. Westgard, described as the "Man Who Maps Trails." Among the organizations within the Good Roads movement, the AAA was known for publishing maps and tourist directories to share with motorists. To this end, Westgard's trip in the summer of 1913 would include several routes through Texas, where Westgard would map both a route from Waco to Austin and San Antonio, and from Waco to Houston and Galveston.¹²⁷ (See *Figure 26*.)

Figure 25. Section of the Southern National Highway Through the Sweetwater Country. Source: *Here and There Around Sweetwater*, p. 8, R. C. Crane Collection, Box 35, Folder 5, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

HERE and THERE *Around Sweetwater*



Camp Joy is considered one of the most picturesque and comfortable tourist camps found along the Broadway of America Highway. Sweetwater has five tourist camps conveniently priced from 50c to \$2.50 per day, making this an ideal stopover place.



The "Old Swimmin' Hole."



Left—A picture of the winding road into the Tonkawa Mountains, south of Sweetwater.



Ruins of Old Fort Chadbourne in 1853, located south of Sweetwater.

GOLF — Country Club, and a beautiful municipal golf course which is one of the finest in West Texas.

EXPOSITION—The Midwest Exposition is a sectional fair that is participated in and attended by the entire Central-West Texas. It is an important factor in developing this section.

LAKES—Santa Fe Lake, City Lake, and Lake Trammell furnish abundant recreation with boating, fishing, swimming, and duck hunting in season.

THEATRES—Three, and a 1,600-seat Municipal Auditorium.



The \$20,000 club house of the Sweetwater Country Club. There is also an excellent golf course in connection.



Lake scenes around Sweetwater.

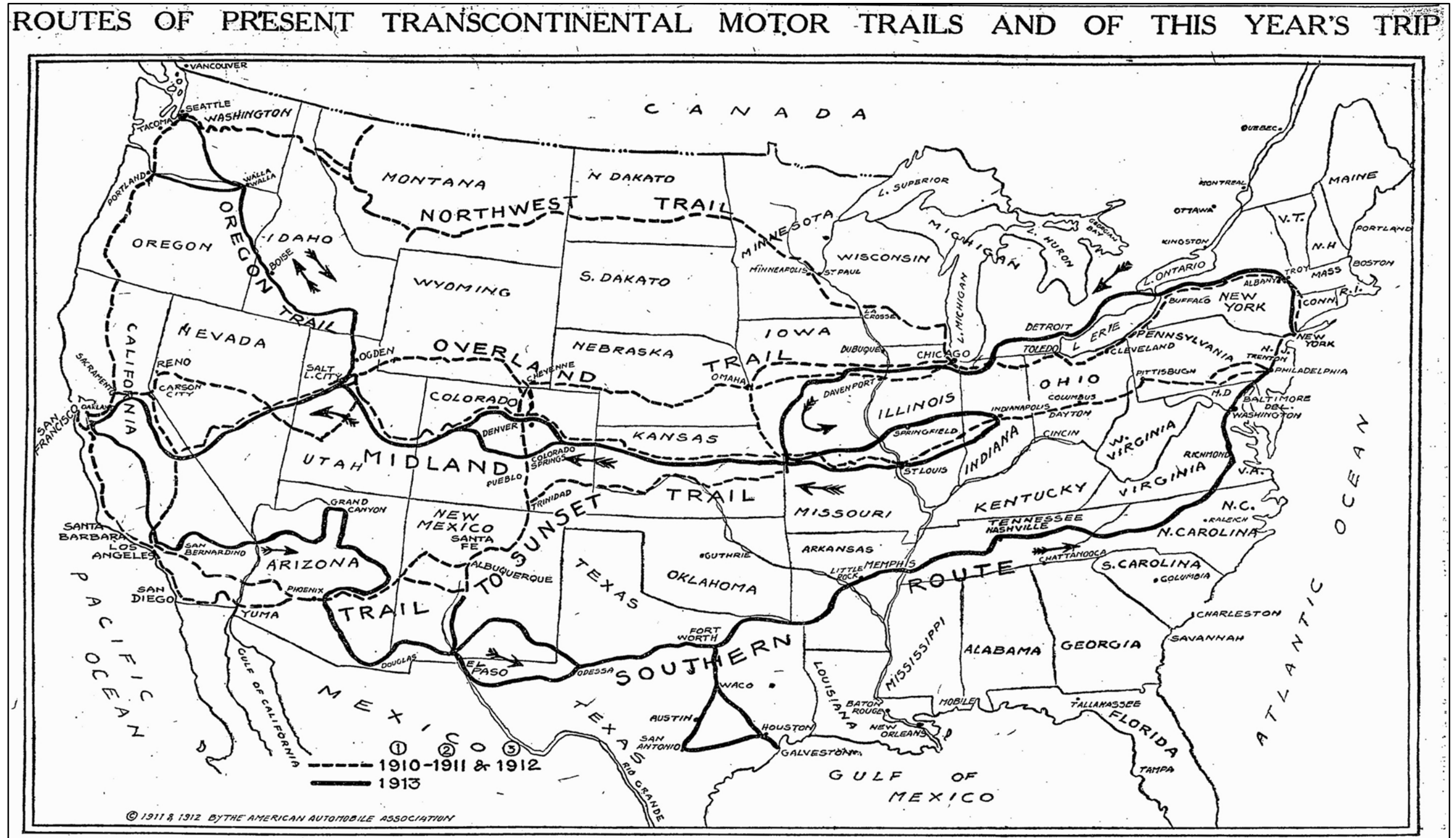




Left—A general view of the Tonkawa Mountains, south of Sweetwater, in which is shown (right) a close-up section of the wide strata of glass sand, 99.5% pure, that runs through the entire length of the mountain. It is likely that within the near future this tremendous sand deposit will be the cause of several large glass factories being located in this vicinity. Here is also shown a part of seventy-five miles of paved highways in this county.

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Figure 26. Coast-to-coast travel mapped by A. L. Westgard in 1913. Original caption read: "This map shows in dotted line the four lines of coast-to-coast travel mapped by A.L. Westgard for the American Automobile Association. The unbroken black line shows the route which he will follow this Summer [sic] in mapping the 'Oregon Trail' and 'Southern Route.' Arrows indicate the directions of the new running, which will aggregate twelve thousand miles." Source: The New York Times, May 4, 1913.



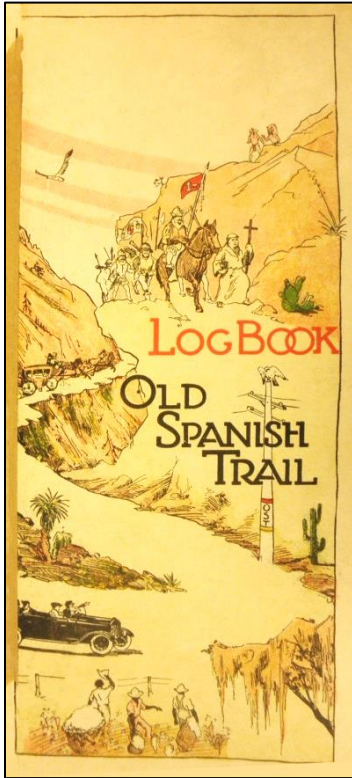


Figure 27. *Log Book Old Spanish Trail*. Source: *Highways: Related/Joining Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives, Louis J. Blume Library, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas*.

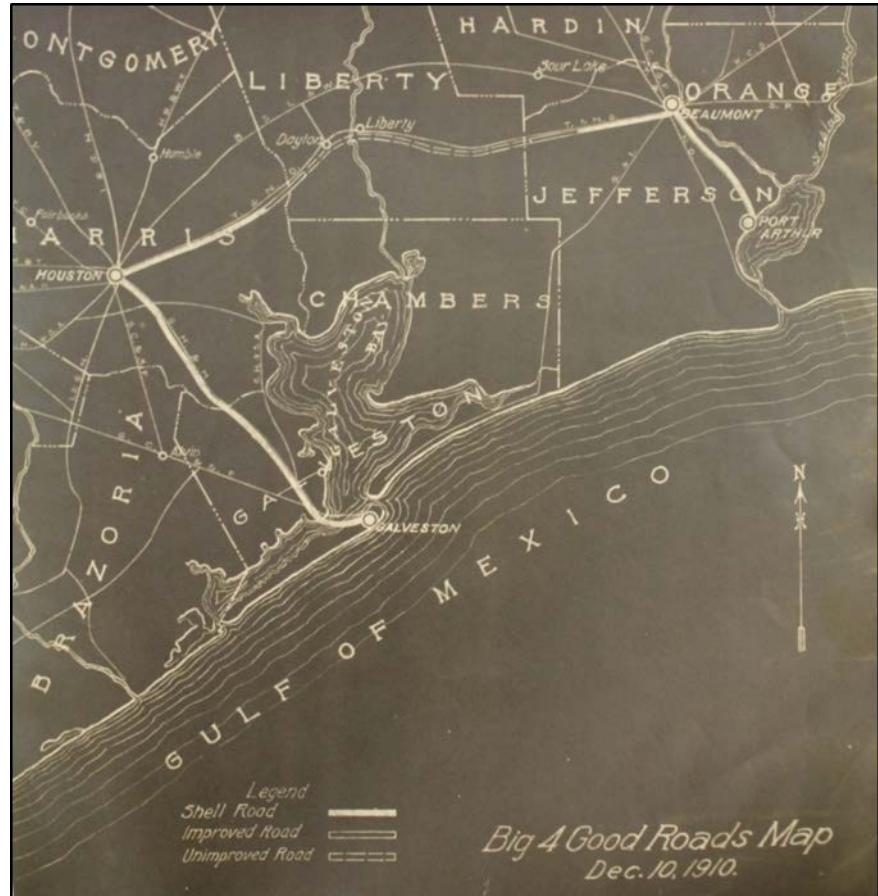
Yet another effective promotional tool to draw attention to good roads was the innumerable, colorful, and imaginative maps and guides issued by such organizations as the AAA and individual named highway associations. Such guides and maps provided much-needed information to motorists about highway routes, road conditions, and the various businesses along the routes, such as those selling gasoline, tires, and other auto-related services. Hotels, restaurants, and camp grounds all advertised in guides that identified areas of scenic and historic interests for tourists. The guides also served a promotional purpose for the highway associations that published them, an opportunity for the association to inform the public about its work and to tout the assets of its particular long-distance route (Figure 27).

One of the earliest maps published in Texas was the *Big 4 Good Roads Map* that depicted a segment of southeast Texas and roads linking Port Arthur, Orange, Houston, and Galveston.¹²⁸ (See Figure 28.) In 1913, the Dallas Automobile Club published the *Official Red Book and Guide*, which depicted roads leading into Dallas and other Texas cities.¹²⁹ The Bexar County Highway League published an *Official Log Book for Texas, 1914–1915*, a tour handbook designed to show “the Principal Automobile Routes in the State of Texas,” but which notably ignored all roads in the northwestern quadrant of the state. (See aforementioned Figure 24.) It also failed to depict the already well-traveled major route from Fort Worth to El Paso, the Fort Worth-to-El Paso Highway. The Kansas–Oklahoma–Texas & Gulf Highway Association published a road log in 1914 for the highway that ran from Herington, Kansas, south through Fort Worth to Waco. In 1916, premier highway mapper Harry Locke toured the roads from El Paso to Shreveport and Denison to Galveston. The work was sponsored by the Dallas Automobile Club and published in 1916 as “Texas Automobile Tours.”¹³⁰ The same year, Good Roads advocate David E. Colp directed the logging of the Meridian Road on its route through Texas. The log was created by engineer Lake Robertson and accompanied a text written G. A. McNaughton, editor of the *Texas Good Roads Magazine* in San Marcos. The publication was lavishly illustrated and filled with promotional text.¹³¹

A combination of state and national Good Roads associations, together with numerous specifically named highway associations, proved to be highly effective proponents for Good Roads. According to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) historian Richard F. Weingroff, named trails could be traced to the 1890s, but “the movement began in earnest in the early 1910s, with the National Old Trails Road (Baltimore to Los Angeles) and the Lincoln Highway setting the pattern.”¹³² Backed by the support of the National Good Roads Association (organized in 1900) and the AAA (founded in 1902), numerous smaller associations forged ahead to promote highway construction. In Texas, an umbrella organization called the Texas Good Roads Association was in existence by 1910. A permanent version of the association was formally organized at the

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Figure 28. *Big 4 Good Roads Map*, December 10, 1910. Source: *Good Roads*, Box 6, Folder 3, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.



State Fair in Dallas in 1911 for the purpose of carrying on “a general campaign of education in the interest of road improvement and furnish[ing] engineering advice and assistance to counties and local road clubs.”¹³³

A national group, the Old Trails Road of America, triggered the beginnings of what probably was the earliest interest in Texas in a historic trail. A claim made in 1911 for the Santa Fe Trail as the oldest trail in America drew the attention and disapproval of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) leader Claudia W. Norvell from Texas. Norvell subsequently spent almost a decade documenting and marking El Camino Real in Texas with the assistance of an engineer, the DAR organization, and some funding from the state legislature.¹³⁴ By the end of 1911, there were several named highway associations that were either based in Texas or had plans for highways that would cross the state (*Table 3*). These included the Gulf Coast Good Roads Association, which envisioned building a road from the Gulf to the Red River and may have been another name for the Red River to Gulf Highway Association, and the Meridian Road or Highway Association. The Texas Trans-State Highway Association was mentioned in connection with the Red River to Gulf Highway and Meridian Highway, suggesting the likelihood of a physical linkage. At least an additional three named

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highway associations were in operation by 1912 and included the Puget South-to-Gulf, Gulf-to-Colorado, and Fort Worth–El Paso highway associations. The last association envisioned a route that later was overlaid in part by the Southern National Highway by 1913, the Dixie Overland Highway in 1914, and almost entirely by the Bankhead Highway beginning after 1916.

Table 3. Named Highway Associations in Texas.

Date of Formation	Name	Purposes
By 1911	Red River to the Gulf Highway Association; possibly the road promoted by Gulf Coast Good Roads Association, J. H. Hawley, Galveston.	Gulf Coast Good Roads Association promoted a road from the Gulf to the Red River with a width of 20 feet and 100-foot right-of-way to include roadway and double-tracked electric railway; auto traffic to be on a "speedway." ¹³⁵
1911	El Camino Real Association, promoted by Claudia W. Norvell.	To identify and mark the route of El Camino Real. ¹³⁶
June 1911	Meridian Road/Highway Association (Kansas), promoted by John C. Nicholson, Newton, Kansas.	To establish a north-south auto route, promoting a road north to Canada, south to Gulf of Mexico, and adopting signage. ¹³⁷
1911	Meridian Highway Association-Texas; in three divisions: North Texas, San Antonio, and Gulf.	
By July 1911	Texas Trans-State Highway Association.	Mentioned in connection with Red River to the Gulf Highway and Meridian Highway. ¹³⁸
By 1912	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puget South-to-Gulf Highway Association. • Fort Worth–El Paso Highway Association. • Gulf-to-Colorado Highway Association.¹³⁹ 	
February 1913	Southern National Highway Association.	"To establish a transcontinental highway from Washington, D.C., to San Diego, California, by a route sufficiently far south to avoid the snows of the Rocky Mountains." Intended to connect with the San Diego–El Paso Road. ¹⁴⁰
May 1913	Jefferson Davis National Highway Association.	To secure a route from Washington, D.C., to San Diego, beautify the road, and mark historic places on it. In 1917, the route entered Orange; it also went to Austin, San Antonio, Brownsville, and El Paso. ¹⁴¹

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Table 3. Named Highway Associations in Texas.

Date of Formation	Name	Purposes
By 1914	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kansas–Oklahoma–Texas & Gulf Highway Association. • San Antonio–Atascosa and Gulf Highway Association. • San Antonio–Port O’Connor Highway Association. • San Antonio–Laredo Highway Association. • San Antonio–Blanco and Granite Highway Association. • Alamo–Victoria–San Jacinto Highway Association. 	To build a road from Herington, Kansas, south to Fort Worth and Waco. ¹⁴²
Ca. 1914 ¹⁴³	Dixie Overland Highway Association.	To promote construction and use of a highway through Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California; the shortest, straightest, only year-round ocean-to-ocean highway; for use by tourists, freight, military assets. ¹⁴⁴
1915	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Spanish Trail Association (eastern end). • King of Trails Association. • Military Road Association. 	International route from Winnipeg, Canada, to Gulf of Mexico by way of Denison, Dallas, Waco, Austin, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and Brownsville. Proposed military highway along Mexican border. ¹⁴⁵
1916	Military Road Association.	Military highway along Mexican border. ¹⁴⁶
By October 1916	El Paso–Fort Worth Airline Association.	Airline pike road. ¹⁴⁷
By June 1917	Dallas–Texarkana Highway Association. Fort Worth–Roswell Highway Association. El Paso–Texarkana Highway Association.	Proposed amalgamation of Dallas–Texarkana and Fort Worth–El Paso Highway Associations. ¹⁴⁸
1917	Henry Exall Memorial Highway Association.	Promoted a route from Boulder and Denver, Colorado, to Galveston, Texas. ¹⁴⁹

Notable named highway associations affiliated with Texas routes supplemented the list. Between 1913 and 1916, additional organizations included the Southern National Highway and Jefferson Davis National Highways (1913), Kansas–Oklahoma–Texas & Gulf, Dixie Overland, San Antonio–Atascosa and Gulf, San Antonio–Port O’Connor, San Antonio–Laredo, San Antonio–Blanco and Granite, and Alamo–Victoria–San Jacinto highway associations (by 1914); and the Old Spanish Trail and King of Trails (in 1915). Plans for a highway called the Military Road were discussed in 1915 and became more feasible in



Figure 29. Photograph of David E. Colp (1867–1936), who served as secretary of the Texas Good Roads Association for eight years between 1910 and 1920. He also was an influential member of the Old Spanish Trail Highway Association from ca. 1919 to 1923, the Meridian Highway Association from ca. 1920 to 1923, and the Glacier to Gulf Highway Association from ca. 1924 to 1925. The breadth of his commitments sometimes was interpreted as a lack of loyalty to any single route, but he was recognized by all accounts as a consummate supporter of funding for Good Roads in Texas. Colp additionally served as chairman of the Texas State Parks Board from ca. 1923 to 1934, where he advocated for connectivity between highways and state parks to accommodate the motoring tourist. The David E. Colp Papers are archived at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin. Source: American Academy for Park & Recreation Administration, <http://www.aapra.org/Pugsley/ColpDavid.html> (accessed February 4, 2014).

1916.¹⁵⁰ An El Paso–Fort Worth Airline Association appears to have formed in 1916, when forward progress by the Dixie and Fort Worth–El Paso highway associations may have failed to occur at a pace that met the expectations of West Texans. A Dallas–Texarkana Highway Association was contemporaneous with the Fort Worth–El Paso Highway Association, but attempts to consolidate the two groups under the name El Paso–Texarkana Highway Association apparently failed, despite the benefit to a trans-state highway that an amalgamation would have meant.¹⁵¹

The Official Good Roads Year Book for 1914 listed numerous named highway associations and general Good Roads associations that were not necessarily affiliated with any one particular road. In addition, a note mentioned that “[p]ractically every town of 5,000 inhabitants or over has an active commercial club, and in every case these organizations act as Good Roads clubs and make the road propaganda one of their chief departments of work.”¹⁵² In general, the clubs, associations, and named highway associations were headed by a president, who tended to be a high profile member of the local community. A secretary acted as the manager and ran the organization. Depending on the enthusiasm of the president and secretary, such individuals sometimes served on more than one organization. David E. Colp, for example, was at one time the secretary of the Texas Good Roads Association, various Texas divisions of the Meridian Highway, the San Antonio–Laredo Highway, Alamo–Victoria–San Jacinto Highway, Bexar County Highway Division of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce¹⁵³ and, eventually, the Old Spanish Trail Association (Figure 29). Larger and more complex association organizations usually included a board of directors and full slate of officers. Depending on the length of the sponsored road, there would be a number of different geographical divisions, each with its own slate of officers who reported back to a central office.

Differentiation of one association from all others, particularly if named routes overlapped, was considered essential to the success of a named road association and its efforts to finalize routes and see completion of the actual road. They all aspired to be recognized by the National Highways Association and the AAA. To distinguish themselves, each association developed distinctive trail markers with particular shapes and colors. They published promotional materials that highlighted particular historical or scenic attributes associated with the trails, and they published maps that noted intersections with other national highways. In the textual map information, the association highlighted the numbers of states and counties the road traversed; the numbers of cities, towns, and hamlets it touched; and the county seats and state capitals on the route. If a printed guide was available, it contained promotional material about the road and association, advertising from road-related businesses along the road, and a detailed written and

point-to-point description and map of the route. The interested public was given an opportunity to purchase membership in the association. Promotional materials typically were distributed through local businesses, lodgings, and the AAA.

The involvement of constituents along the route was key to the success of a named road association. Prior to 1917, it is not clear how sophisticated the association systems were, but it is likely that some aspects of the post-World War I era system were in place. Operations of an association were dependent to a great extent on the willingness of citizens, businesses, and local Good Roads associations to purchase memberships at various levels. Ideally, communities along a proposed route could be convinced that, if they purchased enough memberships, the association would take that financial support into consideration when promoting the specifics of a route. However, even an enthusiastically supported association could not count on memberships for 100 percent of its support. As a result, association secretaries, the people who did most of the work, often supplemented association operations out of their own funds. Enthusiasm for the trail, then, was essential for successful association leadership, as was marked capacity for organization.

With all road construction funded locally in Texas prior to 1917,¹⁵⁴ and no government-based state-wide organization to provide structure, the work of the numerous Good Roads associations and of the Texas Good Roads Association was essential to continuing road construction.¹⁵⁵ In the first half of 1914 alone, the Association “helped to carry fifty-one out of the seventy-three road and bridge bond elections that were held.” In addition, the Association helped counties “place the bonds to the best advantage, insisting that competent engineers be employed to superintend the expenditure of the money, and urging that maintenance be adequately cared for.” In 1916, the Texas Good Roads Association helped with 186 Good Roads meetings and the formation of 84 local Good Roads organizations. In addition, the Association assisted with road bond campaigns that raised over \$10 million. It also “furnished engineers to prepare estimates for roads in many counties and cooperated with a Federal highway engineer. . . .” The organization’s own engineer, Lake Robertson, visited counties to assist them with estimates for road projects and, in 1916, he logged the entire Meridian Highway.¹⁵⁶

The Texas Good Roads Association was assisted in its promotion of Good Roads on both local and state levels by the Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs.¹⁵⁷ Beginning in 1912, the Federation began to express its support for the movement at annual meetings, where members discussed the positive impacts improved roads could have on rural families. In addition, they broadened the focus of the Good Roads movement by beginning a discussion about improvements to the

roadscape that paralleled the work being done by the national Federation. A resolution passed at the statewide meeting in Fort Worth in November 1912 pertained to tree planting adjacent to highways.¹⁵⁸ By 1914, the Federation had formed a Good Roads Committee, and the next year the president posited that it would be “a splendid thing” if Texas roadscape were beautified with native trees and flowers. At the approaches to bridges, for example, clusters of silvery maple would act as “signals of approach,” while the roadway borders could be planted with “the beautiful blue bonnet and Spanish dagger, and the golden yellow daisies.”¹⁵⁹

By 1916, the Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs could boast that their efforts had assisted the beautification of roads, complementing the work of the better roads crusade. Their purpose was to make the highways across Texas “so attractive that tourists will gladly linger here to enjoy the rich scenery, helpful and delightful climate, [and] incidentally leaving coins in the vicinities through which they pass.” More ambitious plans included establishment of “many artistic but inexpensive Tea Houses along . . . highways of travel, where the weary autoist could rest and be refreshed.” Members planned for beautification of the highways by “planting native trees, shrubs and hardy plants along the sections, thus giving an almost geographical aspect to the tourist speeding along them.”¹⁶⁰

The preponderance of the work of the Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs would not occur until after World War I. But the county-level efforts of the Federation to improve local roads assisted the very organized efforts of the many Good Roads associations before and during the war. Both categories of Good Road advocates appear to have been energized by passage of the Federal Aid Road Act in 1916, which appropriated \$75 million for road construction in the United States. The funds were to be spent over five years by the Secretary of Agriculture in cooperation with state highway departments on constructing, reconstructing, or improving public roads over which U.S. mails were or might be carried. Federal aid would be apportioned to the states based on a mathematical formula that was based on area, population, and mileage of rural post roads and star routes. Disbursement of funds was dependent on each recipient state’s having a highway department in place that could work with Office of Public Roads Districts.¹⁶¹ By this system, state highway departments would submit all road documents to the federal district offices (construction programs, project statements, plans, specifications and estimates, contracts, and final construction reports), and the district office would have to give its approval before work could proceed. The federal contribution for any road was limited to \$10,000 per mile, and maintenance remained the responsibility of each state or its civil subdivisions, such as counties.¹⁶²

The 1916 Act appeared to be far-reaching. In fact, it had the effect of extending powers granted by the 1912 Post Office Appropriation Act by requiring that each state have a highway department, that any road on which federal funds were spent would be properly and continuously maintained, that control would remain with the states, and that each state would have multiple district offices and professional engineers with which it could coordinate. In retrospect, the Act established principles of highway administration and engineering and laid the foundation for subsequent acts pertaining to planning and funding. In reality, the \$75 million appropriation that appeared so large in 1916 “was not sufficiently large to serve a real constructive purpose.” In addition, the process outlined by the Act was interrupted by World War I, when highway construction was impacted by “the denial of materials, transportation and labor for new construction and even for road maintenance, except under a non-workable permit system.” Finally, the greatest burden of road construction funding continued to rest with the counties.¹⁶³

Despite the drawbacks of the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act, however, its passage energized Good Roads advocates in Texas, which would receive the largest allotment of all the states.¹⁶⁴ Good Roads associations and their partners lobbied furiously in Texas throughout 1916 as they kept their eyes on the federal bill moving through Congress. They communicated with one another about formulation of a bill creating a state highway department that they could introduce during the 1917 legislative session, and they were in touch with the National Highways Association. The Association sent a representative to tour the state, organizing local support and encouraging citizens to adopt resolutions in favor of a Texas highway department.¹⁶⁵

The Texas Good Roads Congress that met in San Antonio in August 1916 unanimously endorsed the provisions of a draft bill, which included creation of the Texas Highway Commission, employment of a chief road engineer, establishment of a close union among the counties, and levying a tax on vehicles, notably automobiles.¹⁶⁶ In October, with the advice of George D. Marshall, U.S. engineer and superintendent of road construction in Texas, the legislative committee of the Texas Good Roads Association drafted its own bill.¹⁶⁷ J. D. Fautleroy, who would act in the coming years as U.S. district engineer for Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana, also emphasized the federal requirement for creation of a state highway department.¹⁶⁸ Finally, Texas Good Roads Association members descended on the legislature *en masse*, exerting all the lobbying power they could assemble.¹⁶⁹

On the eve of 1917, Good Roads advocates in Texas were organized and hopeful that the state would, at last, pass legislation to enable participation in a federal system. Their efforts up to that point had operated within the limitations of a county-based system that was,

nonetheless, on the verge of significant development. A look at principal road contracts actually under construction in Texas late in 1916 reveals that there was no uniformity to road building materials used (they tended to be highly localized and included gravel, oiled adobe gravel, rock asphalt macadam, sheet asphalt, asphaltic concrete, concrete, bitulithic, sand clay, shell, and dirt).¹⁷⁰ However, the same contracts reveal elements that could be used once a state highway department was formed. Out of 47 projects throughout the state, all were in the hands of engineers such as Abney & McCormick of Bryan and Charles S. Henning of El Paso. Some of the engineers were responsible for projects distant from their head offices. Some construction was done by the counties or sublet in small contracts. But by far, the greatest number of projects was done by contracting companies that were sufficiently large to handle jobs that involved construction of roads as long as 85 miles. Examples of such companies were W. D. Haden & William Bates of Galveston and Cobb & Gregory of Dallas. With more than \$5.6 million worth of bonds and warrants paying for the projects, it was apparent that counties remained committed to road building. Key elements of a system—engineers, experienced road building companies, county- and state-level organizations, and funding—were in place. All that was needed to move Good Roads construction ahead in Texas was the enabling legislation that would integrate the state with the system envisioned by the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS ALONG HIGHWAYS

Response to Demographic Patterns

During the 1880s and 1890s, railroad lines were completed across Texas, and a plethora of new towns arose along the lines.¹⁷¹ In the early twentieth century, many of these towns were platted by railroad companies, which then constructed model homes and farms to attract new residents to move to Texas from elsewhere in the United States. This was especially true in the temperate climate of South Texas, where the founders of towns like Mission advertised for settlers from the colder climates of the Midwest.¹⁷²

Around the same time, a new wave of European immigrants arrived in Texas, establishing farms and building communities with businesses and civic institutions to support them. Altogether, the population of Texas grew from 1,591,749 in 1880 to 4,444,000 in 1916.¹⁷³ While earlier European immigrants had blazed new roads and trails, immigrants arriving in the late 1890s and early 1900s typically settled closer to existing roads and railroad lines. For example, Czech immigrants settled in or near the town of West due to its proximity to roads and the MK&T railroad line, in addition to the availability of fertile farm land.

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Figure 30. Photograph of cotton being transported by automobile in Mount Vernon (no date). Courtesy of B. F. Hicks.



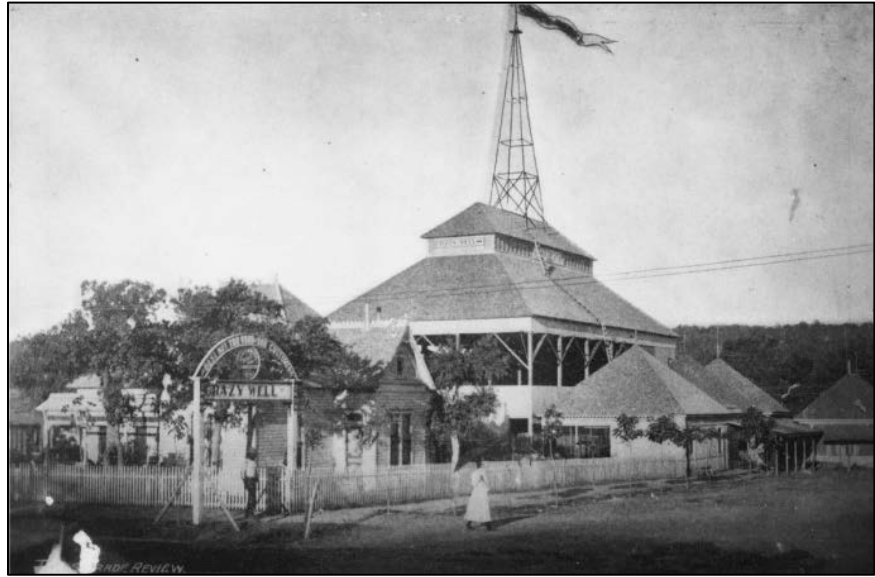
TRANSPORTATION OF PEOPLE AND GOODS

Agricultural Production

During the period from 1880 to 1916, Texas' economy remained largely agricultural. Railroads provided the primary means of transporting agricultural products—especially cotton and cattle—to market.¹⁷⁴ Cotton gins, mills, and other industrial buildings for processing agricultural products were constructed in railroad towns because it was more efficient and profitable to transport processed crops. Similarly, the meat processing industry developed in Fort Worth because of its access to the railroad. However, even though rail lines had been constructed across much of the state, farmers and ranchers still had to transport their goods to the rail line. Through the 1880s, ranchers still drove cattle overland on rough trails to reach the railroad. Even ca. 1900, despite the availability of the automobile, agricultural goods still were shipped via rail because roadways were undeveloped. The lack of a trucking industry during this period is documented by motor vehicle registration figures from 1900 through 1916, which indicate that trucks only accounted for between zero percent and five percent of all motor vehicles.¹⁷⁵ Consequently, in the 1890s and early 1900s, farmers were major proponents of the Good Roads movement because they hoped that road development would provide a more efficient means of transporting their goods to markets and processing facilities located along the railroads (*Figure 30*).¹⁷⁶

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Figure 31. Photograph of the Second Crazy Water Well Drinking Pavilion in Mineral Wells (ca. 1900). Source: The University of North Texas Libraries, Portal to Texas History; crediting Boyce Ditto Public Library, Mineral Wells, Texas, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph29962/> (accessed February 06, 2014).



Tourism

During the 1880s and 1890s, the tourism industry in Texas began to grow, encouraged by promotions from railroad companies. Because roadways were largely undeveloped, travel for tourism was primarily via rail. Sites with supposed health-giving properties—especially mineral springs—were especially popular during this era. Examples included Mineral Wells and Arlington along the T&P railroad line, and the Hot Wells health resort on the MK&T line in San Antonio (Figure 31).¹⁷⁷

As planners selected the routes of the Bankhead Highway and the Meridian Highway, they made sure that they provided connections to existing tourist attractions like these, envisioning a time when the automobile would supplant the train as the main means of tourist travel. The exponential increase in the number of automobiles on the road in the early twentieth century made auto tourism seem like a real possibility. Between 1900 and 1916, the number of motor vehicles registered in Texas increased from 180 to 125,000, and personal automobiles accounted for the vast majority of these motor vehicles (between 95 percent and 100 percent).¹⁷⁸ Automobile owners often used their cars for pleasure expeditions, but they seldom ventured very far because of the poor condition of the roads and the scarcity of highway tourism infrastructure. Until about 1910, gas stations were scarce, and motorists had to carry gas with them.¹⁷⁹ Even if motorists had enough gas supply to make an overnight trip, and enough stamina to weather bumpy roads, hotels typically were located in downtowns, across from the railroad depot, with no parking for cars.

In addition, as in other parts of society, legalized, institutionalized segregation in Texas extended to travel. Segregation on railroad cars in

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Figure 32. Photograph of Simms Gas Station in Longview, Texas, ca. 1910. Source: The University of North Texas Libraries, Portal to Texas History; crediting the Longview Public Library, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph191339/citation/> (accessed February 6, 2014).



Texas became widespread practice after the Civil War. The Texas Legislature passed a law requiring railroad companies to have separate passenger coaches for black and white patrons; 10 years later, they mandated separate waiting rooms in railroad stations.¹⁸⁰ The U.S. Supreme Court declared the constitutionality of “separate but equal” public facilities in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. While the Texas government did not formalize any Jim Crow laws related to highway travel, many of the formalized laws related to railroad travel extended to other modes of transportation. In addition, black car owners traveling the nation’s roads in the early decades of automobile travel might suffer repercussions for passing white drivers or be required to yield right-of-way to non-white drivers “chauffeuring white passengers” in other instances.¹⁸¹

Land Development along Roads and Railroads

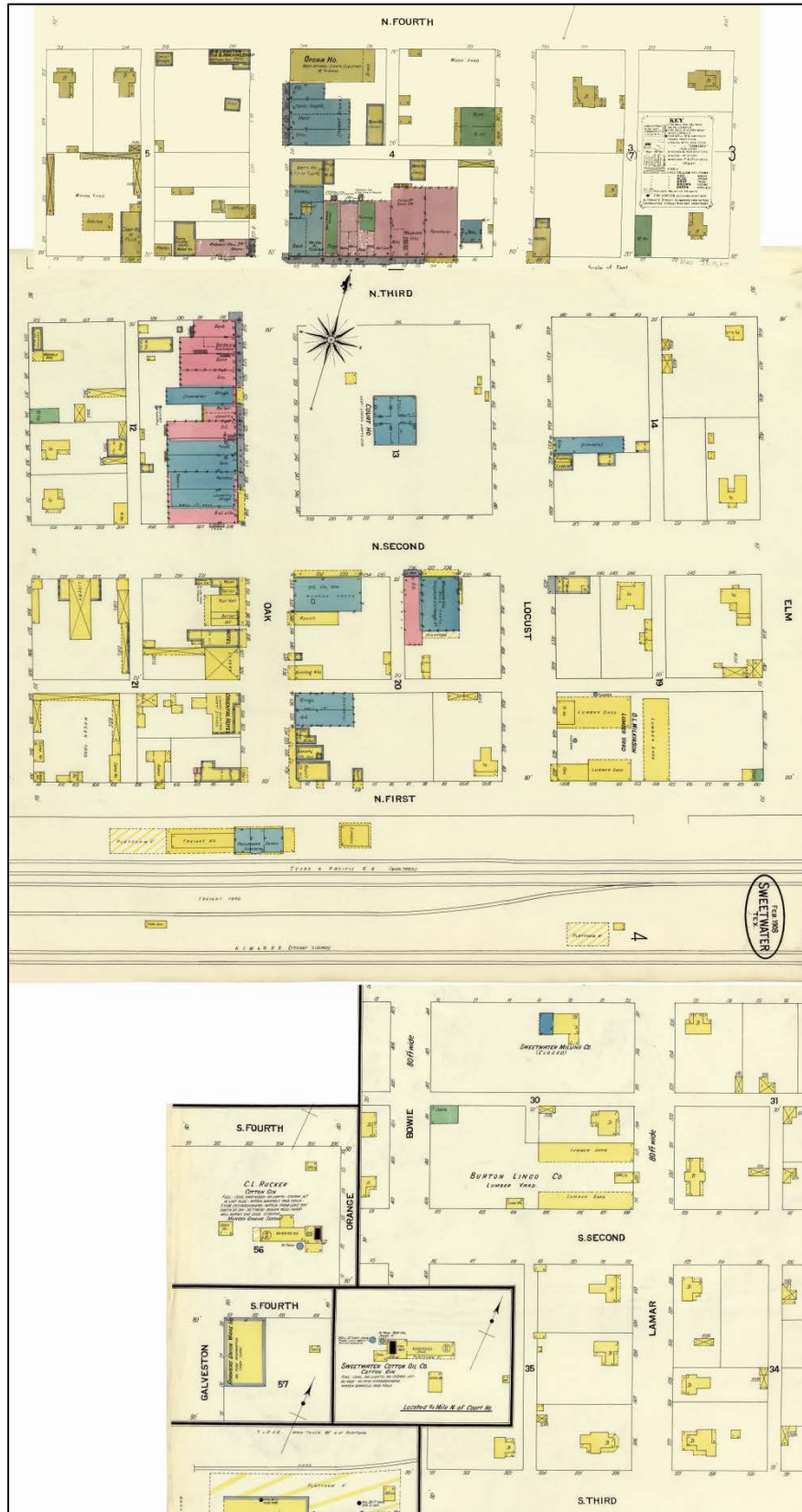
In existing urban areas, the railroad line typically was constructed at the periphery of town, where land was available for right-of-way. Cities then expanded toward the railroad, and rail spurs, streetcar lines, and city streets were constructed to connect the railroad to the older urban center. Many new towns also sprung up along railroad lines in Texas from 1880 to 1916, and these towns typically followed similar urban patterns and included similar types of properties. The commercial center of town often was on one side of the tracks, while industrial development was on the opposite side. Most commercial downtowns followed a grid pattern, and, if the town was the county seat, the courthouse typically was located within a square at the center of the downtown district. Roadside services like gas pumps typically were located outside existing commercial buildings (*Figure 32*). Industrial development, on the other hand, often was linear, running parallel to

the railroad tracks. Railroad depots typically were located on the industrial side of the tracks, and hotels typically were located immediately across the tracks within the commercial downtown. Residential areas typically surrounded the industrial and commercial core of a town on all sides. (See *Figure 33*.) In larger cities, the emergence of streetcar lines in the early 1900s made the construction of outlying residential suburbs possible. In some cases, small, secondary neighborhood commercial nodes were constructed within these early suburbs.¹⁸² Both commercial and residential buildings typically were constructed using nationally popular styles and prefabricated building materials that could be transported via the railroad.

Cities located at the juncture of several train lines grew rapidly during this era, as did cities with access to both railroad lines and ports. Between 1880 and 1900, the population of El Paso grew 20 times larger (2,051 percent), the populations of both Fort Worth and Dallas quadrupled (400 and 410 percent, respectively), and the population of Houston nearly tripled (270 percent).¹⁸³ This rapid growth caused congestion and pollution. In response, many cities implemented urban plans that aimed to organize and beautify the city in the early twentieth century. For example, the City of El Paso hired George Kessler to help develop a plan in 1907, and the City of Dallas did the same in 1909. Kessler's plans for both cities were influenced by the Garden City and City Beautiful movements, introducing additional parks, monuments, and civic institutions. However, his plans fundamentally were practical, focusing on resolving cities' functional issues such as dangerous at-grade railroad crossings and flooding. In Dallas, Kessler recommended that railroad lines and the accompanying industry should be situated in the lowest topographical areas, just beyond the flood plain, so that higher land could be reserved for residences. In the decades to come, this tenet would be applied to the location of new highways as well.¹⁸⁴

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Figure 33. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Sweetwater, 1908. Note the Nolan County Courthouse and surrounding downtown located north of the railroad tracks, the Orient Hotel located across from the railroad depot, industrial properties like the Sweetwater Milling Co. and Burton Lumber Yard located south of the railroad tracks, and residential properties fanning out on all sides. Later, ca. 1920, the Bankhead Highway/SH 1 would be routed through Sweetwater along N. Third Street. In 1934, SH 1 would be re-routed to continue along N. Second Street. Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/s.html> (accessed February 6, 2014).



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⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Road Inquiry, *Proceedings of the Good Roads Convention of Texas* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895), p. 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, pp. 22–23.

⁵⁹ John Stricklin Spratt, *The Road to Spindletop: Economic Change in Texas, 1875–1901* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), pp. 3–4.

⁶⁰ Peter J. Hugill, “Good Roads and the Automobile in the United States 1880–1929,” *The Geographical Review* 72 (1982): 328; Thomas H. MacDonald, “The Engineer’s Relation to Highway Transportation,” *The Sixth Annual Salzberg Memorial Lectures and Symposium*, Maxwell Hall, Syracuse University, April 28, 29, 1954, p. 33, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, MacDonald Personal, Box 4 – Folder 19, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX., cited hereafter as Thomas H. MacDonald Papers; *History of the Texas Highway Department*, n.p., Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, Good Roads, Box 13 – Folder 9; Truman R. Strobridge, comp., *Preliminary Inventories Number 134, RG30: Records of the Bureau of Public Roads* (Washington: The National Archives, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1962), p. 2.

⁶¹ MacDonald, “The Engineer’s Relation to Highway Transportation,” p. 33.

⁶² Spratt, *The Road to Spindletop*, pp. 32–33.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 14.

⁶⁴ MacDonald, “The Engineer’s Relation to Highway Transportation,” p. 33.

⁶⁵ Frank M. Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas: A Study of Administrative Methods and Financial Policies*, Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences Study no. 8, The University of Texas Bulletin no. 3423 (Austin: The University of Texas, 1934), p. 12.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 13; *History of the Texas Highway Department*, n.p.

⁶⁷ Stewart, p. 13.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 13, 14.

⁶⁹ The published proceedings of the 1895 Good Roads Convention in Texas, for example, included only one brief reference to the positive impact Good Roads would have on “the sort of free social intercourse which is so conducive to the mental and physical well-being and happiness and prosperity of the people.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Proceedings of the Good Roads Convention*, p. 6.

⁷⁰ William A. Bassett, “Problems of Highway Administration,” *Municipal Research* 81 (January 1917): 249–250.

⁷¹ Robert T. Hill, *Roads and Material for Their Construction in the Black Prairie Region of Texas* (Austin, TX: n.p., [1889]), pp. 18, 24–27.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 29–30, 32, 38–39.

⁷³ T. U. Taylor, *County Roads*, University of Texas Bulletin no. 54 ([Austin]: University of Texas, [1890]), n.p.

⁷⁴ In Texas, the exception would have been the roads in which the U.S. War Department invested for the transporting of goods from coastal ports and overland to the Department of Texas depot in San Antonio, and from the depot to various frontier posts after 1848.

⁷⁵ Stewart, p. 9. The neglect of common roads in favor of railroads was a common concern among leading academicians and economists by the late 1880s. Eric Jaffe, *The King’s Best Highway: The Lost History of the Boston Post Road, the Route That Made America* (New York: Scribner, 2010), pp. 174–175.

⁷⁶ Jaffe, *The King’s Best Highway*, pp. 178–179; Stewart, p. 10.

⁷⁷ [Thomas H. MacDonald], “The Public Roads Administration and Its Work,” p. 1. Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, Intra Agency, Box 9 – Folder 7.

⁷⁸ RFD gave momentum to the Good Roads movement because it required that a gravel or macadam road be in place as a prerequisite for service. James T. Jenkins, “The Story of Roads,” *American Road Builder* (September 1967): n.p., Good Roads, Box 24, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, cited hereafter as Good Roads.

⁷⁹ [Thomas H. MacDonald], “The Public Roads Administration and Its Work,” p. 1, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, Intra Agency, Box 9 – Folder 7; Strobridge, *Preliminary Inventories Number 134, RG 30*, p. 1.

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⁸⁰ [Logan Waller Page] to J. J. Bale, December 17, 1908, Box No. 2, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, Record Group 30, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD., cited hereafter as RG 30, NARA-College Park.

⁸¹ Stewart, pp. 11–12.

⁸² [MacDonald], “The Public Roads Administration and Its Work,” p. 3.

⁸³ Jenkins, “The Story of Roads,” n.p.

⁸⁴ MacDonald, “The Engineer’s Relation to Highway Transportation,” p. 35; Strobridge, *Preliminary Inventories No. 134*, RG 30, p. 2.

⁸⁵ MacDonald, “The Engineer’s Relation to Highway Transportation,” p. 35.

⁸⁶ In an address to the Good Roads Club of Brazos County on July 22, 1899, faculty member and engineer J. C. Nagle made reference to the recent devastating Brazos River flood that had impacted the already marginal profits of agricultural products by interrupting the tenuous transportation network in the region. He noted that, at present, “our roads are located almost altogether with reference to existing land lines—a most pernicious system. The same general considerations as regard grades, material for the roadway, and bridging govern—or should govern—the location of a highway as govern the location of a railway, modified, of course, by the purpose the road is intended to serve.” J. C. Nagle, *The Construction of County Roads and Bridges. An Address Prepared for the Good Roads Club of Brazos County, Texas, July 22, 1899* ([Texas]: n.p., [1899]), pp. 1, 3.

⁸⁷ Jeff Dunn, “The Development of Automobile Roads in Dallas County: 1905–1926,” *Legacies: A History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas* XII (Spring 2000): 13, 14, 19; Jerry Flook, *History of the Bankhead Highway Presented in the Context of Experience of Garland, Texas, a City on Its Route*, <http://douglasathas.net/blogs/index.php/bankhead.flook4>.

⁸⁸ *History of the Texas Highway Department*, n.p.; Stewart, p. 14.

⁸⁹ “Fifty Years of Progress in Highway Improvement in the Southern States,” *Manufacturers’ Record*, December 11, 1924, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, MacDonald Personal, Box 6 – Folder 58. The 2,128 miles of improved roads consisted of 167 miles surfaced with gravel; 1,909 with stone; and 52 miles with other material. Stewart, p. 15n.

⁹⁰ Dunn, p. 14; Stewart, p. 15n.

⁹¹ *History of the Highway Department*, n.p.; Stewart, p. 22.

⁹² Dunn, p. 13.

⁹³ Jerry Flook, *History of the Bankhead Highway Presented in the Context of Experience of Garland, Texas, a City on Its Route*. <http://douglasathas.net/blogs/index.php/bankhead.flook4>.

⁹⁴ Dunn, p. 13.

⁹⁵ [Thomas H. MacDonald], “Fifty Years of Progress in Highway Improvement in the Southern States,” *Manufacturers’ Record*, December 11, 1924, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, MacDonald Personal, Box 6 – Folder 58, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

⁹⁶ Stewart, p. 15n; Dunn, “The Development of Automobile Roads,” p. 13.

⁹⁷ Hilton Hagan, *An Informal History of the Texas Department of Transportation* ([Austin]: Texas Department of Transportation, 1991), p. 3; Peter J. Hugill, “Good Roads and the Automobile in the United States 1880–1929,” *The Geographical Review*, Vol. 72, no. 3 (July 1982): 340.

⁹⁸ Stewart, p. 15n.

⁹⁹ American Highway Association, *The Official Good Roads Year Book of the United States 1913* (Baltimore, Maryland: Waverly Press, 1913), pp. 429–430; Dunn, “The Development of Automobile Roads,” p. 13; Hugill, “Good Roads and the Automobile,” pp. 338–339.

¹⁰⁰ Stewart, p. 16n.

¹⁰¹ Laurence I. Hewes and James W. Glover, *Highway Bonds: A Compilation of Data and an Analysis of Economic Features Affecting Construction and Maintenance of Highways Financed by Bond Issues, and the Theory of Highway Bond Calculations*, Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Agriculture no. 136 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), p. 47; Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 18n.

¹⁰² Stewart, pp. 15n, 16n.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16n, 19n.

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¹⁰⁴ Letter to Martin Dodge, September 24, 1904, Box No. 2, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, Record Group 30, NARA-College Park; Letter to D. Woodhead, September 27, 1904, Box No. 2, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; Letter to M. O. Eldridge, November 2, 1904, Box No. 20, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park.

¹⁰⁵ Director to Hon. A. S. Burleson, November 22, 1905, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park.

¹⁰⁶ C. R. Thomas inspection of Hallsville road, November 17, 1910, Box No. 84, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; J. H. Eldridge, Final Report of Object Lesson Road, Hall[s]ville, Harrison County, TX, 1909, Box No. 84; J. H. Eldridge, Final Report of Object Lesson Road, Colorado, Mitchell County, TX, 1909, Box No. 84; C. R. Thomas, Report on U.S. Object Lesson Road at Mexia, TX, November 9, 1910, Box No. 84; J. H. Dodge, Final Report on Object Lesson Road, Taylor, Williamson County, TX, 1908, Box No. 86, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; C. R. Thomas inspection of San Antonio road leading east toward Melrose, Nacogdoches, November 14, 1910, Box No. 87, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; C. R. Thomas, Final Report of Object Lesson Road, 1908, Box No. 87; J. H. Eldridge, Final Report of Object Lesson Road, Paris, Lamar County, Texas, 1909, Box No. 89, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park.

¹⁰⁷ *Good Roads Party From States of Arkansas[,] Oklahoma[,] Louisiana[,] Texas on Tour of Inspection through Eastern States* (n.p.: n.p., 1909), p. 139.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Stewart, p. 16.

¹¹⁰ Mead & Hunt, *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context For use in amended Historic Bridges in Texas Multiple Property Submission*, Work Authorization 570 01 SH002, Task 2b, Prepared for Texas Department of Transportation (Austin, TX: Mead & Hunt, 2011), p. 29; Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 16.

¹¹¹ Howard Lawrence Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885–1935* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), pp. 31–36. Preston described the changes in the Good Roads movement in the South beginning in 1908, when the movement “slipped out of the controlling grasp of those who had different expectations of what improved local networks of roads could accomplish for the impoverished region” and became “an effort to improve long-distance tourist highways. . . .” *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹¹² Stewart, p. 20.

¹¹³ Robt. J. Potts to L. W. Page, August 9, 1910, Box No. 46, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; Paul D. Sargent to Robert J. Potts, August 19, 1910, Box No. 46, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park.

¹¹⁴ Dunn, p. 19.

¹¹⁵ *A Brief History of the Texas Section*, American Society of Civil Engineers, Texas Section, <http://www.texasce.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticle> (accessed April 18, 2013).

¹¹⁶ Stewart, *Highway Construction in Texas*, pp. 21–22.

¹¹⁷ James P. Nash, *Road Materials of Texas*, Bulletin of the University of Texas no. 62 (Austin: A. C. Baldwin & Sons, 1915), pp. 6, 17–18, 21–26, 40–52.

¹¹⁸ Stewart, pp. 18–19.

¹¹⁹ C. R. Thomas, “Report on Bond Issue for Road Improvement in Precinct 2, Montague County, Texas, June 28, 1911, Box No. 46, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; C. R. Thomas to Vernon M. Peirce, July 31, 1911, Box No. 97, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; S. H. Walthall to L. W. Page, December 21, 1911, Box No. 45, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; Paul D. Sargent to S. H. Walthall, December 27, 1911, Box No. 45, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park; George D. Marshall to Vernon M. Peirce, April 9, 1912, Box No. 45, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park.

¹²⁰ Marshall to Peirce, April 9, 1912.

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¹²¹ M. G. Lay, *Ways of the World: A History of the World's Roads and of the Vehicles That Used Them* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 118; [MacDonald], "The Public Roads Administration and Its Work," p. 2; Strobridge, *Preliminary Inventories No. 34, RG 30*, p. 2.

¹²² Hugh Hemphill, "Automobiles in San Antonio, 1899–1916," www.texasrtransportationmuseum.org/history-auto.php.

¹²³ J. P. Withers to L. W. Page, February 14, 1912, Box No. 45, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, RG 30, NARA-College Park.

¹²⁴ Dunn, p. 19.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

¹²⁶ *The Automobile*, May 2, 1912, p. 1,020.

¹²⁷ *The New York Times*, May 4, 1913.

¹²⁸ "Big 4 Good Roads Map," Dec. 10, 1910, Good Roads, Box 6, Folder 3.

¹²⁹ Dunn, p. 19.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 22.

¹³¹ G. A. McNaughton, *The Meridian Road in Texas, 1916* (n.p.: International Road Association, Texas Division, 1916).

¹³² Richard Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System*. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/numbers/cfm> (accessed September 3, 2012).

¹³³ Stewart, pp. 17, 17n, 23.

¹³⁴ A. Joachim McGraw, John W. Clark, Jr., and Elizabeth A. Robbins, editors, *A Texas Legacy: The Old San Antonio Road and The Caminos Reales—A Tricentennial History, 1691–1991* (Austin: State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, 1991), p. 231; Decca Lamar West, "Pen Sketches of Notable Texas Women – Mrs. Lipscomb Norvell," Box 1:2, Series 1, Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, Mss. 32, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX Cited hereafter as TFWC Collection.

¹³⁵ J. H. Hawley to L. W. Page, June 16, 1911, Box No. 46, General Correspondence, 1893–1916, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, Record Group 20, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland; *Wichita Daily Times*, July 22, 1911.

¹³⁶ A. Joachim McGraw et al., p. 231.

¹³⁷ Mead & Hunt, Inc., and Heritage Research, Ltd., *Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Historic Highways in Nebraska* (Madison, Wisconsin: Mead & Hunt, Inc., 2002), p. 73.

¹³⁸ *Wichita Daily Times*, July 22, 1911.

¹³⁹ Stewart, p. 20.

¹⁴⁰ American Highway Association, pp. 440–442; Weingroff 2013, FHWA, Highway History, U.S. Route 80 The Dixie Overland Highway

¹⁴¹ Eula Belle Maley Cook, *Travel with the Memory of Jefferson Davis: A Review of the History of the Jefferson Davis Highway in Texas, 1980*, pp. 1, 5. Typescript in the collections of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

¹⁴² Dunn, p. 22.

¹⁴³ 1914, conceived by Automobile Club of Savannah, Georgia; 1914, first meeting; 1915, permanent organization; February 14, 1917, incorporated

¹⁴⁴ *The New York Times*, July 2, 1914.

¹⁴⁵ *Houston Post-Dispatch*, March 28, 1926.

¹⁴⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, July 23, 1916, part 2, p. 3; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, September 15, 1916, p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Municipal Journal*, Vol. XLI, no. 16 (October 19, 1916): 503.

¹⁴⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, June 20, 1917, p. 15.

¹⁴⁹ Dunn, p. 21.

¹⁵⁰ On December 5, 1915, Colonel Henry T. Allen, 13th U.S. Cavalry, wrote an article about the Dixie Highway as a military asset, demonstrating an understanding of the strategic importance of highways to national defense throughout the country, not just along the border. Col. Henry T. Allen, *The Dixie Highway as a Military Asset* (Chattanooga, Tennessee: Dixie Highway Association, 1917). That understanding on the part of the War

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Department would intensify after the involvement of the United States in World War I and its experiences with superior European road systems.

¹⁵¹ *Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1917, p. 18; *ibid.*, April 12, 1917, p. 9; *ibid.*, June 3, 1917, part 4, p. 9; *ibid.*, June 20, 1917, p. 15; *ibid.*, June 21, 1917; *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, October 29, 1916, Part 3, p. 25; *ibid.*, November 23, 1916, p. 10; *ibid.*, January 20, 1917, p. 2; *ibid.*, February 13, 1917, p. 4; *ibid.*, February 21, 1917, p. 8.

¹⁵² American Highway Association, pp. 450–451.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 450. Colp also agreed contractually to commit half of his hours to promoting the Finley Method, a way of applying bituminous treatments to road surfaces. The Finley Method Company of Atlanta, Georgia, was particularly interested in Colp’s soliciting “contracts for work to be done on any part of all of what is known as the Post Road” between San Antonio and Austin, on intersecting roads, and any continuous or partial road between Austin and Dallas. Memorandum of Agreement between the Finley Method Company and D. E. Colp, CAH, Colp, Box 2H448, Dec. 15, 1915, David E. Colp Papers, Box 2H448, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX. One road under construction in Hopkins County by October 1916 employed the Finley method. “The Principal County Road Contracts Under Construction in Texas, October 1, 1916,” *Engineering News* (October 6, 1916): 219.

¹⁵⁴ The one exception to this rule appears to have been road construction associated with the penitentiary system.

¹⁵⁵ An article in the *Fort Worth Star–Telegram* noted retrospectively that before the Texas Highway Department was created, “road development had already been greatly benefited by the Good Roads Associations that dotted the State. These had been organized in most of the counties. They had molded good road sentiment and had done much toward paving the way for much of the road building that is to start soon.” *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, March 30, 1919, part 3, p. 8.

¹⁵⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, March 4, 1916, p. 10; *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, January 25, 1916, p. 10; Stewart, *Highway Construction in Texas*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁷ The national Federation of Women’s Clubs had become interested in the Good Roads topic in 1911. Within a few years, the Federation began a campaign to install roadside planting adjacent to the Lincoln Highway. According to Decca Lamar West, a proponent of the Jefferson Davis Highway from Waco, subsequent work was done by the national group according to a horticultural plan developed by Jens Jensen of Chicago. Decca Lamar West, “The Idea of Memorial tree Planting Originated in the Conservation Department of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs,” Box 1:2, Series 1, TFWC.

¹⁵⁸ Stella L. Christian, editor and compiler, *The History of the Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs* (Houston: Dealy-Adey-Elgin Co., Stationers and Printers, 1919), p. 281.

¹⁵⁹ *Program of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs*, Galveston, November 16–20, 1914, n.p., Meeting Programs, Boards of Directors, Conventions 1903–1939, Box 7-1, Series: 7, TFWC; Mss. 32; *Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs 1915–1916, The Eighteenth Annual Convention Held at Brownwood, November 9–12, 1915*, p. 26, Meeting Programs, Boards of Directors, Conventions 1903–1939, Box 7-8, Series: 7, TFWC.

¹⁶⁰ *Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs, The Nineteenth Annual Convention Held at Sherman, November 14–17, 1916*, p. 60, Meeting Programs, Boards of Directors, Conventions 1903–1939, Box 7-8, Series: 7, TFWC.

¹⁶¹ The requirement that each state receiving money from the federal government had to establish a highway department meant that “the principle of State control, long advocated by Public Roads, was finally adapted by all States.” [MacDonald], “The Public Road Administration and Its Work,” pp. 2–3.

¹⁶² [MacDonald], “The Public Road Administration and Its Work;” Stewart, *Highway Construction in Texas*, p. 38; Strobridge, *Preliminary Inventories No. 134, RG 30*, p. 3.

¹⁶³ Strobridge, *Preliminary Inventories No. 134, RG 30*, p. 3; [Thomas H. MacDonald], “Prepared for Breeders’ Gazette December 1920,” Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, MacDonald Personal, Box 6 – Folder 13; MacDonald, “The Engineer’s Relation to Highway Transportation,” p. 36; [Thomas H. MacDonald], “Highway Engineering, Iowa Semi-Centennial, Ames, Iowa, June 8, 1920,” Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, MacDonald Personal, Box 6 – Folder 7.

¹⁶⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, July 15, 1916, p. 8.

¹⁶⁵ Stewart, *Highway Construction in Texas*, p. 25.

¹⁶⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, August 19, 1916, p. 3.

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¹⁶⁷ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 17, 1916, p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 18, 1916, p. 12.

¹⁶⁹ Stewart, *Highway Construction in Texas*, pp. 25–26.

¹⁷⁰ An article in *Engineering News-Record* described the adverse effects of common climatic conditions in the Southwest on road building. Cement roads were preferable but had only been built for several miles in El Paso County, where there were cement mills. Otherwise, the more common gravels and oyster shells broke down readily unless regularly maintained. In certain areas, road engineers had attained some longevity by applying oil containing asphalt. *Engineering-News Record*, Vol. 76, no. 11 (September 14, 1916): 481–482.

¹⁷¹ *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).

¹⁷² Payne, Emily and Terri Myers, Oblate Park Historic District National Register Nomination, submitted to the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2005, on file at the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, TX.

¹⁷³ “United States and Texas Populations: 1850–2012,” *Texas State Library and Archives Commission*, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/census.html> (accessed May 4, 2013).

¹⁷⁴ Texas State Library and Archive Commission, “From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: The Texas Highway Department Blazes Texas Trails 1917–1968,” 2012. <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/highways/index.html> (last modified November 14, 2011).

¹⁷⁵ “Highway Statistics Summary to 1995,” *Federal Highway Administration*, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/summary95/section2.html> (accessed May 14, 2013).

¹⁷⁶ Texas State Library and Archive Commission, “From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: The Texas Highway Department Blazes Texas Trails 1917–1968.”

¹⁷⁷ Keith Elliott, “TOURISM,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dut01> (accessed April 30, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

¹⁷⁸ “Highway Statistics Summary to 1995.”

¹⁷⁹ Jones, W. Dwayne, *A Field Guide to Gas Stations in Texas*, prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation, 2003, available at http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/library/pubs/bus/env/fieldguide_gas_stations_.pdf.

¹⁸⁰ Arnold de León and Robert A. Calvert, “Segregation,” *The Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/pks01>), accessed October 9, 2013; William S. Osborn, “Curtains for Jim Crow: Law, Race, and the Texas Railroads,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, volume 105, no. 3 (January 2002): 393, available at <http://www.texasantafefhistory.com/q%20osborn.pdf> (accessed on November 4, 2013).

¹⁸¹ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, “The Road to Civil Rights: Adapting Transportation to Jim Crow,” <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/highwayhistory/road/s14.cfm> (accessed November 4, 2013).

¹⁸² Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClellan, *Historic Residential Suburbs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002) <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/> (accessed May, 2013).

¹⁸³ “Texas Almanac: City Population History from 1850 to 2000,” <http://www.texasalmanac.com/sites/default/files/images/CityPopHist%20web.pdf> (accessed April 30, 2013).

¹⁸⁴ *The City Plan of El Paso, Texas*, Prepared for the City Plan Commission, El Paso, Texas, 1925, <http://www.planelpaso.org/wp-content/reports/The-1925-City-Plan-for-El-Paso-TX.pdf> (accessed April 20, 2013); Kessler, George Edward, *A City Plan for Dallas*, (Dallas, TX: Southwestern Publishing Co., 1911).

I.4. INITIATION OF THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1917–1932

STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The years 1880 to 1916 had seen a slow but persistent realization of the importance of roads to the economic development of Texas and an appreciation of the contributions that the Good Roads movement and professional engineers could make to road funding and construction. The next decade and a half was marked by important state legislation that created a Texas Highway Commission and Department and slowly turned highway construction and maintenance from a county-based activity to a state-run endeavor, funded by state and federal funds. U.S. involvement in World War I and the subsequent transition from a war to peacetime economy delayed full implementation of the Federal Aid Highway of 1916. However, the pace of road construction quickened beginning around 1920. Good Roads advocates, named highway associations, and the Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs continued to play important roles in public education, passage of local road bonds and state legislation, and construction of roadside infrastructure. These groups advertised to the tourists to promote the experiences and amenities that could be found along the highways, and private businesses responded by constructing new amenities that catered to the increasingly lucrative tourist trade.

1917–1921

The 35th Texas legislative session opened in January 1917, and took up scores of bills just months before the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Germany and then declared war. Shortly after, the financial demands of the war effort stalled highway work associated with the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act. Highway work was delayed despite the government’s growing awareness of the strategic significance of good roads and of oil, the development of which depended on the existence of highways that could hold up to heavy use in rural locations. (See *Figure 34*.) Texas, itself, was hampered by a drought from 1917 to 1918 that crippled the agricultural economy and made it difficult to pass county road bonds. A return of rain in late 1918 through 1919 caused floods and damaged roads in many parts of the state, where highway builders soon realized the drawbacks of earthen and gravel roads. Economic conditions continued to be unstable until 1921. At that point, passage of road-related acts in Texas and a Congressional bill modifying the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 set Texas on a trajectory of road building.

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Figure 34. Photograph of a truck owned by Gulf Oil Co. stuck in the mud on a dirt road in Crane County. The poor quality of roads hampered transportation stemming from the many oil discoveries in many parts of the state after World War I. The rapid influx of trucks and heavy machinery strained the existing highway infrastructure. Rainfall often compounded the problem, as evidenced in this image. Source: The Portal to Texas History, crediting Permian Basin Petroleum Museum, Library and Hall of Fame, Midland, Texas (accessed February 08, 2014).



The activities of Good Roads associations, which had played such a pivotal role in the early years of highway development, continued after 1916. Their role in lobbying for road bonds remained an important function in assuring that counties acted as financial partners with the state and federal governments. The activities of named highway associations continued, as well. Three of those associations—the Bankhead, Meridian, and Old Spanish Trail—particularly began to develop identities as they sought to promote their names, routes, and constituencies. By 1921, they all had strong organizational structures that sought to interact with local communities and defend their routes against other associations. By 1921, when new federal requirements were passed, the Texas Highway Commission designated 29 highways in the “Major State Highway System” – and the Bankhead Highway, Meridian Highway, and Old Spanish Trail all were part of this system.

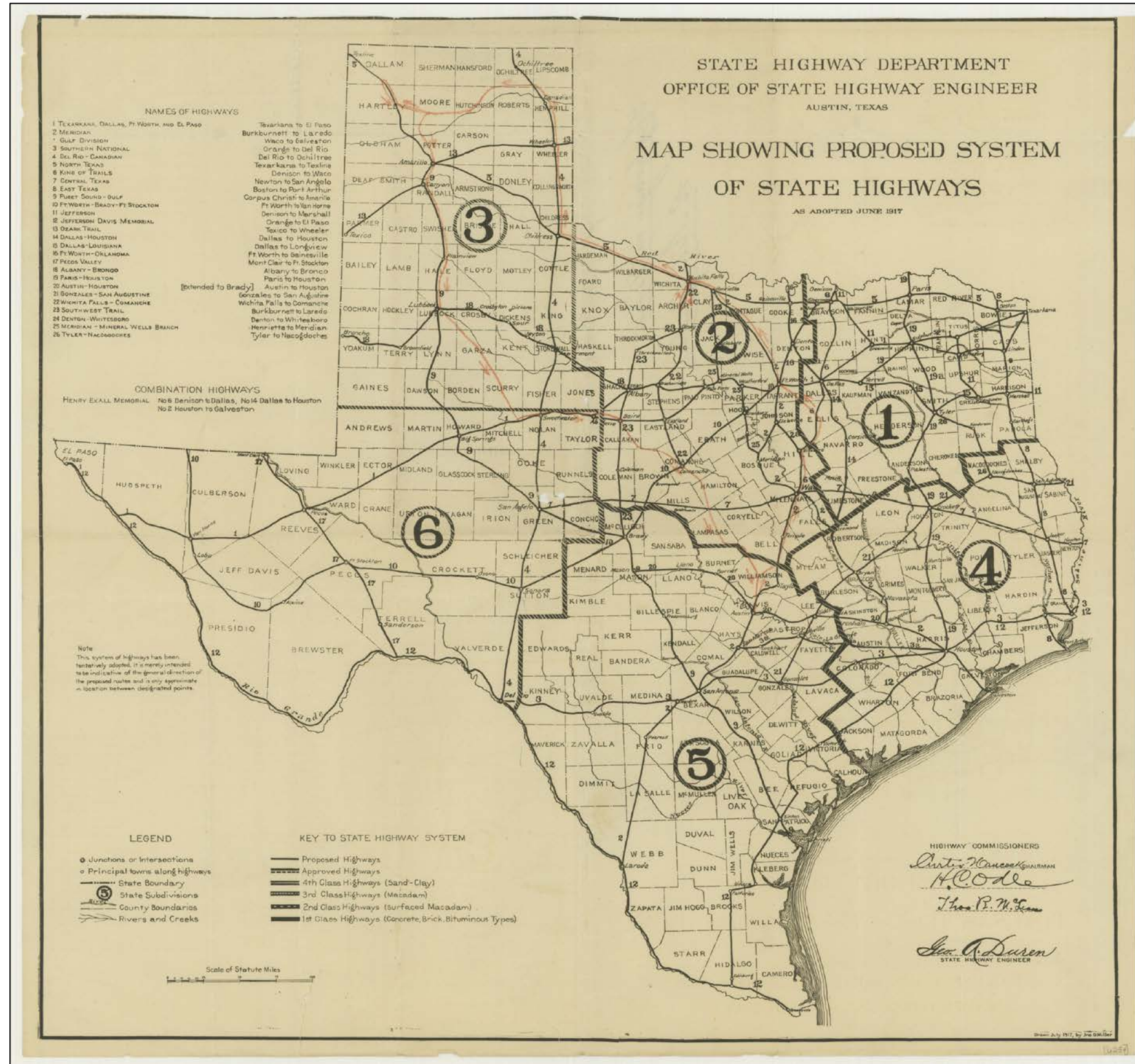
The opening of the 1917 legislative session began with an address by Governor James Ferguson, who called attention to the absolute need for a highway department in Texas. The measure sponsored by the Texas Good Roads Association was introduced as House Bill 2, and members of the Association testified on its behalf. It was steered rapidly through both houses, and the governor signed it on April 4, 1917.¹⁸⁵

The provisions of the law created a state highway department and the Office of State Engineer. The Texas Highway Commission consisted of three members appointed by the governor. Their responsibility was to formulate policies and plans for the location, construction, and maintenance of a comprehensive system of state highways and public roads. They were to cooperate with the counties; the work was to be under the direction, supervision, and control of the Highway Department.¹⁸⁶

The Commissioners also were responsible for appointing the State Highway Engineer, who was to prepare plans for the location and construction of state highways, with the oversight and approval of the Commission. (See *Figure 35*.) The Commission was to collect

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Figure 35. "Map Showing Proposed System of State Highways," 1917. This is the earliest known map prepared by the Texas Highway Department. It was published soon after the agency's creation, and depicts the proposed plan for the state highway system. The map also shows the boundaries of the six regional divisions/offices that supported the agency's operation. The map provides insights into the intent of the agency and the hierarchy of the highway network. Note that State Highway 1 is listed in the top left-hand corner as the Texarkana, Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso Highway. The Texas Highway Commission later adopted the Bankhead Highway name. Source: Texas State Library and Archives, Map Collection, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/cgi-bin/aris/maps/maplookup.php?mapnum=6254> (accessed February 21, 2014).



data about Texas public roads, decide what were the construction methods best adapted to each area, and establish construction and maintenance standards for highways, bridges, and ferries. County commissioner’s courts were charged with obtaining information and advice from the Commission about the type of road construction that was best for their counties before spending any bond money. Commissioners also were to have county road maps made within 12 months. Information on the maps had to state the importance of their roads as they related to a system of state highways and to the market and traffic centers.¹⁸⁷

Some funding for the work came from automobile registration fees that the Commission collected. (See *Table 4.*) However, those fees were not sufficient to provide the match that was required by the Federal Aid Road Act, and so the greatest part of the financial burden remained with the counties. In addition, the funds given in aid to the counties could not exceed 25 percent of the total project costs, and there could be no more than 10 miles of road per county per year. Counties unable to raise the match could receive as much as 50 percent of a project’s cost.¹⁸⁸ The legislation enabled Texas to avail itself of federal funding. In addition, it required adjoining counties whose public roads were part of the state highway system to connect. But the very limited mileage that the state could underwrite in one year, together with the county-based funding and emphasis on local construction materials, almost guaranteed that it would be difficult for Texas to build an integrated, homogeneous highway system in the near future.

Table 4. Important Road Statistics and Events in Texas Between 1917 and 1932.

Date	Event
1917	First statewide registration of almost 200,000 vehicles. ¹⁸⁹
July-December 1917	Money collected from automobile registrations: \$853,987.00. ¹⁹⁰
September 1, 1917- August 31, 1918	State highway projects let: 250.33 miles @ \$1,582,446.76 Structures @ \$4,442.84 ¹⁹¹
1917-1920	County and road district bonds voted: \$95,244,799.90 Federal aid allotted to counties: \$15,618,462.26 State aid allotted to counties: \$4,088,615.91 ¹⁹²
1918	Money collected from automobile registrations: \$1,939,415.00 ¹⁹³
September 1, 1918- August 31, 1919	State highway projects let: 887.46 miles @ \$5,611,386.19 Structures: \$20,050.34 ¹⁹⁴
1919-1920	Federal aid allotted to counties: \$11,294,481.86 State aid allotted to counties: \$1,681,382.68 ¹⁹⁵
September 1, 1919- August 31, 1920	State highway projects let: 1,222.74 miles @ \$15,106,735.94 Structures: \$157,285.24 ¹⁹⁶
1920	1 in 10.9 Texans per registered motor vehicle (21st in the United States) ¹⁹⁷
September 1, 1920- August 31, 1921	State highway projects let: 1,138.54 miles @ \$16,415,239.83 Structures: \$713,387.82 ¹⁹⁸
September 1, 1921- August 31, 1922	State highway projects let: 1,150.35 miles @ \$14,580,550.08 Structures: \$581,424.24 ¹⁹⁹

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Table 4. Important Road Statistics and Events in Texas Between 1917 and 1932.

Date	Event
September 1, 1922- August 31, 1922	State highway projects let: 1,025.62 miles @ \$14,479,469.30 Structures: \$601,043.90 ²⁰⁰
September 1, 1923- August 31, 1924	State highway projects let: 1,134.91 miles @ \$12,988,454.14 Structures: \$601,043.90 ²⁰¹
September 1, 1924- August 31, 1925	State highway projects let: 1,207.63 miles @ \$12,558,258.27 Structures: \$780,662.25 ²⁰²
September 1, 1925- August 31, 1926	State highway projects let: 1,059.15 miles @ \$13,367,887.68 Structures: \$1,094,354.14 ²⁰³
September 1, 1926- August 31, 1927	State highway projects let: 670.13 miles @ \$8,688,558.77 Structures: \$367,492.85 ²⁰⁴
September 1, 1927- August 31, 1928	State highway projects let: 1,363.5 miles @ \$16,173,183.38 Structures: \$1,398,624.85
1928	Committee on Standards, American Association of State Highway Officials, establishes U.S. engineering standards that "made mandatory ten-foot traffic lanes, eight-foot shoulders, a minimum concrete surface thickness of six inches, and a one-inch crown on a two-lane concrete highway." ²⁰⁵
1928	Highways in Texas by type: Concrete - 96 miles; Asphalt - 1,060 miles; Gravel, shell, stone - 5,000 miles; Dirt - 10,000 ²⁰⁶
1928-1930	Approx. 1,100 miles of gravel roads received asphalt surface treatments. Approx. 800 miles of roadway were widened. ²⁰⁷
August 31, 1930	Texas highway system: 18,928 miles of road, including 8,167 miles of dirt roads ²⁰⁸
October 6, 1931	18,539 total state highway miles (most in U.S.) 15,558 miles surfaced = 84% of total (national average = 72%)
Fiscal year ending June 30, 1931	Federal aid: \$7,366,218.00 (most in U.S.) ²⁰⁹
1931-1932	2,305.14 miles completed @ \$24,693,519.61 Bridges, underpasses, overpasses @ \$3,75,235.17 Federal funds = 28.38% County funds = 29.95% State funds = 41.15% Other funds = 0.52% ²¹⁰

In mid-1917, the Texas Highway Commission took over approximately 12,000 miles of roads.²¹¹ The three Commission members (Curtis Hancock, a Dallas lawyer; Thomas R. McLean, a Mount Pleasant banker and farmer; and H. C. Odle, a Meridian farmer and stockman) appointed George A. Duren to serve as State Highway Engineer. Duren was a civil engineering graduate of the University of Texas who had worked for railroad and interurban companies. From the beginning, all four men worked closely with J. D. Fauntleroy, who was district engineer for the Sixth Federal Aid Department of the Office of Good Roads, which included Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Secretary of the Commission was David E. Colp, who had played leading roles in Bexar County and Texas Good Roads associations.²¹²

While the Legislature was conferring and the Texas Highway Commission and its engineer subsequently were busy organizing and

responding to the requirements of the new legislation during the first half of 1917, named road associations continued with their work. One of the most noteworthy associations was the Fort Worth–El Paso Highway Association, whose members had worked since at least 1912 with counties on the route to build “a great permanent highway connecting Fort Worth and El Paso.” Their efforts had caught the attention of Captain Fauntleroy, and he made a trip over the road from El Paso to Palo Pinto County with the secretary of the association, W. B. Starr of Midland, and its engineer, John B. Merriweather of Big Spring, in February 1917.²¹³

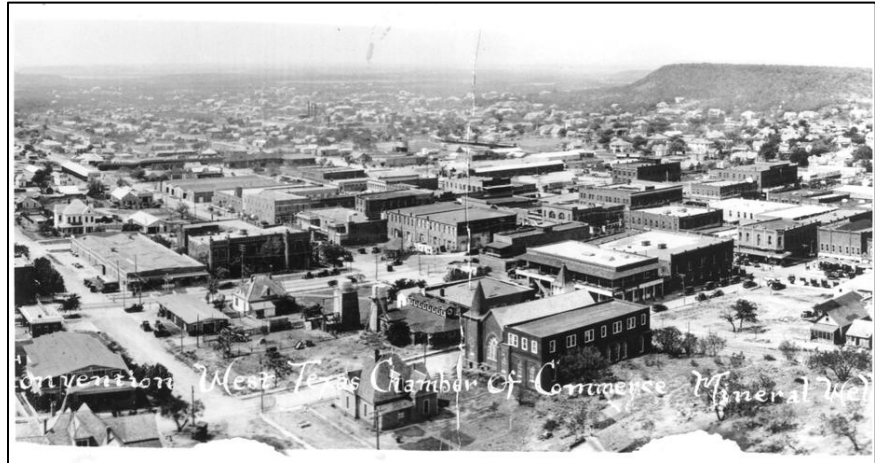
Fauntleroy’s trip was interrupted by a summons to give testimony to the Legislature, but the *Fort Worth Star–Telegram* opined that he was familiar enough with the route to recommend it “for the very first work to be done under government supervision.” The *Star–Telegram* stated that one of the first roads for which federal aid would be requested was the Fort Worth–El Paso Highway, which the Texas Good Roads Association promised to endorse because it believed the road had importance to the entire state. The road already was “a part—the big part—of a road that would traverse the state at its greatest breadth, with a 900-mile stretch from Texarkana in one corner to El Paso in another.” It would be the main conduit for tourists from the North, who traveled to Texas in the winter, and it would facilitate travel between Texas towns on its route.²¹⁴

Plans to promote the “new state highway” developed further in March, when the Dallas Automobile Club invited 14 men from counties east of Dallas to discuss plans to secure a state highway through northeast Texas. The *Dallas Morning News* hoped that the group would formally organize and become part of the El Paso–Texarkana Highway Association. That umbrella organization could then get recognition for a state route through Texarkana, Atlanta, Mount Pleasant, Sulphur Springs, Greenville, Rockwall, Dallas, Fort Worth, Mineral Wells, Weatherford, Abilene, and other cities, ending in El Paso. The plan was to log and map the route, cooperate with county authorities, and get their agreement to cooperate with state and federal governments in building and maintaining the road. The association then would make its presentation and argument to the Texas Highway Commission.²¹⁵

The work of the Highway Commission and State Engineer was of great interest to the Fort Worth–El Paso and Dallas–Texarkana Highway Associations and to the Texas Good Roads Association, which coordinated with the Texas Highway Department to have a convention in Mineral Wells in June 1917. The recently formed Dallas–Texarkana group was urged to join with the older Fort Worth–El Paso Highway Association and then work to build a trans-state road, but no such amalgamation occurred before the Mineral Wells meeting.²¹⁶

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Figure 36. Photograph of a convention of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce in Mineral Wells in May 1905, illustrating the popularity of Mineral Wells as a convention destination at the time. The city of Mineral Wells was a popular destination for early Good Roads advocates who held several conventions there because of its abundant supply of restaurants, lodging and hotel accommodations that developed around the naturally occurring mineral water and springs in the area. The Texas Highway Commission held one of its earliest official meetings in Mineral Wells on June 21, 1917 when it designated the state's first official highways. The Bankhead National Highway Association also met in Mineral Wells in 1919, and finalized the route through Texas at that time. Source: The Portal to Texas History, crediting Boyce Ditto Public Library, Mineral Wells, Texas, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph20344/> (accessed February 21, 2014).



The logic and importance of the connected route also seems to have occurred to the Commission and was reflected in the minutes of their meeting on June 21, 1917, in Mineral Wells, which was popular for both tourists and conventions at the time (*Figure 36*).²¹⁷ They tentatively selected 25 roads²¹⁸ that were described by their terminal or intermediate points; exact locations would be established by the State Highway Engineer. They designated the Texarkana, Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso Highway as State Highway No. 1, and described its tentative route as Texarkana, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, Sulphur Springs, Greenville, Rockwall, Dallas, Fort Worth, Mineral Wells, Abilene, Sweetwater, Colorado [City], Big Springs, Midland, Pecos, Van Horn, and El Paso (the same route as that promoted by the Bankhead National Highway Association). One member of the Mineral Wells conference offered a resolution that was accepted to create two branches out of the Mineral Wells to Abilene segment, the southern branch going by Palo Pinto, Strawn, Ranger, Eastland, Cisco, Putnam, Baird, Clyde, and Abilene; and the northern branch going by Palo Pinto, Caddo, Brackenridge, Albany, and Abilene. (See *Figure 35* earlier in this section.) A second resolution offered and accepted created two branches between Sulphur Springs and Texarkana, the southern route going from Texarkana to Atlanta, Linden, Hughes Springs, Daingerfield, Pittsburg, Winnsboro, and Sulphur Springs; and the northern branch going by way of Atlanta, Douglassville, Bryan Mill, Naples, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, and Sulphur Springs.²¹⁹ Although the southern route was initially part of SH 1, it was never considered to be part of the Bankhead Highway as promoted by the Bankhead Highway Association. The Texas Highway Commission designated the southern route between Texarkana and Sulphur Springs as “1A,” as noted on State Highway maps from 1919 and 1922. By 1923, this segment’s designation would change from SH 1 to SH 11.

Other named highways that achieved recognition by the Texas Highway Commission were the Meridian (SH 2), Southern National (SH 3, later named Old Spanish Trail), North Texas (SH 5), King of Trails (SH 6),

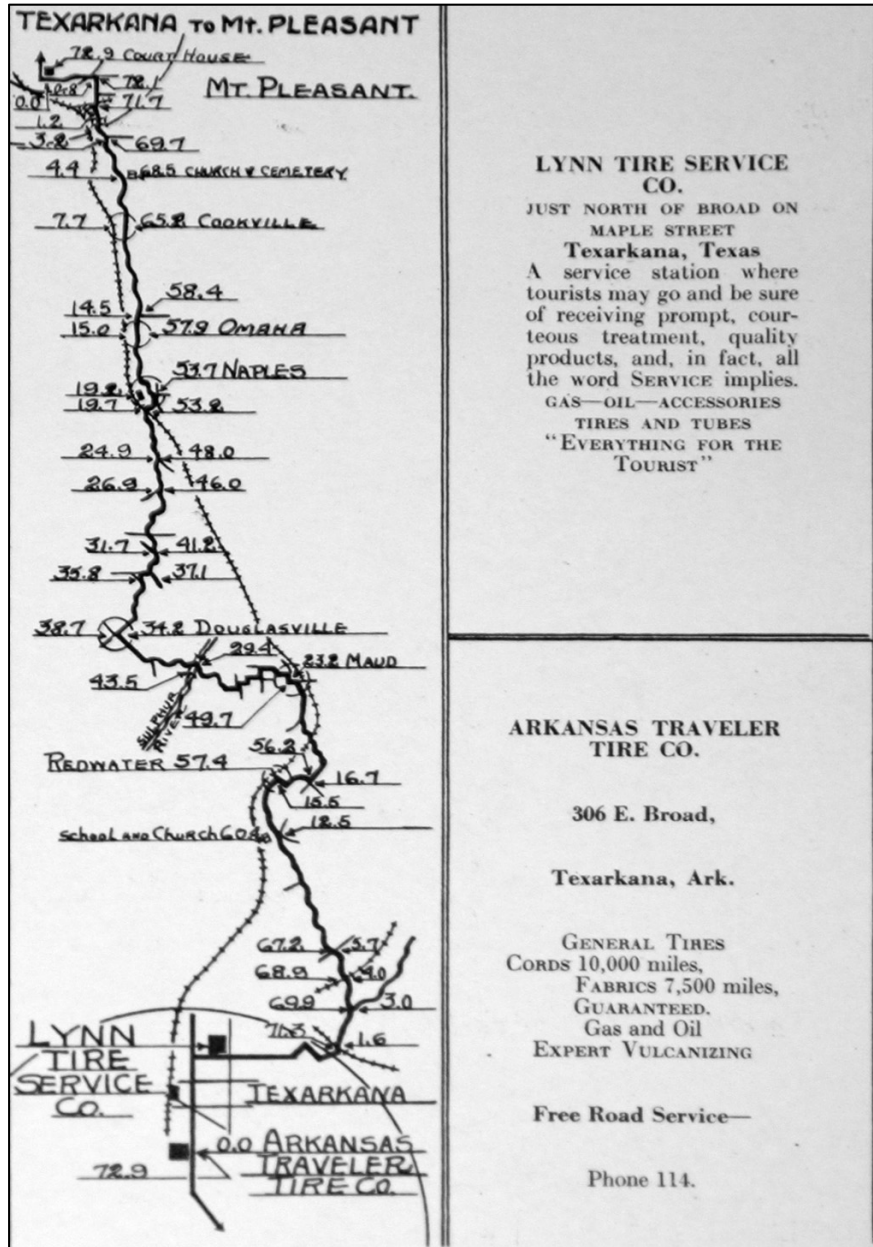
Central Texas (SH 7), East Texas (SH 8), Puget Sound to Gulf (SH 9), Jefferson (SH 11), Jeff Davis (SH 12), Ozark Trails (SH 13, referred to by the Commission as Ozark Trail), and Southwest Trail (SH 24). (See aforementioned *Figure 35*.) The balance of the highways derived their names from terminal points.²²⁰ In the meantime, highways whose associations perhaps hoped they would be designated as part of the highway system, such as the Colorado-to-the-Gulf, carried out inspections and pronounced their roads to be drivable. The Commission agreed within a few days of their meeting in Mineral Wells to approve a state highway named for Henry Exall, former president of the Texas Industrial Congress. Segments of the Henry Exall would overlay the King of Trails and Meridian Highways.²²¹

Following the recommendation of Department Engineer George Duren, the Commission partitioned the state into six engineering divisions districts (see aforementioned *Figure 35*), but only three division engineers were hired.²²² The Commission itself and its engineer then spent the remaining summer months becoming familiar with the routes they had designated. They focused heavily on State Highway No. 1, beginning with the segment between Dallas and Texarkana, and were accompanied by Captain Fauntleroy, George Duren, and Dallas County Engineer J. F. Witt. They then conducted an inspection of the El Paso to Fort Worth segment and conferred with the Meridian Road, East Texas, Puget Sound to Gulf, and Colorado to Gulf highway associations at a number of meetings. Subsequent trips inspected or laid out the Del Rio–Canadian, Houston and San Antonio, Meridian, Colorado to Gulf, Fort Worth to Vernon, Austin to Temple, and San Antonio to Corpus Christi highways.²²³

The field trips by the department's commissioners and engineer uncovered considerable rivalry along the Dallas to Texarkana segment between counties that lay on the southern and northern routes defined by the Commission in June. In addition, residents in Cass County had seen the rivalry as an opportunity to propose a third, or middle, route that would go by way of Redwater, Maude, Douglasville, and Naples. Duren predicted that the rivalry would be productive because it would result in quicker completion of the northern and southern routes. But no amount of funding would rapidly cure the serious defects Duren found. Because of soil conditions, existing road locations would have to be moved in Rockwall and Morris counties. Numerous segments of road needed to be rebuilt in almost all the counties. The Sulphur River was a serious impediment because its rate of flow often led to persistent flooding.

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Figure 37. Map showing the curved and stepped existing route between Greenville and Dallas from T. A. Dunn's, 1922 *Authentic Roadmap and Tourist Guide of the Bankhead Highway: Washington to San Diego (Birmingham, Alabama: Bankhead Highway Map Publishing Co., 1921)*. The Dunn guide is an excellent primary source documenting the sometimes arduous route that the Bankhead Highway followed prior to the construction of SH 1. The Guide includes a series of similar maps that depict in detail the earliest known route of the Bankhead Highway. Many of the maps include advertisements or photographs of some of the businesses that catered to the growing number of motorists using the highway. Source: *Bygone Byways*, http://home.comcast.net/~bygonebyways/bh_texas.htm (accessed 8/23/2012).



Finally, Duren remarked on the persistence of "crooks," probably alignments that followed property lines and would need straightening. His description of the route through a portion of Bowie County would have been typical of many Texas roads in 1917 (Figure 37). The county was in the process of improving a roadway leading from Texarkana and paralleling a rail line. But it traversed country not previously used as a highway. It had to cross several creeks where expensive fills and openings were necessary. "At present the road following this route is a crooked, winding trail through the timber, unimproved in any way except that trees have been cut down in sufficient number to enable vehicles to follow a beaten path."²²⁴

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Figure 38. Photograph of an abandoned segment of concrete road located west of Doniphan Drive in El Paso, as it appears today. Historically, this roadway continued for 20 miles, stretching from the New Mexico-Texas state line into the City of El Paso. This segment may be among the state's oldest examples of concrete highway construction and reflects the importance of locally available Portland cement as a road building material. The abundant supply of cretaceous limestone in the area fostered the development of El Paso as one of the state's leading producers of Portland cement. Early experiments with the material demonstrated its effective use as a road-building material. Photo by HHM.



The variety of existing road types along the proposed route was noteworthy and included dirt, gravel, asphalt macadam (a type of road construction made of crushed stone bound with another material, such as asphalt; named for its Scottish inventor John McAdam), first-class concrete, sand and sand-clay. Similar conditions existed along the El Paso–Fort Worth segment of State Highway No. 1, where deep sand was an impediment in the Monahans area. Department Engineer Duren encountered other problems created by sand in Ector County and cloudbursts that resulted in arroyo cutting. Road types on this stretch of State Highway No. 1 included asphaltic macadam, gravel, gravel surfaced with asphaltic oil, dirt, sand, and a rock, gravel, and caliche mix. The very best road was encountered in El Paso County, where a large cement plant and supplies of limestone and shale had supplied material to build an 18-foot-wide, 20-mile-long concrete road from the New Mexico–Texas state line to the City of El Paso (*Figure 38*). The highway east of the city was asphaltic macadam and comprised part of what Duren considered to be a modern system of highways that needed no state or federal aid.²²⁵

Descriptions of the road types along State Highway No. 1 also were descriptive of road materials across the state that J. D. Fauntleroy had written about in October 1917. The presence of blackland and sand meant that some areas were naturally impassable some or all of the time and would have to be modified before traffic could pass. But Texas also had as great a variety of materials suitable for road building as existed anywhere in the United States. As a result, Fauntleroy believed the road building problem in the state could be resolved only if communities understood that they had to first select the best location possible for a road. Then, during construction, contractors had to grade, provide for proper drainage structures, preferably of concrete, and then provide for a suitable surface to stand up to the prevailing traffic. To ensure surface durability, he recommended conducting traffic counts and analysis of the types of traffic using the roads.²²⁶

The Commission spent much of the summer and fall of 1917 making highway inspections, approving federal aid projects brought to them by the counties, making location modifications to existing routes, and approving entirely new ones.²²⁷ The department worked aggressively on surveying, assessing, planning, and funding, but not everyone was in agreement with the direction the agency was going. In mid-October, the Dallas Automobile Club called for a meeting after Dallas County District Attorney Mike T. Lively stated that he believed that the federal money controlled by the Highway Department was being wasted. The Department was “dribble[ing] [the money] out over the State.” He believed that the funds would be better used by completing one trans-state road at a time instead of improving small stretches that start nowhere and go nowhere. Other cities stated that the general population wanted “continuous highways on which they can travel from one prominent city to another.” Furthermore, it was completion of the main arteries from state line to state line that would bring the tourists.²²⁸

Chairman Hancock responded immediately, pointing to the appropriations made, in particular, to counties through which State Highways Nos. 1 and 2 ran. He stated that the Commission was working with a plan and had adopted a system of 26 state-designated highways comprising about 9,000 miles. The highways had been numbered according to their relative importance.²²⁹ While the Commission was, indeed, operating within a plan as required by federal and state laws, the criticisms and concerns levied had some merit. The 1916 federal law had brought some supervision of local authorities by the State Commission, but its role remained that of “guide, counselor, and friend” to local officials who retained the initiative in road building. According to a report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Organization and Economy, the results of such an approach were failure to systematically develop state highways into a coordinated system, creating “a hodge-podge of roads of varying degrees of importance,” and this pattern persisted until 1932, largely as a consequence of “compliance with federal legislation,”²³⁰ resulting in a state highway system built “according to the standards of a system of county roads.”

Although the availability of non-local road materials became worse, the Commission’s work during the fall and winter of 1917–1918 continued much as before. The Railroad War Board, concerned about shipments of war-related material, denied railroads the use of gondola or open-top freight cars to ship materials for building and maintaining public and private highways during the war. The Highway Commission conveyed to Washington that it understood the policy, but the Commission wanted the Board to understand the impact the policy was having on highway construction and to appreciate the role highways played as military assets capable of transporting food and fuel.²³¹ In Texas, the issue was particularly pertinent, since the state was the location of more existing

and new cantonments, military air fields, training facilities, and depots than any other state in the United States.²³²

The concern with military transportation continued, carrying forward an earlier sentiment expressed by the Texas Legislature. Members petitioned Congress to make a provision for a national military highway through the Southwest, including through Texas.²³³ In January, Chairman Hancock delivered a complete report on the work of the Texas Highway Commission, one part of which focused on road construction in the vicinity of military facilities. Hancock noted that the Commission intended to facilitate travel into and out of cantonment points such as Fort Worth, Waco, San Antonio, and Houston. State Highway Engineer Duren would work to have the federal government modify its order forbidding freight cars from carrying road materials. A change in policy was necessary, he said, so that work could concentrate on military highways, more auto trucks could transport materials, and railroad traffic would be relieved.²³⁴ The balance of the Commission's report consisted of reports and maps that gave a complete record of the Commission's work up to December 1, 1917. It also identified the stretches of highway within the system that had received state and federal aid. Soon after, numerous projects on State Highway No. 1 were initiated, with plans and specifications for work in Titus, Dallas, Tarrant, Morris, and El Paso counties being approved.²³⁵

The Commission's focus on State Highway No. 1 was repeated early in 1918 by John Asa Rountree, a Birmingham, Alabama, publisher who formed an early alliance with Good Roads promoter John H. Bankhead in 1898. (See preceding *Figure 20* in Section I.3. for more information regarding Bankhead.) The two men organized the North Alabama Good Roads Association, and Rountree cultivated his friendship with Bankhead, who eventually became a leading proponent of the Good Roads cause in Congress. In 1913, Rountree convinced Senator Bankhead to accept the National Good Roads Association's presidency. (Refer to preceding *Figure 8* in Section I.3. for a summary of the Good Roads movement.) Three years later, Rountree conceived the idea for a 4,000-mile transcontinental highway from Washington, D.C., to California to be named the John Hollis Bankhead National Highway.²³⁶ (See *Figure 39*.)

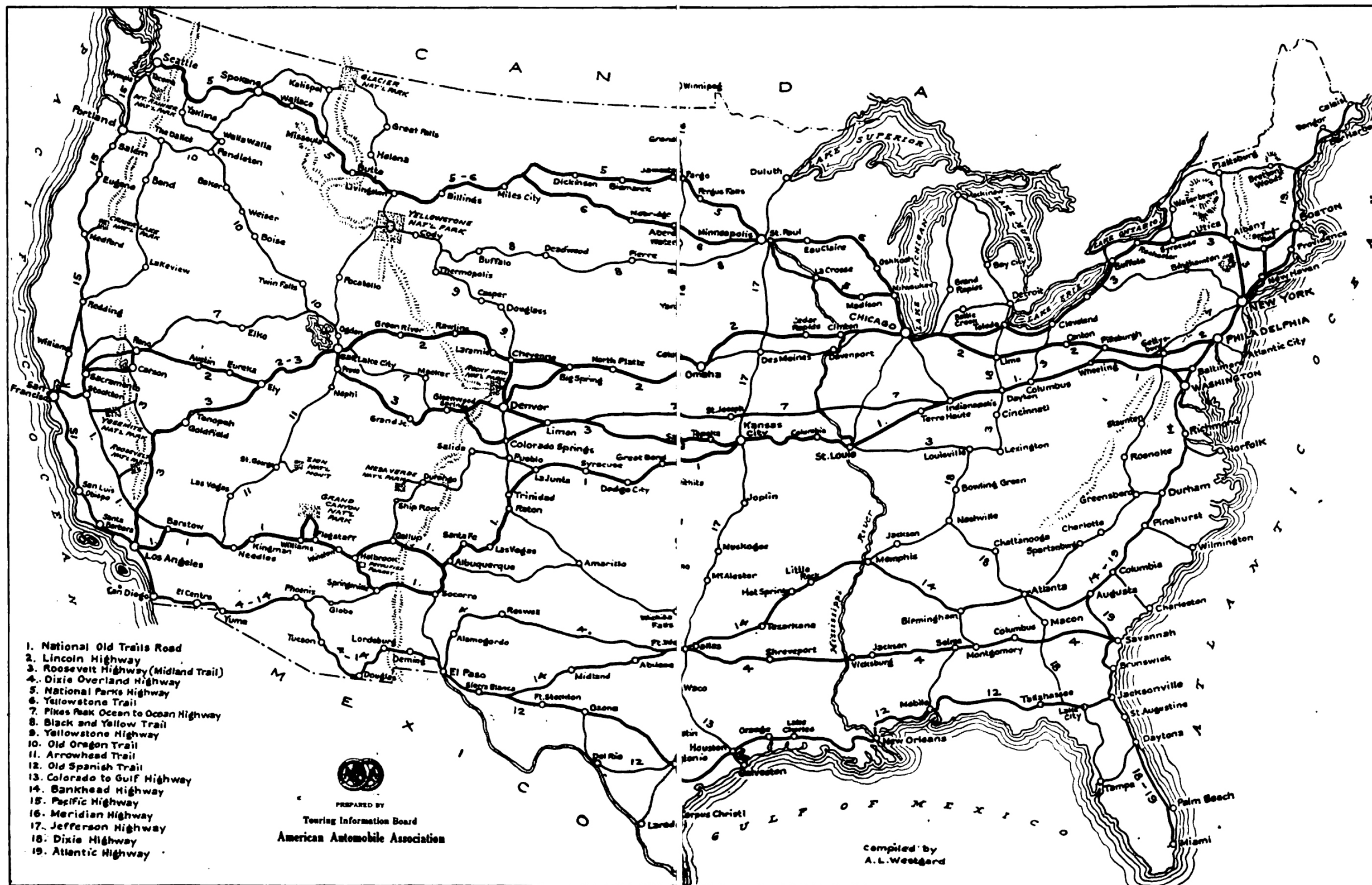
It is not clear when Rountree first made connection with officials in Texas, but once engaged, he was relentless in his promotion of the Bankhead Highway. He scheduled a meeting with Curtis Hancock in mid-February 1918, communicating that he would be in Dallas to confer with Hancock about the route the Bankhead National Highway would take through Texas. He also introduced the idea that an alternate route through Oklahoma instead of Texas might be selected by the Bankhead Association.²³⁷

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Figure 39. Map of transcontinental auto trails, published by the American Automobile Association (AAA), ca. 1919. The images show some of the most important named highways that extended through Texas, including the Dixie Overland Highway (4), Old Spanish Trail (12), Colorado to Gulf Highway (13), and Bankhead Highway (14). These and the other highways represented the earliest and most significant roadways for motorists at the time. Many of these same highways later were incorporated into the interstate highway system and remain a vital part of the nation's transportation network and infrastructure. Source: American Roads, crediting "Here Are the Motor Trails from Atlantic to Pacific—and All Points Between," by A. L. Westgard, published in *The Independent*, June 7, 1919, http://www.americanroads.us/articles/The_Independent_1919_6_7_360.html (accessed February 24, 2014).



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Rountree's meeting with officials and prominent citizens in Dallas was a study in salesmanship. He represented first that the highway was complete from Washington, D.C., to Little Rock and was headed towards Los Angeles, California, with the Little Rock–Los Angeles route pending. He failed to acknowledge earlier designations of the proposed route through Texas other than making the statement that “county officials and others are anxious for the highway to extend through Texas and take up the Texarkana–El Paso roadway now being provided.”²³⁸ He alleged that the federal government eventually would take over the road and its maintenance, and that the next step would be to designate it a military highway. Rountree then informed the group that government road engineers would be at a meeting at Little Rock in April, when a route would be selected.²³⁹

Hancock pledged the support of the Texas Highway Commission, and Rountree averred that the road “would be arranged for” by the Bankhead National Highway Association. He then re-identified the highway as a military road, and he differentiated it from every other road as being “essentially a Government proposition.” It was “in a class by itself,” not in “opposition or competition with any other national highway.” He then stated that “the Government authorities in Washington, D.C., had given assurance that when the survey of the highway is completed and everything is in readiness to begin its construction, the [federal] Government will go ‘fifty-fifty’ on the expense attached to making the highway an actual accomplishment.” He also maintained that a bill had already been introduced in Congress for that purpose.²⁴⁰

Rountree had created a manic environment in North Texas, where proponents of the Texas route perceived that they were in direct competition with Oklahoma. Hubbard returned to Austin, where the Texas Highway Commission voted to designate State Highway No. 1 as the Bankhead Highway, replacing the name Texarkana, Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso Highway. The Dallas Automobile Club planned to send a large delegation to Little Rock to show support for the Texas route, as did towns in West Texas, while newspapers began to refer to the Bankhead as “the great military highway.”²⁴¹

The Little Rock meeting resolved nothing about the route, except a decision that pathfinders along the various routes would present their findings to the highway directors by January 1, 1919, and a final decision would be made at an upcoming 1919 convention in Mineral Wells.²⁴² (See *Figure 40*.) Rountree then assured continued interest in Texas by appointing Arthur P. Dyer, manager of the Dallas Automobile Club as secretary-treasurer of the Texas Division of the Bankhead.²⁴³ Specifics about the operations of the Association relative to the actions and responsibilities of the Texas Highway Commission continued to develop

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Figure 40. Photograph showing the attendees of the annual Good Roads convention in Mineral Wells from April 14–19, 1919. The Bankhead National Highway Association likewise held its annual meeting in Minerals Wells on April 18–19, 1919. Among the attendees were Senator John H. Bankhead and John Asa Rountree of the Bankhead National Highway Association. This meeting was critical in the history of the Bankhead Highway in Texas. Members voted to support the “All Texas Route” over a competing alignment that extended through, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, known as the “Four State Route.” Courtesy of the Old Jail Museum, Palo Pinto.

as it occurred to some observers that the counties on the route and the Commission had already financed much of the length of the road through Texas. The responsibilities of the Bankhead National Highway Association, then, were somewhat less clear, although there was consensus that its work would have to be financed “by memberships secured along the line of the proposed route.”²⁴⁴

Highway associations such as the Ozark Trails, Meridian, and King of Trails supported the endeavors of the Bankhead-affiliated organizations, joining in their Good Roads conventions and working to make highway routes more readily visible to motorists. County representatives at a Good Roads meeting in Abilene in May 1918, pledged to mark the Bankhead with distinguishing signs at the expense of each county. The Dallas Automobile Club similarly announced plans to mark the Bankhead through Dallas as well as the King of Trails Highway, which ran from Corpus Christi and Galveston to Winnipeg, Manitoba. By May, every telephone and electric pole on the route through Dallas had been painted with the letters “K-T” on a yellow band. Outside the city limits, the club intended to paint three poles per mile as well as three poles at every turn and intersection.²⁴⁵ (See *Figure 41.*)

The drumbeat of publicity appears to have encouraged counties and road districts to vote favorably for bonds to work on State Highway No. 1.²⁴⁶ All the counties were encouraged to improve their part of the route sufficiently to make the Texas route the obvious choice for the pathfinders. The Highway Commission moved ahead with funding for segments of State Highway No. 1, among others. In particular, the Commission approved funding for the south (SH 1 through Strawn/Ranger/Cisco) and north (SH 1A through Palo Pinto/Breckenridge/Albany) loops in West Texas because they would serve “an oil producing section necessary to increase fuel production at this [war] time.”²⁴⁷ The need for such improvements was reflected in a humorous letter written by the secretary of the Cisco Chamber of Commerce to Rountree after the visit of the pathfinders: “Here[']s to the Good road ? between Ranger and Strawn. I hope you boys have survived the shock and are not resting upon flowery beds of ease. Let your conscience be your guide and not the present condition of this

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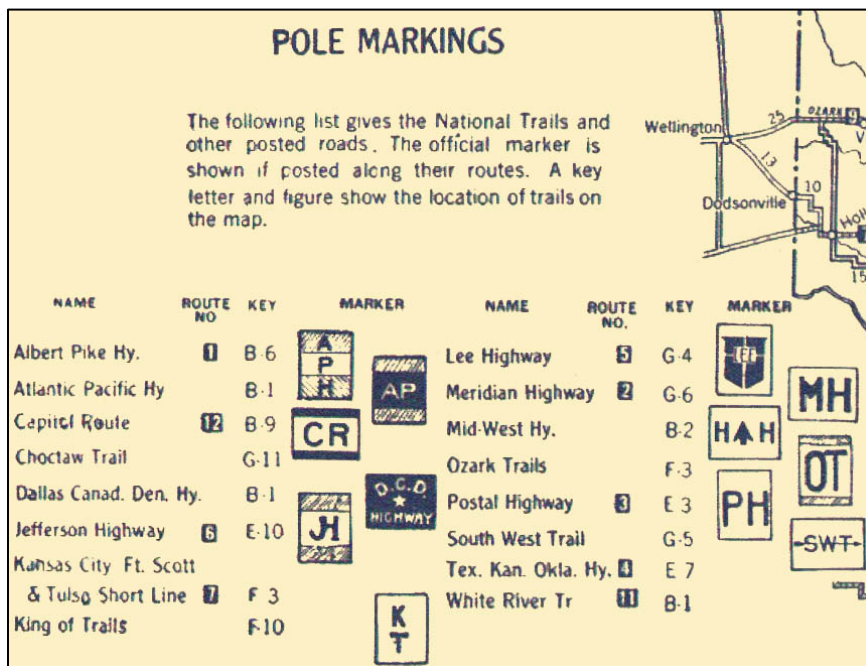
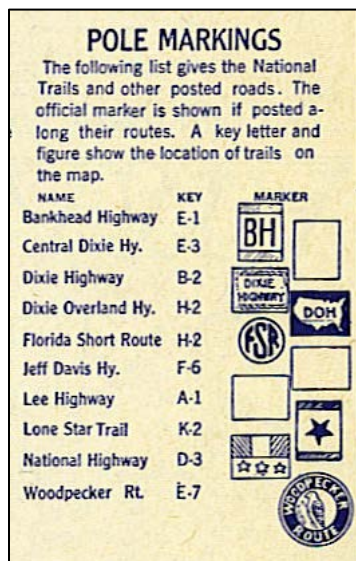


Figure 41. Details of the legends of Clason's Touring Atlases from the 1920s, showing the pole markings for various named roads. In an era before the federal government imposed a standardized system of designating and marking roads, signage from highway associations provided a primary means of informing motorists of highway routes. These signs created a visual clue to assure travelers that they were following the correct path. Sources: "US Highway Systems: Present, Past, and Present," by Donald Dale Milne, Roadtrip 62, <http://www.roadtrip62.com/Post021411.htm#.UwuQqvldWBB> (accessed February 24, 2014); "1925-26 Oklahoma Map from Clason's Touring Atlas," <http://historicroadmaps.com/OklahomaPage/1926ClasonsOklahomaPage/image1.html> (accessed February 24, 2014).

road, for you know all tourists will want to come thru the oil belt for there are lots of 'Ginks' in the world that have never seen an oil well."²⁴⁸

The path-finding effort in the fall of 1918 began in Memphis, Tennessee, and made a loop through Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, where the convoy began in El Paso and traveled eastward to exit the state at Texarkana. (See Figure 42.) The months between the survey and meeting in Mineral Wells were filled with lobbying on the part of road proponents in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, and analysis of collected information by Bankhead officials. There were strong arguments in favor of two routes in West Texas and New Mexico, one of which would make a scenic loop through Roswell and the White Mountains. Other decision-makers dismissed a route through Oklahoma City as well as a late bid from Sherman. Perhaps one of the most important observations was expressed by S. M. Johnson of the AAA in Washington, D.C., who stated that there had been "no show for any special appropriation by Congress to build the B[ank] H[ead]" despite considerable lobbying on the part of the Bankhead Association. Therefore, the Texas route seems to be the most logical, given the money the state had pledged to its construction.²⁴⁹

The exact route of the Bankhead was in question, and Congress demonstrated little will to assume responsibility for funding any transcontinental military routes. But the end of World War I brought a rearrangement of priorities that promised to benefit Good Roads advocates. Perhaps inspired by the roads War Department personnel had seen in Europe, Congress voted at the end of February to appropriate an additional \$200 million in federal aid to be spent in line

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Figure 42. Dallas Official Pilot Car for the Bankhead Highway Pathfinding Trip, November 1918. In an era before the existence of highways, drivers known as “pathfinders” identified the best routes for motorists and automobile travel. Oftentimes, they would drive on poorly constructed and maintained roads where they often would get stuck in mud and need assistance. In the example to the right, the pathfinder’s car was used as a way to generate interest in and publicity for the Bankhead Highway. John Asa Rountree is the individual on the left shaking the hand of the unidentified driver of the “Pilot Car.” Source: File 66.23.21, John Asa Rountree, Sr., Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama.



with the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. The legislation also broadened the definition of rural post roads and doubled the federal contribution per mile to \$20,000.00.²⁵⁰ S. M. Johnson, after witnessing the event from the gallery at the Capitol, crowded to Rountree about the final vote of 268 to 71 and advised him that the states could go ahead to provide their end “of the 50–50.”²⁵¹ Apparently inspired by the events in Washington, D.C., the Texas Legislature considered and passed the Laney Bill, which called for a constitutional amendment. If it passed, voters would decide whether to empower the state to issue road bonds up to \$75 million. Finally, the requirement in the 1917 Texas law that successful road bond votes required a two-thirds majority to pass, by 1919, required only a majority vote.²⁵²

All of these events advanced the cause of Good Roads in Texas. They likely were topics of discussion at the seventh annual convention of the United States Good Roads Association and the third annual convention of the Bankhead National Highway Association. During the meeting, the Del Rio–Canadian Highway Association was formed, and Decca Lamar West, who had been a prime mover for Good Roads in the Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs, made a plea for a national highway named for Jefferson Davis. (See *Figure 43.*) Fellow Federation member Mrs. J. L. Landrum of Austin spoke on behalf of beautifying the national highways.²⁵³ In addition, an organization was formed “to promote and cause to be constructed a transcontinental highway along an All-Southern Route” from Washington, D.C., to San Diego to be known as the Robert E. Lee Highway.²⁵⁴ The event at Mineral Wells was packed with proponents of the various routes proposed for the Bankhead Highway. The pathfinders’ report was presented to the directors of the Bankhead National Highway Association and read by them, after which



Figure 43. Photograph of Decca Lamar West, active member of the Good Roads Association and the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs [no date]. Women played an important, yet often underappreciated, role in the development of the state and nation's highway systems. Many women's clubs advocated tree plantings and other landscaping efforts as well as the elimination or reduction of billboards to improve the aesthetic quality of the driving experience. Source: "Decca Lamar West," <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=82792501> (accessed February 24, 2014).

the "all-Texas" route was selected. That route followed the Highway Department's 1917 proposal for State Highway No. 1, leading from Texarkana to Naples, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, Sulphur Springs, Greenville, Rockwall, Garland, Dallas, Fort Worth, Weatherford, and Mineral Wells. From Mineral Wells, the highway would go to El Paso by way of Palo Pinto, Strawn, Ranger, Eastland, Baird, Abilene, Merkel, Sweetwater, Roscoe, Colorado [City], Big Spring, Stanton, Midland, Odessa, Pyote, Barstow, Pecos, Toyah, Wild Horse, Van Horn, and Sierra Blanca. The report acknowledged that State Highway No. 1, as identified by the Highway Commission, included an alternative route between Texarkana and Sulphur Springs and another between Mineral Wells and Abilene. But the pathfinders and committee chose not to include them.²⁵⁵

Immediately following the Mineral Wells meeting, the Bankhead National Highway Association signed a contract with the National Highway Marking Association of Chicago to mark the highway along the officially designed route. The markers were to be of reinforced concrete 24 inches long, 13.5 inches wide, and 1.5 inches thick. The slab would contain the word "Bankhead" in blue capital letters, "the letter 'H' in red and the signal mark in black." (Refer to aforementioned *Figure 41*.) Posts for the markers were to be concrete also, with slots or shoulders. They were to be 6.5 feet long, four inches square at the top, six inches square at the bottom, and tapered to be sunk at least two feet in the ground. Other poles, 10 feet long, would provide information that local authorities thought was important on concrete asbestos strips.²⁵⁶ The significance of the contract was not lost on Arthur P. Dyer, manager of the Dallas Automobile Club, who noted that the secretary of the association was "instructed not to receive any applications for membership from Oklahoma, thus assuring beyond all doubt" that the highway would be routed through Texas and not Oklahoma.²⁵⁷ The markers would serve as visual affirmation of the route selection made at Mineral Wells.

The choice of routes for the Bankhead was only superficially final, and identification continued to be a bone of contention. An influential supporter of the Oklahoma route was overheard by another delegate on a train after the Mineral Wells convention, saying that the money the Oklahoma contingent had raised to secure delegates ought to be used to put up Bankhead Highway markers on the Oklahoma route. There was "no power on earth to prevent it and if the Bankhead Highway or anyone else wanted to go into the courts they could do so."²⁵⁸ The Oklahoma proponents subsequently restyled themselves as the Scenic Route and began holding annual conventions.²⁵⁹

Earlier in 1919, the sometimes chaotic politics that accompanied interactions between highway associations and state highway commissions became a topic of concern for the United States Bureau of

Public Roads.²⁶⁰ In addition, it seemed that the 1916 federal legislation modified in 1919 by the increase in the highway-dedicated budget still was not achieving the goal of creating a national highway system for which some had hoped. A revised Townsend Bill had been introduced in Congress in June 1919 that called for creation of a federal highway commission. The duty of the commission would be to “select the highways to be included in the national highway system” within two years of enactment of the legislation.²⁶¹

The bill was reintroduced, but was not successful, and another version was introduced in the House of Representatives in December 1919. The purpose of the bill was to create a National Department of Highways to be known as the National Highway Commission. The responsibility of the Department of Highways would be “to construct and maintain ‘a system of connected, main, inter-state, motor highways. . . .’” The purpose of the Act was “to produce and effect an alliance of all such highways in the United States as hereafter may be selected and designated as National Highways by the Department of Highways, such highways to be hereinafter referred to as National Highways and to comprise a whole, hereinafter referred to as the National System of Highways.” States would retain control of the highways and do the work of construction and maintenance. The costs would be borne by the federal government.²⁶²

Debate about what was called the Townsend Bill continued in 1920 as Congress struggled to agree on a compromise that would link highways and broaden the focus of planning from county level to national level. In their own ways, the named highway associations kept the attentions of their constituencies on that national transportation landscape. The Bankhead National Highway Association, for example, reiterated the strategic military significance of the highway’s route. The Association sought to reinforce that perception, both with the War Department and Texas counties, by pressing for a military convoy in 1920 through the South that would mimic the one that had traveled over the Lincoln Highway in 1919.²⁶³ The War Department viewed the convoy, in part, as a way to assist in “the development of a system of national highways, by bringing before the public in an educational way, the necessity for such a system.”²⁶⁴

The convoy was hardly an unmitigated success on its trip through Texas, thanks to drought-breaking rains that created seas of mud and impassable roads in West Texas. (See *Figure 44*.) But the exercise allowed Rountree to reiterate the identity of the Bankhead as a highway having national significance. Similar efforts led officials to scout West Texas in 1920 for the most appropriate route for the Old Spanish Trail as it moved westward from the Hill Country to El Paso and beyond.²⁶⁵ Promoters of the Jefferson Davis National Highway also pressed their suit, receiving official designation by the Texas Highway Commission for

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Figure 44. Machine truck stuck in mud between Graham and Albany. Record rains following a record drought hampered forward movement by the 1920 Army convoy, as roads became impassable. This image captures the kinds of problems the convoy sometimes encountered since the highway network was being developed at the time. The convoy intended to demonstrate the strategic military importance of a good network of highways and roads to move men and materiel in the defense of the nation. U.S. military personnel saw first-hand the significance of such a system after seeing how the roads in Europe were so vital to the military during World War I. Source: File 66.25.53, John Asa Rountree, Sr., Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama.



an expansive set of routes that stretched from Louisiana to New Mexico, including a route along Texas' Gulf Coast.²⁶⁶ (Refer to *Figure 35* earlier in this section.)

Debate about federal highway legislation continued unabated during 1921. Certain parts of what eventually became the Federal Aid Act of 1921 appear to have caught the attention of the Texas Legislature, which preemptively passed the Davidson-Perkins Patrol Act early in 1921. The focus of the Act was to rank roads within counties and establish a uniform system of maintenance. By definition of the Davidson-Perkins Patrol Act, first-class roads were those designated by the Texas Highway Commission and comprised of one road leading in the direction of the county seats of each adjoining county, and other roads subject to constant and heavy traffic. Second-class roads were the main arteries of travel leading to first-class and lesser used roads. Third-class roads were the lesser arteries connecting second- and first-class roads with all other roads designated not in classes one or two but designated public.²⁶⁷ Then, in late March 1921, the Commission voted to designate a number of state highways as "The Major State Highway System." These included Highway No. 1 (the Bankhead Highway), the various routes of Highway No. 2 (the Meridian Highway), and the various routes of Highway No. 3 (the Southern National Highway, also known as the Old Spanish Trail), among others.²⁶⁸

Concurrent with the actions of the Texas Legislature and Highway Commission, national debate occurred over provisions of two competing bills, the Dowell Bill and the Townsend Bill.²⁶⁹ The Dowell Bill was favored by agricultural interests because it focused more on the needs of rural communities. Farm interests objected to construction of a limited number of hard-surfaced transcontinental roads until after local farm-to-market highways were constructed.²⁷⁰ More to the point, the American Farm Bureau Federation characterized the Townsend Bill as providing "cross country trunk lines of boulevards for those who have

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Figure 45. Photograph entitled "Cotton Bales on Truck," 1920. Early road advocates in Texas and the rest of the nation often debated how and where roads should be built and who would benefit most from such networks. Some argued that transcontinental highways would be a major economic catalyst by enabling people to drive and tour the nation. Others contended that a road network that served local needs provided far greater economic advantages and development opportunities. Such a system, they stated, would be a boon to states with agricultural-based economies such as Texas. The availability of good roads that could be used year round would enable farmers to bring cotton (as depicted in the image to the right) and other crops to market more efficiently and profitably. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, crediting Taylor Public Library, Taylor, Texas, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph145843/citation/?q=truck> (accessed February 24, 2014).

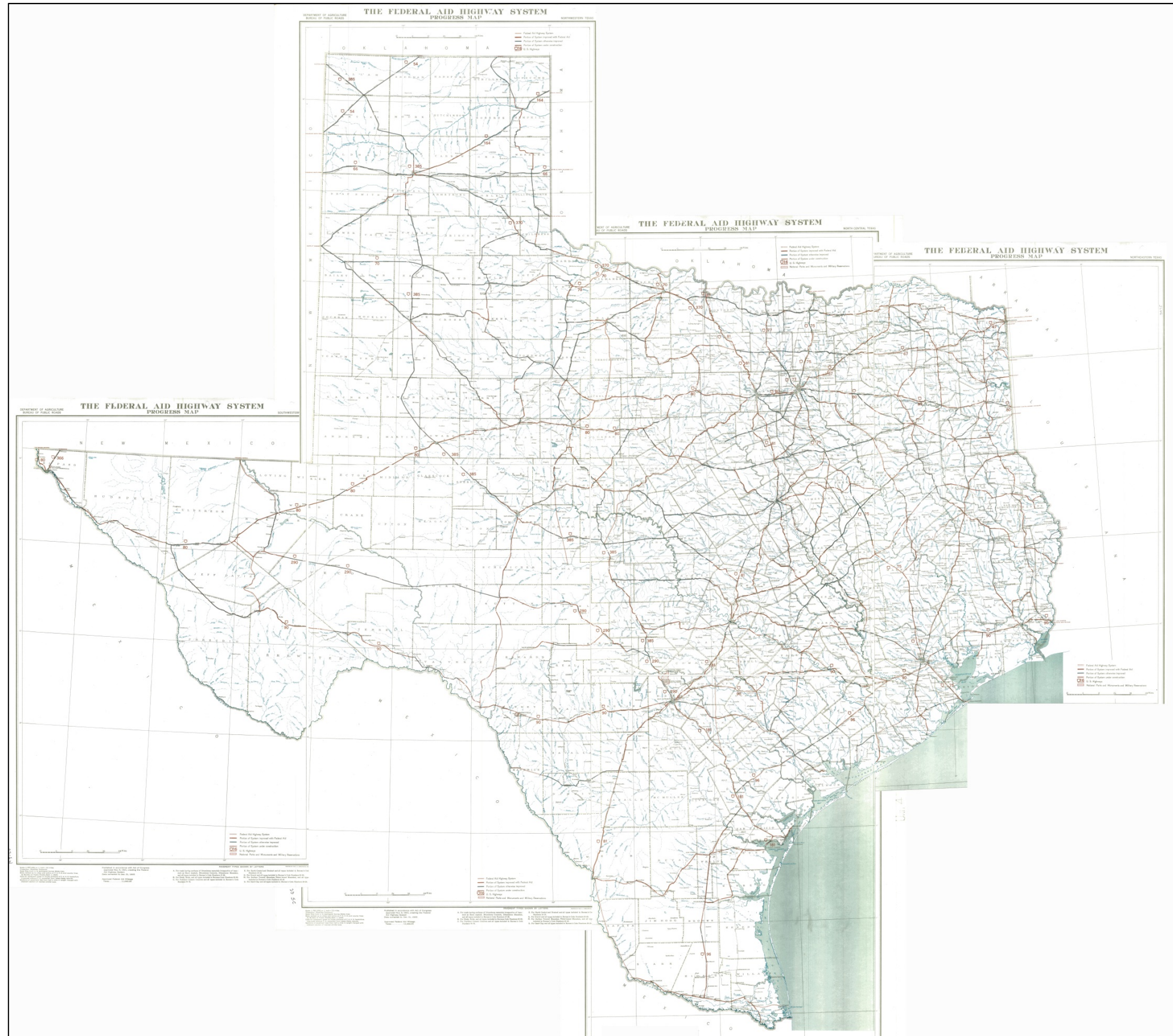


the money and time to idle away in long distance tours while the Dowell bill would furnish more local roads available for farm-to-market purposes and which are of service to all of the people." After all, the Federation pointed out, farmers owned and operated fully half of the automobiles and trucks in the United States (Figure 45).²⁷¹

Debate concluded in November 1921, when Congress passed the Federal Highway Act of 1921. This new Act reiterated the basic principles of the 1916 Act, but addressed aspects of that Act that had permitted a wide dispersion of federal funds, resulting in a lack of connected arteries. To cure this problem, the 1921 Act required that the Secretary of Agriculture and each state highway department jointly "designate a system of important interstate and intercounty roads limited to seven percent of the country's total road mileage." This mileage would then comprise the Federal Aid Highway System, which would receive all future federal funding.²⁷² (See Figure 46.) The Act also specified that the state had to have "direct control," a requirement that was not allowed by the Texas Constitution in 1921. Because the state Constitution vested authority over highways in the counties, the Act required changes in the state's laws and Constitution so that exclusive control was vested in the Texas Highway Department.²⁷³ Nonetheless, the authority to set priorities regarding highway construction was vested in the state, not in the federal government.

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Figure 46. "The Federal Aid Highway System Progress Maps," 1921, updated through 1928. Highways selected to receive federal funding are shown. Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, Series 20, Progress Maps 33 – Texas.



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Figure 47. Photograph entitled, "The Park Site Legislative Committee in the Davis Mountains," ca. 1921. Expeditions to potential state park sites such as this one were common at the time. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Collection, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/pan/item/2007661739/> (accessed February 24, 2014).

1921–1925

With passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1921, Texas found itself in jeopardy of losing federal aid. With a three-year grace period, however, concerned citizens organized to inform the general public and exert pressure on the Legislature to pass necessary legislation at its 1923 session. While that effort initially failed, legislation passed in 1925 enacted the laws necessary to retain federal funds.

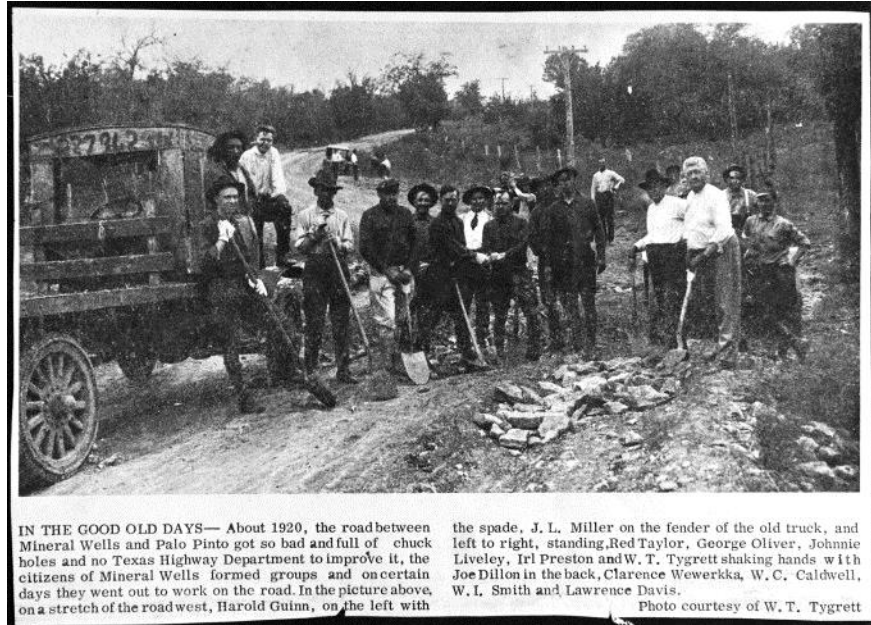
The success of the effort was due largely to the work of the newly formed Texas Highway Association and to the Federation of Women's Clubs. Private highway associations such as the Old Spanish Trail contributed as well. They also moved forward to promote continued construction funding and road extensions and improvements for each of the named highways. With the Federation, the associations focused on the public's awareness of the benefits of highway amenities by encouraging installation of signage, camps, and landscaping while discouraging billboards that distracted from scenic values (*Figure 47*). They found a willing partner in the newly formed State Parks Board, whose first chair was the Good Roads promoter David E. Colp and whose secretary was Mrs. W. C. Martin, a member of the Federated Clubs with a particular interest in roadside landscaping. (Refer to *Figure 29* in previous Section I.3. for details regarding Colp's background.)

The 1921 Federal legislation granted a three-year grace period to the states, but concerned citizens knew that the date embraced only one legislative session in Texas. On April 17, 1922, approximately 300 people gathered at the State Capitol and, with the encouragement of Governor Pat Neff, organized the Texas Highway Association. The board of directors met in Waco the next month and appointed a legislative committee to work out a detailed plan that could be presented to the Legislature. They met again in August with the Federal District Engineer, State Highway Engineer, and members of the Texas Highway Commission. They adopted a legislative program and made plans for a program of public education.²⁷⁴

Assistance appeared in the fall from the Old Spanish Trail Association, which used its convention as a vehicle to educate members about the 1921 law and seven percent system. Members organized to assist the Highway Department to secure the necessary state laws and an adequate state highway fund.²⁷⁵ With the leadership of Decca Lamar

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Figure 48. Photograph illustrating county repairs ongoing despite lack of funding from the Texas Highway Department, 1920. The image also captures the ambiguous role between state and county governments over the maintenance and upkeep of roads and highways. The lack of historical precedent made the implementation of the state's highway program and network sometimes problematic. Source: *The Portal to Texas History*, crediting Boyce Ditto Public Library, Mineral Wells, Texas, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph16289/citation/?q=highway> (accessed February 24, 2014).

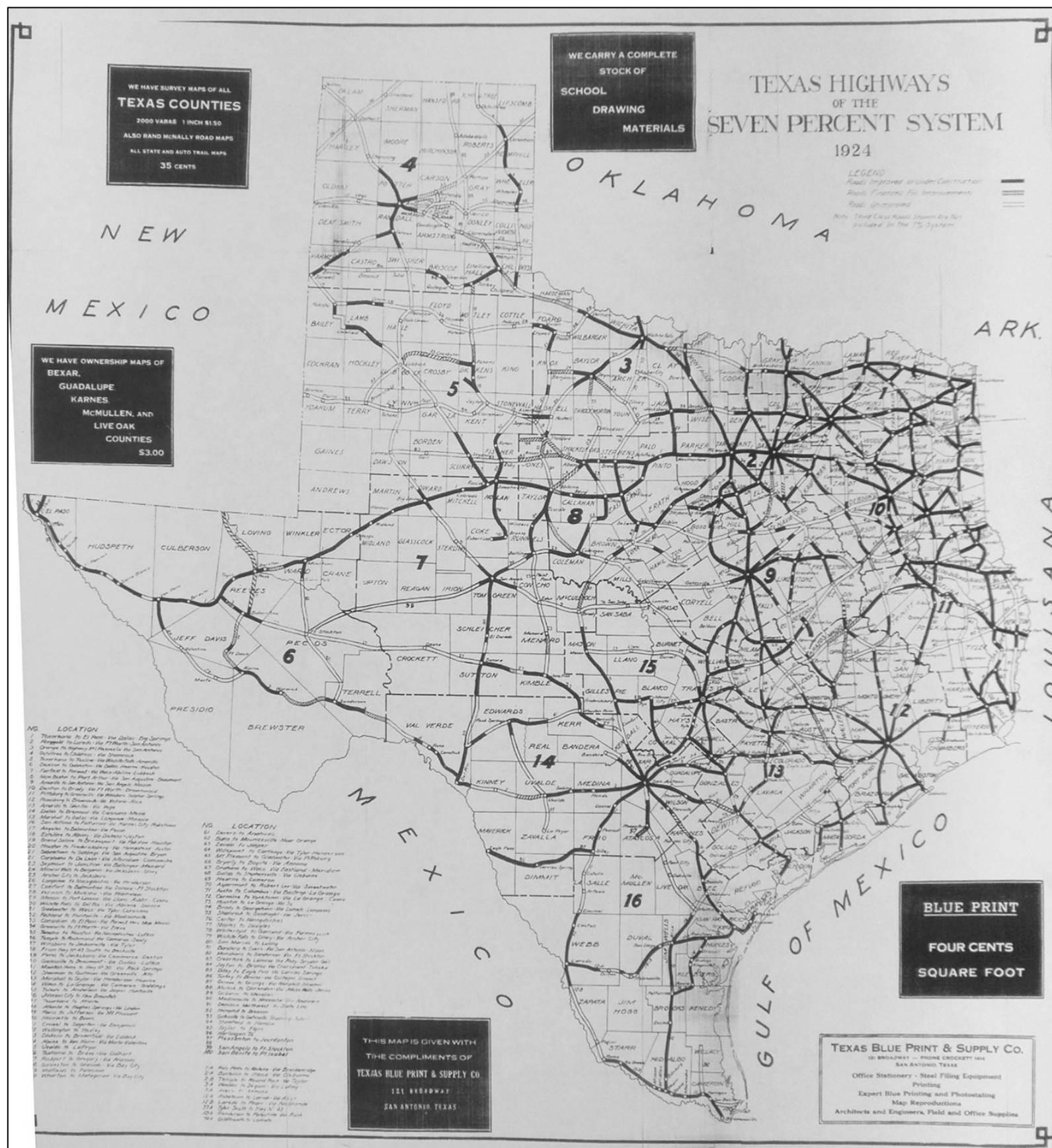


West, Chairman of the Good Roads Division, the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs also recruited memberships in the Texas Highway Association to promote passage of necessary legislation. After the Association met, developed recommendations, and submitted them to the Legislature, West's committee wrote more than 1,400 letters, released articles to more than 100 newspapers, and subsequently developed a model address that succinctly explained what was at stake if Texas failed to meet the requirements of the federal law.²⁷⁶

The Legislature passed bills that created a maintenance fund and theoretically relieved counties of that burden,²⁷⁷ but it failed to meet a deadline required to allow the necessary popular vote to amend the Texas Constitution. During the year that lapsed between sessions, the Texas Highway Commission took over general maintenance of all state highways on January 1, 1924, although some counties that owned equipment were permitted to perform their own maintenance (*Figure 48*).²⁷⁸ In November, the Commission designated State Highway Nos. 1, 2, 3 (Del Rio route), 5, 6, 12, 15, 16, 47, 50, and 54 as comprising the primary roads of the Federal Aid Highway System²⁷⁹ (see *Figure 49*), and in 1925 the Legislature enacted laws that relieved counties of construction and maintenance supervision. Under the statute, the Texas Highway Department was charged with direct control in making surveys, plans, and specifications for all highways. The duties of the counties were therefore limited to aiding the state in highway construction by agreed-upon contributions, thereby bringing Texas into conformity with the requirements of the Federal Highway Act of 1921.²⁸⁰

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Figure 49. Texas Highways of the Seven Percent System, 1924. The Federal Highway Act of 1921 provided matching federal funds for state highway construction for up to seven percent of the total number of road mileage in each state. This map graphically depicts the evolution of the rapidly improving highway network in Texas that utilized these funds. The map also indicates the highways that the Texas Highway Department considered to be the most significant at that time. Areas with the highest population densities, such as northeast, central, and southeast Texas, had the most intricate and developed network of roads. The numbers in bold and dashed lines note the 16 divisions within the Texas Highway Department that implemented the state's highway program within their respective jurisdiction. Source: Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.



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While the state was struggling with the implications of the Federal Highway Act of 1921, and the legalities and requirements associated with the seven percent system between 1921 and 1925, the named highway organizations and Federation of Women's Clubs, in cooperation with the new state parks board, were enjoying several years of success in their endeavors to build and promote their roads. There was a growing suspicion from the Bureau of Public Roads about the purposes and methods of the named roads promoters, and the American Association of State Highway Officials (a national organization comprised of transportation officials and professionals founded in 1914) met regarding trail marking. At their 1924 assembly, the officials admitted that there were reputable associations that had rendered a public service by "stimulating highway improvement, maintenance, and marking." Unfortunately, there were others that capitalized on public demand for roads by organizing trails, collecting money, and were generally self-serving to the detriment of reputable organizations.²⁸¹ However, the Association had no tools at its disposal to take action against rogue highway associations.

The challenging relationship between the official Texas Highway Commission and the named highway associations was highlighted by disagreements about route selection. For example, the Texas Highway Commission defined the Old Spanish Trail as strictly traveling along the route of State Highway No. 3, as defined by maps of the Federal Aid Highway System. (Refer to *Figure 46* earlier in this section.) The Old Spanish Trail Association, on the other hand, considered its scope much broader, even stating in a brochure that the Old Spanish Trail was "no longer a single highway, but a system of highways, for the people are seeking to open the way to every alluring historic spot along the Southern Borderlands."²⁸² The profusion of routes led to conflicts with other routes, some of which were hard-fought, and others of which were amicable. One of the most bitter was between the Old Spanish Trail Association and the Lee Highway Association, which threatened to preempt, at different times, both the Bankhead and the Old Spanish Trail.²⁸³ Another conflict that persisted for years was between the Old Spanish Trail and the Jefferson Davis National Highway. On the other hand, the Old Spanish Trail Association's chairman, Herral Ayres, was able to establish a cooperative relationship with John C. Nicholson, President of the Meridian Highway. In a series of letters and sometimes using frank language, they commiserated with one another over David Colp of San Antonio, who was involved with multiple highway associations, the Texas Good Roads Association, and the Texas State Parks Board. Unbeknownst to Nicholson, Colp had marked the Meridian Highway while simultaneously working for the Old Spanish Trail. Colp then had tried to get himself elected president of the Meridian Highway after being released by Ayres. By April 1924, Ayres noted that Colp was busy in South Texas promoting the Glacier to Gulf Highway. Ayres wrote that Colp used other highway routes but marked them as the Glacier to

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Figure 50. Photograph entitled “Ranger, Texas” showing oil development, ca. 1919. The city of Ranger was at the epicenter of an intense oil boom that brought rapid growth and prosperity to this small community in Eastland County. The discovery of oil nearby in 1917 brought many people to Ranger seeking to capitalize and profit from the oil boom. The influx of people, goods, and materials strained the city’s and region’s infrastructure, and the poor road quality hampered the development of the local oil industry. These conditions forced local and state officials to work to improve the road network as quickly as possible. The boom in Ranger was one of many such oil-related events that affected the development of the Bankhead and other named highways. Source: The Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Collection, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2007661591/> (accessed February 24, 2014).

Gulf. Ayres also noted that “[these routes] wobble around, perhaps wherever a bit of money is possible. That’s his type. He does have a rare facility for putting over bond issues, and this gives him recognition in my quarters.” Ayres and Nicholson agreed that it would be mutually beneficial to cooperate and promote one another’s highways by sharing maps and brochures.²⁸⁴

Like the Old Spanish Trail and Meridian Highway, the Bankhead Highway experienced continuous improvement between 1921 and 1925, thanks to the numerous projects the Texas Highway Commission approved along its main route, the willingness of counties to vote bonds, and the work of the Bankhead National Highway Association to keep the highway in the public eye. The identity of the Bankhead as the most important route in the Major State Highway System, as defined by the Commission on March 21, 1921, was affirmed in April 1924, when it was first in the Preferred System of Highways and on November 24, 1924, when it was designated a primary road of the Federal Aid Highway System.²⁸⁵ Funding flowed to State Highway No. 1 projects proportionately, and notable improvements followed. These included straightening and shortening of segments from the west Dallas County line through Arlington, a growing tendency to standardize the surface width to 16 feet, and building on a new location in El Paso.²⁸⁶ There were projects that specified expensive, durable paving materials in areas that experienced heavy traffic, such as the oil fields around Ranger (*Figure 50*). The Highway Commission also was interested in completing the highway entirely through counties and willing to work with counties in West Texas that sometimes had trouble passing bonds. The Commission was particularly willing to help counties that were the locations of roads that represented important links in transcontinental routes.²⁸⁷ Road types remained variable, with little consistency of materials (dirt, gravel, macadam, concrete, and brick). But by early 1924, Thomas MacDonald, Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, could report good news to the Honorable Representative W. B. Bankhead (son of the late Senator John H. Bankhead) about the highway named after his father. A total of 350.2 miles had been completed in Texas with Federal Aid funding, and another 180.3 miles were under agreement, for a grand total of 530.5 miles.²⁸⁸

As with the other named highways, the question of routes on the Bankhead National Highway was a source of constant discussion and, sometimes, disagreement. Regardless of what the Highway Commission chose to fund, communities in the general area of the highway always

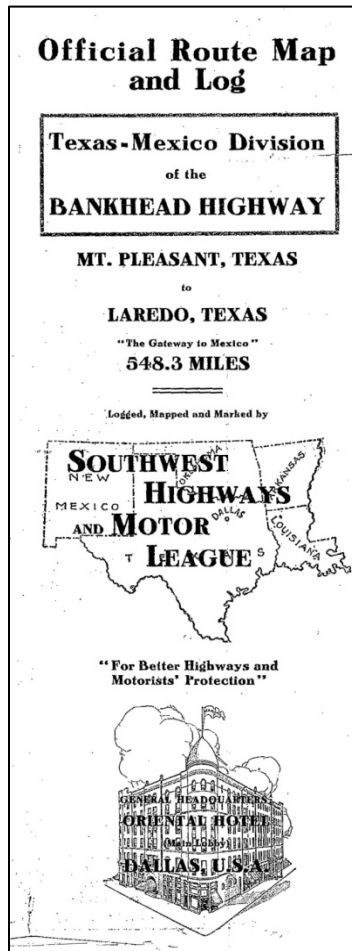


Figure 51. Official Route Map and Log: Texas–Mexico Division of the Bankhead Highway, Mt. Pleasant, Texas to Laredo, Texas, “The Gateway to Mexico,” 548.3 Miles. The promotion of another segment of the Bankhead Highway extending to Mexico stemmed from the efforts of a group formed in Pittsburg, Texas, to have the Bankhead Highway extend through the community. The proposed route was not without controversy as some members of the Bankhead National Highway Association did not fully support the effort. Source: File G-C-3, Box 2002/01-23, Texas Highway Department Historical Records, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas.

hoped that routes could be modified. In Texas, the town of Commerce pressed incessantly to be on the Bankhead, as did Breckenridge, where the city secretary sent a letter to Rountree asserting that the mileage from Mineral Wells to Abilene by the northern route (Breckenridge and Albany) was considerably shorter than the southern route (Ranger).²⁸⁹

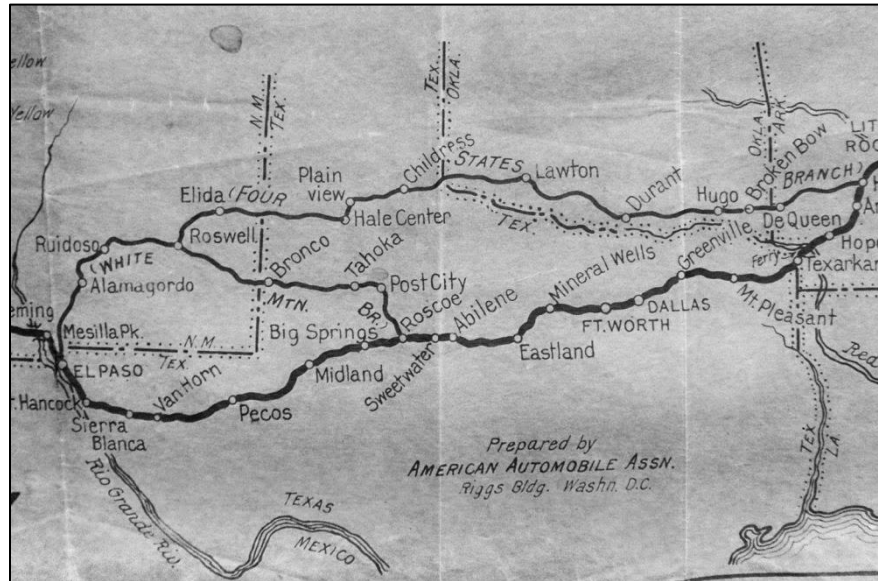
In one case, proponents of a route did not just request a modification but set out, instead, to create an entirely new branch. An association formed in Pittsburg, Texas, on May 26, 1921, for the purpose of charting an extension off of the main Bankhead route that would run from Mount Pleasant to Mexico City. The Texas–Mexico Branch would run to Pittsburg and then to Gilmer, Tyler, Athens, Kerens, Corsicana, Waco (where it would join the Meridian Highway route), Temple, Austin, San Antonio, and Laredo (Figure 51).²⁹⁰ Some Bankhead Association officers were supportive of the idea of a new branch route. But the Bankhead National Highway Association’s Midland director, J. M. DeArmond, was less enthusiastic. In June, he wrote to Rountree, “. . . I am not unmindful of the fact that the branches we have created thus far have caused all the fights and friction in the organization and I am not in favor of creating any more until we have properly received the recognition from the United State[s] Government and the respective State Governments of the Main Line and got it so well fixed that all the branches will not expect to be Main Lines at every Convention.”²⁹¹

In yet another case, the proponents of the Oklahoma route refused to give up their claims to the Bankhead. As late as 1921, representatives from that state attending the national Bankhead meeting attempted to recapture the main route from Texas.²⁹² While their efforts proved unsuccessful, their support of road building and use of the Bankhead name resulted in official recognition by the Association of three major routes in 1925: the main line and branches from Texarkana to El Paso; the Texas–Mexico branch or division from Mount Pleasant to Laredo, and the Four States branch or division from Arkadelphia, Arkansas, to Durant, Oklahoma, and Marlow, Oklahoma, through New Mexico to El Paso, Texas.²⁹³ (See Figure 52.)

Disagreements about routing within the organization were accompanied by threats from other named highway associations, which declared their intentions to mark as their own a route that had been claimed by the Bankhead Association.²⁹⁴ The Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis Highway associations that had bedeviled the Old Spanish Road also drew the ire of the Bankhead. Rountree kept up a heated correspondence with and about representatives of the Lee Highway, enlisting the help of the former Senator Bankhead’s family and the AAA. His ire was directed, particularly, at Decca Lamar West, proponent of the Jefferson Davis Highway, who had alleged that her proposed route pre-dated the Bankhead. He dismissed the Jefferson Davis Highway as

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Figure 52. Map of the Bankhead Highway. This map depicts two of the three Bankhead National Highway routes (the All Texas and Four States). The Texas–Mexico Division was acknowledged by the Bankhead National Highway Association but not usually depicted on their official maps. Source: Box 66.22.1, John Asa Rountree, Sr., Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama.

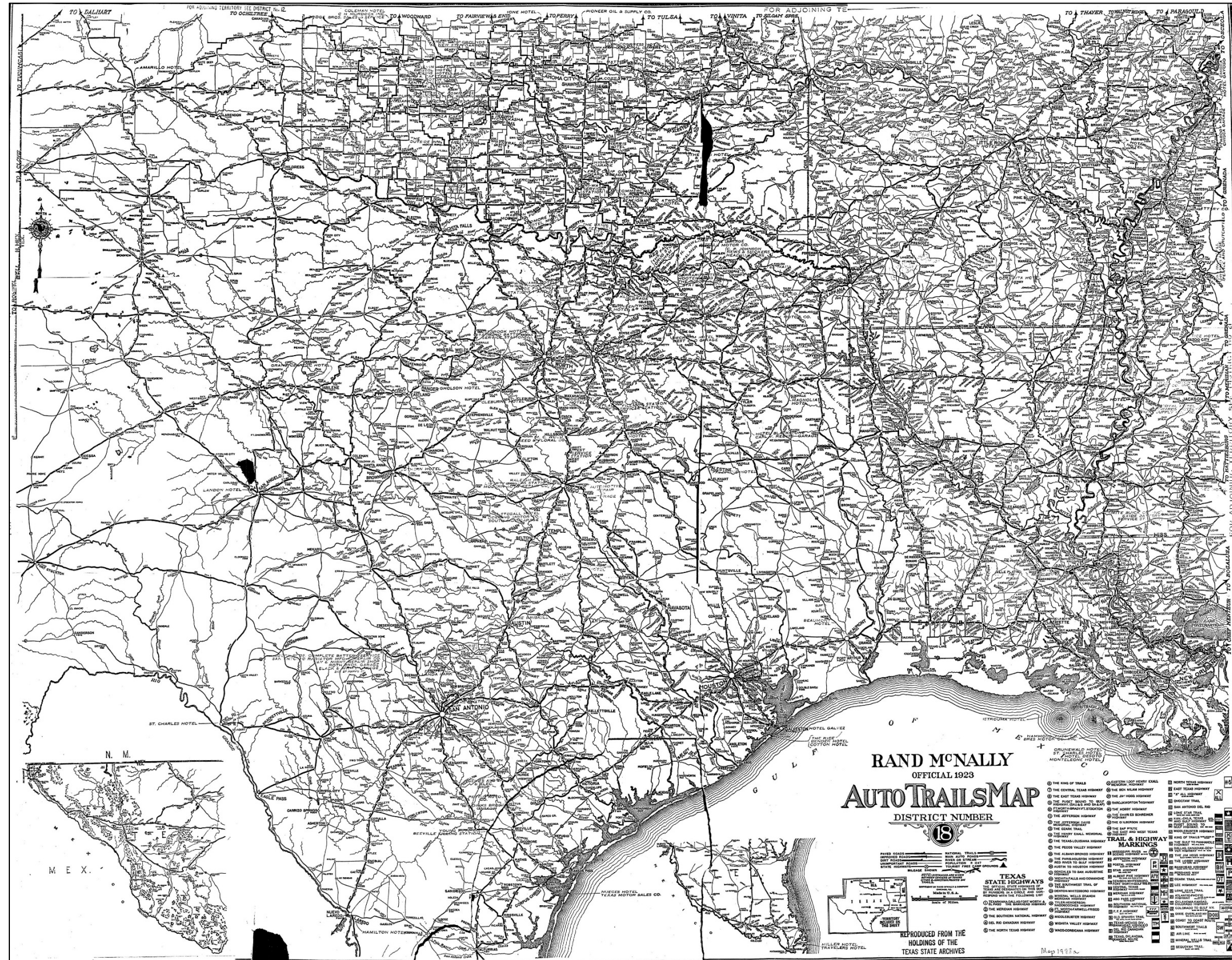


“simply a road on paper and. . . a beautiful sentiment,” but nothing to be taken seriously except for its possible usurpation of the Bankhead.²⁹⁵

All of the named highway association leadership realized that their claims to a particular route could be tenuous without visible markings on the landscape. One way to accomplish this was to erect signs that associated a particular route with a particular name. Throughout the early to mid-1920s, Rountree attempted to achieve a workable contract with a number of road signing companies that would install the markers designed by the Bankhead National Highway Association across the entirety of the route. He failed to meet with success, and so the Texas Auto Club undertook the task and finished marking the road from Texarkana to Dallas by the middle of February 1923. The markers would not have met with Rountree’s approval, because they consisted of a band around telephone poles marked “State Hy No. 1.”²⁹⁶ Through Senator Bankhead’s son, he did, however, manage to arrange a concession from the Texas Highway Department in May 1924. State Highway Engineer Gibb Gilchrist wrote to Representative W. B. Bankhead (Alabama) that the Texas Highway Commission had officially designated State Highway No. 1 as the Bankhead Highway. “We are at present arranging to mark out highways and will, of course, be glad to have the markers on our State Highway No. 1 read, ‘Bankhead Highway.’”²⁹⁷ (See Figure 53.) Rountree must have been pleased to inform Bankhead that, even if official markers were not in place, his father’s name was being memorialized in countless other ways on the landscape: “In Texas I counted along the route more than a dozen Bankhead highway filling stations. I found two hotels named ‘The Bankhead Hotels’ [sic]. I found three different automobile Companies named ‘Bankhead Automobile Company’. You can see that Texas is

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Figure 53. Map of Auto Trails in Texas and beyond, published by Rand McNally, 1923. This map captures the rapidly evolving highway network in the south-central region of the United States at that time. The legend at the bottom right-hand corner shows the proliferation of the highways in the region and how complicated these “name highways” could often be to travelers. The complicated nature of this unregulated highway naming system was soon replaced with a federal system that standardized highway names based on numbers for routes that extended into multiple states. Source: Texas Historical Commission, History Programs Division files, Austin, Texas.



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Figure 54. Bankhead Filling Station in Rockwall County located in the town of Rockwall, ca. 1920, demolished. Photograph of the Bankhead Gas Station, intersection of Alamo Street and the Bankhead Highway, Rockwall, Texas, ca. 1920. Source: Rockwall County Historical Foundation.



perpetuating the name of ‘Bankhead’ and are [sic] proud of the same (Figure 54).”²⁹⁸ Rountree understood the value of making the presence and identity of the highway known through landscaping as well as through signage. He had identified the need for a beautification effort by at least 1920, when he proposed to form a Beautification Commission composed of 12 women – one woman for each of the states through which the Bankhead highway passed.²⁹⁹ In December 1920, the Association created the Commission, whose work would include “the prevention of the use of the right of way for advertising purposes, that would detract from the beauty of the landscapes or that would be otherwise undesirable; the planting of the memorial and food producing trees and flowers, the marking of historical sites, with suitable tablets, and the placing of a series of monumental mile stones along the way.”³⁰⁰ All of these aspects of highway landscape treatment were topics that had been defined and explored by the Federated Women’s Clubs for almost a decade.

In November 1923, Rountree took up the subject of appointing a Texas representative to the Woman’s Commission. J. M. DeArmond in Midland recommended Florence (Mrs. W. B.) Martin of Dallas, and she received an appointment in 1924. Rountree was immediately impressed, and in January, Martin announced her intention to attend the Good Roads Convention in Houston and inform delegates about the work that had been done to beautify the Bankhead Highway.³⁰¹ She worked to appoint committees in counties along the Bankhead route that were charged with planting flowers, roses, shrubs, and trees in the spring.³⁰² (See Figure 55.)

Rountree could not have chosen a more appropriate person to carry out highway beautification on the Bankhead Highway in Texas. Florence Martin was a long-time member of the Federated Women’s Clubs

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Figure 55. Photograph with caption stating, "Zinnias in roadside park on Highway No. 1 in Hopkins County," just east of Sulphur Springs (no date). Source: Views of Division 1, Headquarters in Paris, Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

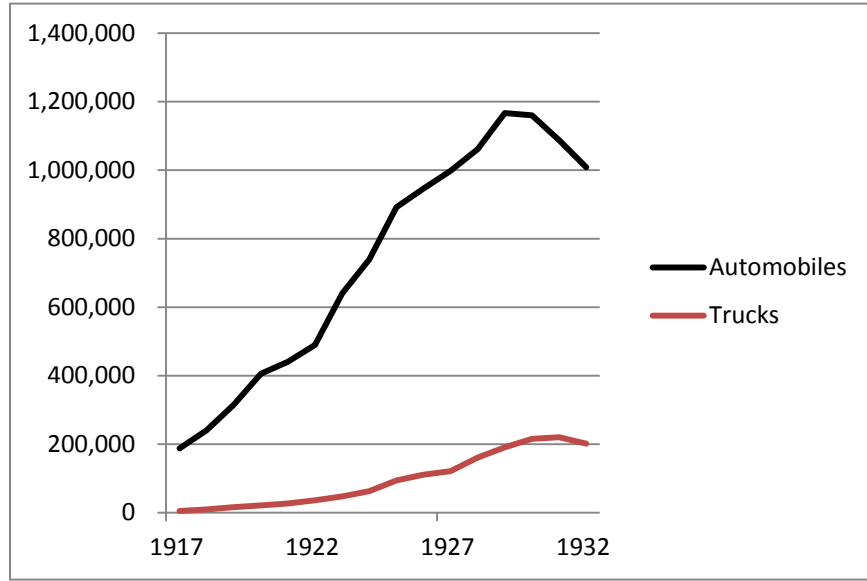


whose particular focus had been good roads and rural life. In 1923, she was appointed to the first State Parks Board by Governor Neff, and she became its vice president, serving under President Colp. The early idea of the Board was to acquire relatively small 50-acre parks as waysides for motorists driving from city to city. The Board soon went on extensive trips throughout the state, soliciting donations of parkland,³⁰³ usually adjacent to the highways that had been designated as part of the state highway system. Indeed, Colp fostered a close relationship among the Texas State Parks Board, Texas Highway Department, and named highway associations with which he was affiliated. He arranged for the State Highway Engineer to survey a potential park site and offered the donor a life membership in the Glacier to Gulf "motorway" for having given a park site along the highway.³⁰⁴ He frequently hosted meetings concerning parks that were attended by the State Parks Board and Highway Commission. Field trips in search of park sites often followed named highways, such as the Pat M. Neff or Bankhead Highways. Indeed, Colp had written early in his tenure as chair of the parks board that he hoped to get the parks system established quickly and then "turn it over to the State Highway Department to maintain."³⁰⁵

With the Old Spanish Trail and Bankhead Highway, the State Parks Board and Federated Women's Club worked diligently during the early to mid-1920s to beautify areas adjacent to state highways and visible from them. In the absence of a Texas Highway Department-sponsored program, the work of these groups continued through the 1920s as they sought to provide motorists with the convenience of easily seen markers, comfortable camping grounds, and information about sites of historic or scenic note, all while promoting their own organizations.

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Figure 56. Graph showing the increase in vehicles registered in Texas between 1917 and 1932. Source: FHWA, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/summary95/section2.html> (accessed May 14, 2013).



1925–1932

One specialist in the administration and financing of highways in Texas, Frank Mann Stewart, has described the period 1925 to 1932 as the third significant stage of highway planning, funding, and construction in Texas.³⁰⁶ Until the early 1930s, it also was a period of significant prosperity in the state. The second half of the decade marked the conclusion of 10 years during which the state's population grew by almost 25 percent. Cities also grew as rural residents increasingly moved to urban settings and became more mobile. The petroleum industry, which expanded with new strikes in West and East Texas, helped diversify the economy and supported an increase in automobiles: by 1929, one in every 4.3 Texans had an automobile (*Figure 56*). Increased prosperity brought greater opportunities for leisure as well, which helped spur the spread and growth of tourism. In some parts of the state where newly found oil discoveries spread broadly within the population, the wealth that accompanied the strikes lessened the effects of the Great Depression and provided opportunities for leisure activities.

The same period failed to result in development of an integrated, homogeneous state highway system that fulfilled the vision of the 1916 and 1921 federal highway acts, nor that of the state legislation of 1925. As a result, federal funding to Texas remained in jeopardy until at least 1927 because the state failed to maintain its highways adequately. Increases in taxes on gas were insufficient to create an adequate maintenance fund, and the state remained dependent in part on the success of county road bond elections to fund road construction and maintenance. Not until 1932, when the Legislature created a specific fund, were the counties at last relieved of their historic role in highway construction.

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Figure 57. Photograph of a road grading project in Cass County, funded with federal aid, 1921. Funding limitations forced the Texas Highway Department, county commissioners courts, road districts, and other local governments to implement road improvements in an incremental basis. As this image shows, many highways of the early 1920s remained unpaved. However, many highways subsequently were upgraded with grading that improved the overall road quality. As more funding became available in later years, road segments such as this one in Cass County, were improved and paved, thereby providing better year-round driving conditions. Source: Federal Aid Project Notebooks, Cass County, Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

On a federal level, creation of a Joint Board on Interstate Highways resulted in debates about what constituted interstate as opposed to transcontinental highway systems and a decision to develop and impose a uniform numbering system for the highways that the Board identified as being transcontinental. Some scholars have argued that the imposition of a numbered system meant the immediate demise of the multitudinous named highway associations. However, some of them persisted into the late 1920s and early 1930s. They continued to promote not only their own particular organizations but also causes that the federal government was late to champion: highway beautification and restriction of billboards and other advertising.

Senate Bill No. 74 that passed the Legislature in 1925 appropriated to the Texas Highway Department all funds (less operating and maintenance monies) coming into the State Highway Fund that derived from registration fees and other sources. The funds were to be used for the establishment of a state highway system and its construction and maintenance.³⁰⁷ The law thus gave the Department authority to construct a state system of highways without depending on funds raised by the counties. In addition, the Department received authority to acquire additional right-of-way by purchase or condemnation, a necessary step if the Commission contemplated adding new highways or widening existing roads.³⁰⁸ Other road improvements not using federal aid could be made by the Department using county aid if it so chose. Regardless, all proposed projects had to be reviewed and approved by the State Engineer. Finally, the 1925 law defined the State Highway System as being comprised of all the highways included in the system plan that had been prepared by the highway engineer following the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act.³⁰⁹

Technically, the 1925 legislation placed Texas in compliance with the 1916 Act. However, appropriated state funds were insufficient to meet demands for roads throughout Texas, and counties and road districts were still willing to tax themselves. As a result, the state-county partnership that had characterized road building continued for another seven years, and the Texas Highway Department received large amounts of local aid.³¹⁰ By mid-1925, the Texas Highway Commission and its engineer were grappling once again with the implications of insufficient funds. In response, the Commission first recognized that work would have to continue occurring in a piecemeal fashion, with roads being placed on their proper locations first and then using available funds to grade and drain while waiting for the funds that were needed for surfacing. The Commission stated that its policy would be “to proceed as rapidly as possible with building the necessary earth works, culverts, and drainage on the main State Highways. . .” assuming that the plan would meet with the approval of a representative of the Bureau of Public Roads (*Figure 57*).³¹¹

A lawsuit brought by Archer County that went to the United States Supreme Court threatened to complicate the issue of funding by introducing confusion about the legality of road districts and the associated great debt that counties had assumed for road building. The sale of bonds slowed considerably, as did highway construction work in 1925. Finally, the governor was forced to call the Legislature into special session in September and October 1926 to validate and legalize the state, county, commissioners' precinct and special road district bonds and securities.³¹²

Despite the lack of sufficient funding, highway projects let during fiscal year 1926 consisted of 1,059.15 miles of road and structures worth \$1,094,354.14.³¹³ (Refer to *Table 4* earlier in this section.) In 1926, *The Texas Almanac* reported that the public road system in Texas embraced about 180,000 miles in 1926, of which approximately 20,000 miles were on the designated highway system. Of the 20,000 miles, 11,092 miles were on the federal designated system and consisted of 3,575 miles of primary and 7,517 miles of secondary highways. The approximately 160,000 miles outside of the two systems designated by the state and federal governments consisted largely of gravel and clay roads.³¹⁴

Lack of adequate funding led the Texas Highway Commission to place specific responsibilities on the counties, which then assumed the associated costs. In July 1926, the Commission listed five requirements that governed acceptance of road designated as part of the State Highway System. First, the location and traffic count had to be made on the shortest and most feasible route with an eye to "eliminating all sharp turns, heavy grades and undesirable locations." Second, the division engineer had to prepare a report that included a route map depicting the old road and proposed new location. Third, the counties through which a designated road passed had to provide adequate fenced right-of-way, which was a minimum of 80 feet and 100 feet on locations requiring heavy fills.³¹⁵ Fourth, the road had to be sufficiently graded to be maintained with machinery in all weather conditions. Fifth, bridges on the roads had to be a minimum of 20 feet wide and culverts had to be a minimum of 24 feet wide. Guidance to the State Highway Engineer required that there be no sharp turns or right angles and, except under extraordinary conditions, no grades of over five percent or curves over six degrees.³¹⁶ (See *Figure 58*.)

Lack of adequate funding also meant that maintenance was not being carried out as required, and federal aid was withdrawn from Texas between January and June 1927. The Commission then announced that it would not designate any new highways until the existing roads were improved sufficiently to meet the required standards. The ensuing political debate lasted five years and revolved around the problems associated with the burden of local highway taxes and identification of a solution in the form of state assumption of county and road district

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Figure 58. Photograph of an existing road with sharp curves that did not comply with new state guidelines of 1926, Shackleford County, 1921. The reduction or elimination of curves provided safer driving conditions and improved traffic flow. Other state-mandated standards implemented in 1926 required the highway engineer to prepare maps showing the existing road and the proposed new alignment. Counties provided fenced right-of-way at a minimum of 80 feet, and roads had to be maintained in all weather conditions. Source: Federal Aid Project Notebooks, Shackleford County, Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



indebtedness.³¹⁷ A typical problem was that expressed by the county judge of Martin County, who wrote the Commission in February 1927 to request an inspection of State Highway No. 1 because it was “fast giving way to the heavy traffic due to the oil development in this part of the country.” A Commissioner responded that highway engineers would do an inspection, but the Commission lacked sufficient funds to make repairs.³¹⁸ A stopgap measure in 1927 consisted of imposing a tax on gas of three cents a gallon until September 1, 1928, and using the receipts from automobile license fees.³¹⁹ State Highway Engineer Gilchrist then worked during 1928 to rehabilitate hundreds of miles of road that had been neglected and poorly maintained.³²⁰

Discussion about the sources of necessary funding revolved around raising them through taxes or through issuance of state bonds. The Highway Club of Texas, a private Good Roads association, favored a \$100 million revolving fund bond issue for building “a connected and comprehensive system of durable state highways.”³²¹ Discussions by interested parties such as the Texas Highway Commission and numerous chambers of commerce continued through much of 1928 about methods of highway finance and construction, and in November, Governor Dan Moody appointed a citizens’ conference to prepare a legislative play for the 1929 session. During that session, Moody observed that Texas never would have a complete system of highways as long as it depended on local initiative. (See *Figure 59*.) Legislators were convinced to pass a bill that called for a four-cent gas tax. A final change to funding sources occurred in 1932, when the Legislature passed the State Assumption Highway Bond Law that provided funds to repay county and road district indebtedness. As a result, financing of construction of improvements at last became a wholly state-level responsibility with county participation consisting of providing right-of-way.³²²

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Figure 59. Official Map of the Highway System of Texas September 1, 1930. A map published by the Texas Highway Commission depicted the numerous types of roads that comprised the highway system. Source: Dallas Public Library.



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Figure 60. Photograph showing roadside signs near Metcalf Gap, Palo Pinto County, 1929. This image illustrates the increasing popularity of highway signage during the late 1920s and early 1930s. However, this particular example also illustrates ongoing conflict between the “northern” and “southern” route of the Bankhead Highway/State Highway No. 1 between Mineral Wells and Fort Worth. This sign encourages motorists to travel along the all-brick highway segment through Breckenridge. Besides being touted as a better roadway, this route was a shorter path to get to Abilene, where the two segments converged. Source: Palo Pinto County files, Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



Strapped as the Texas Highway Commission was for money with which to execute maintenance and new construction between 1925 and 1929, commissioners still approved some number of projects that involved widening. They also provided funding to counties such as Mitchell to complete some of the only unimproved segments of important highways, or improving highways that received a relatively large amount of use, such as the one between Fort Worth and Abilene.³²³ In addition, the Commission undertook activities that had minimal financial impact on the Department. In March 1925, they voted to mark highways and contracted with H. Steckol to erect mile posts, sign posts, guide posts, and highway markers on and along the designated state highways. (Refer to *Figure 41* earlier in this section.) They specified the locations where the signage was to be placed. Each sign was to have the number of the highway and the name (if there was one) painted in white. Additional information was to indicate distances to towns and have pointers and directions where two or more roads intersected or one diverged from another. The surface on which the information was painted had to be six inches long and made of 28-gauge sheet iron metal with a black or red background and white letters. Steckol was allowed to “place commercial advertising in uniform and artistic designs” on signs measuring a maximum of 2.5 feet wide and 4.5 feet long. He was to pay the Commission for the privilege of erecting the signs.³²⁴

In October 1926, the Commission agreed to cooperate with the U.S. Department of War to install the “Harriman System of Road Marking” for the benefit of the Army. The system was to be installed on available road signs at highway intersections.³²⁵ Installation of signage in general appears to have been somewhat haphazard with local communities sometimes opting to erect their own. The Chambers of Commerce in Ranger, Eastland, Breckenridge, and Cisco, for example, erected signs on the Bankhead Highway that first were “large signboards” (*Figure 60*). These were replaced with presumably smaller signs that showed the

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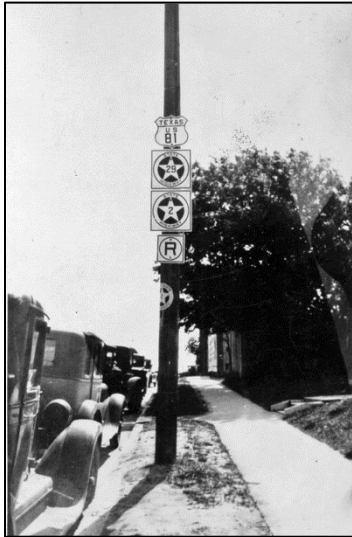


Figure 61. Photograph showing highway signs along the Meridian Highway/US 81, including the official shield (top) and an older painted sign (bottom), ca. 1930. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

distance to the next town.³²⁶ Two years later, Department crews began “erecting signs and marking pavements in accordance with standards jointly set by the states through the American Association of State Highway Officials.” During the first year alone, the Department erected more than 100,000 signs.³²⁷

While Texas Highway Department signage increasingly followed specific protocols, the Commissioners occasionally approved markers that catered to particular interest groups. The Commission voted to allow the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) to place “suitable markers” on the Jefferson Davis Highway, which was described as running from the Sabine River near Orange to Houston over State Highway No. 3 (Old Spanish Trail), from Houston to Austin over State Highway No. 20, from Austin to San Antonio over State Highway No. 2 (Meridian), from San Antonio to Alpine over State Highway No. 3, from Alpine to Van Horn over State Highway No. 54, and from Van Horn to El Paso over State Highway No. 1 (Bankhead).³²⁸

Confusion and conflict over highway names and general signage was pervasive, not just in Texas, but throughout the United States. Deciding that the variety created confusion for the traveling public as well as potential dangers, Secretary of Agriculture Howard M. Gore approved appointment of the Joint Board on Interstate Highways in February 1925. The Joint Board met first in April and decided to focus on the topic of selecting and numbering interstate routes. The first priority was to select a system of arterial highways in consultation with the state highway agencies and to designate no more than three percent of the total highway mileage per state for roads having greatest, secondary, and tertiary importance. A uniform shield design to be used throughout the country also was approved (*Figure 61*).³²⁹

The named highway organizations had not been invited to the meetings because the Joint Board believed they might be hostile to substituting numbers for names. However, word about the Board’s deliberations leaked out. Initial reaction from the named highway associations was strong because they believed that the general public felt an attachment to the histories that stood behind the names. As one editorialist explained the choice, numbers were all very well for bureaucrats, but pleasure-bent tourists unconsciously absorbed “a vast amount of history and geography” on their trips. “The romance attached to such trips is what leaves the lasting impression and gives to the participant a definite, fixed and permanent element of education. . .” as opposed to a trip over U.S. Highway Nos. 11 or 60.³³⁰

Private highway organizations, such as the Old Spanish Trail and Glacier to Gulf, informed their membership about the proposed changes. But it was the three percent restriction that raised the most competition. Colp wrote a letter to friends and officials in June 1925, informing them

about the decisions of the Joint Board concerning selection of a system of arterial highways. He admitted that the Glacier to Gulf could not qualify 100 percent of its mileage, but he did think it merited recognition as a primary highway because it acted as a feeder to every other highway in the country except the Pacific Highway. He urged readers to forward endorsements so that the Glacier to Gulf would be included in the system.³³¹ State highway departments also pushed strongly to have as much of their road mileage as possible included. As a result, the Joint Board's early success with limiting the number of miles eventually turned to failure as the combined state agencies sought 132 changes in routing or numbering, and they pressed to have almost 100 percent more miles designated as part of the system than the Board recommended.

The Board also decided to assign odd numbers to north-south running highways and even numbers to east-west running highways. Whether or not the states chose to use the numbering system was up to each one. The Board acknowledged the work certain highway associations had done to interest people and communities along the routes to improve and maintain them. As a result, they assumed that some states would perpetuate highway names on the signs that carried the numbers adopted for highways extending into multiple states.³³²

Unacknowledged was the leadership role that highway associations had taken for more than two decades in introducing the public to the vision of transcontinental, as opposed to local- or even state-level road systems. In 1925, the Joint Board members debated the subject of interstate vs. transcontinental. They did not define what they meant by "interstate," but some members seemed to use the term in the sense of "intra-state."³³³ Discussions of "transcontinental" were more tentative, and while the idea was not foreign to highway planners, they seemed to lack deep familiarity with a term that had pervaded thinking among the leadership of Good Roads leaders since Captain J. S. Daugherty had spoken of "annihilating space" in 1895. In fact, highway associations had always thought in the broadest and most adventuresome geographical and historical terms. Members of such associations typically were knowledgeable, or at least curious, about local, regional, and national history, historic places, and historic figures. They embraced and promoted trails and roads that bridged state lines and crossed great amounts of geography. In the broadest sense, they thought and conceptualized across time and space, while also celebrating the specific places that embodied the identities of their particular road associations.

The federal government also lagged behind road associations and even states in other areas pertaining to roadside improvement. Congress did not pass an amendment to the 1916 Federal Highway Act until 1928, which permitted the federal government "to pay half the cost of



Figure 62. Cover of a 1923 travel guide published by the Old Spanish Trail Association. Source: St. Mary's University Library, San Antonio, Texas, <http://library.stmarytx.edu/ost/roadway/OSTTX3.html> (accessed February 24, 2014).

wayside planting along Federal-aid highways. . . .” That amendment mirrored and built on the work begun by the national Federation of Women’s Clubs in the early 1910s. By the mid-1920s, 23 states, including Texas, had laws governing tree and shrub planting along highways.³³⁴

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Good Roads groups and named highway organizations had made significant contributions to highway planning, construction, landscaping, and associated local and statewide economies. However, scholars such as Weingroff have asserted that the creation of a numbered highway system in the United States in the mid-1920s “almost immediately render[ed] the named trails and their booster associations obsolete.” He pointed to the Lincoln Highway Association, which ended formal operations on September 1, 1928, as an example.³³⁵ A look at several of the highway associations active in Texas, however, indicates that their work persisted under their original or successor names throughout the 1920s and beyond. Two of them—the Bankhead National Highway Association and Old Spanish Trail Association—persisted at least until the end of the twentieth century.

Between 1925 and the early 1930s, the Old Spanish Trail, Bankhead, and Meridian highway associations worked to promote their respective highways as transcontinental routes. The Meridian Highway Association, for example, held its annual meeting in Salina, Kansas, in 1931 and adopted a guide that featured both the Meridian name and new U.S. highway designation (81). The guide touted the international route from Winnipeg, Canada, to Mexico City, Mexico; eventually the highway became a link in the Pan-American Highway system that stretched from Winnipeg to Tierra del Fuego, Argentina.³³⁶ The Bankhead similarly advertised its links with Mexico and its advantages as a transcontinental highway.³³⁷

Within each state through which the highways ran, the associations continued their work to remain visible and promote tourism as a positive financial boon to the towns and cities along their routes. The Old Spanish Trail Association regularly published travel logs based on meticulous field research (Figure 62). The staff talked to tourists about the information that would be most useful to them. The log portion of each publication provided travelers with information about road conditions, locations of tourist and auto camps, hotels, motor leagues and chambers of commerce, filling stations, garages, auto service and storage businesses, restaurants, restrooms, camp supplies and other provisions, and towing services. The businesses acknowledged in the guides, and those who chose to advertise, benefited from the Association’s work as increasing numbers of visitors used the Old Spanish Road, Bankhead, and Meridian guides and maps. In at least one case, an association established its own wayside park for the use of

travelers. The Old Spanish Trail acquired a plot of land where the Trail crossed Balcones Creek west of San Antonio at the line between Bexar and Kendall counties. There, the Beautification Committee planted 60 trees and shrubs, planted native trees along the roadway, and built large concrete pillars on the county line.³³⁸

By 1928, Harral Ayres had created a formal travel development program for the Old Spanish Trail. Underway since the organization moved its headquarters to San Antonio, the program included components that featured the usual guides, maps, publicity, and signage and route marking. It also included fliers targeting businesses along the trail, soliciting memberships in the Association, and explaining the financial benefits of membership. Because mileage changed “as the extensive construction program substitutes new roads for old. . .” the Association issued a *Travel Bulletin* that included updated mileage tables based on data obtained from the Automobile Club of Southern California in Los Angeles.³³⁹ The updates underscored the dynamic quality of road building and construction.

The Bankhead National Highway Association pursued a promotional program as well, but because of Asa Rountree’s distance from Texas, he had to depend on correspondents in remote and relatively isolated locations to keep him apprised of activities. Ongoing needs to improve the Bankhead Highway, especially in West Texas where oil-related activities took their toll on roads, required ongoing work by Good Roads proponents. Those advocates continued to lobby the Texas Highway Commission and pushed for passage of bonds by the counties. Chambers of commerce became increasingly outspoken on behalf of the Bankhead, and in 1927, political leaders from the counties between Big Spring and El Paso came together to form what they called the Bankhead Highway Association for the purposes of improving the road. They also sought to create an advertising campaign in the northern and eastern United States that would direct traffic onto the Bankhead. About the same time, a group of businessmen and farmers assembled in Mount Vernon to form the East Texas Bankhead Highway Association.³⁴⁰

The advertising effort culminated in a meeting in El Paso in November 1927. At that assembly, attendees created an advertising campaign for the Bankhead called “Broadway of America.”³⁴¹ (See *Figure 63*.) By April 1928, supporters had come together to carry out what was acknowledged as an effective method of advertising and promoting named roads – the motorcade. Hoping to generate support for the use of the Bankhead, motorists in 27 cars set out from California and ended up in Memphis, Tennessee, with 635 cars, 1,598 delegates, bands, and groups of singers. (See *Figure 64*.) There, they voted to spend considerable funds to popularize the route. They decided to meet in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in April 1929.³⁴²

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Figure 63 (above). Cover of a travel guide [no date]. Source: Jensen, Jeff, *Drive the Broadway of America: The U.S. 80 and Bankhead Highways Across the American Southwest!* (Tucson, Arizona: Bygone Byways, 2009).

Figure 64 (above right). Photo of one of the cars setting out from California. Source: Calisphere, <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt9x0nc778/> (accessed March 18, 2014), crediting the San Diego History Center.



The Broadway of America

After 1927, the Bankhead Highway in Texas became better known as “The Broadway of America.” In Texas, the route followed SH 1, as the Bankhead Highway did. Outside of Texas, however, the route of the Broadway of America differed from the Bankhead Highway Route somewhat. For example, the Broadway of America veered northeast to travel through Memphis, Tennessee, to New York City, whereas the Bankhead Highway continued due east to Birmingham, Alabama. However, the significance of the Broadway of America is more closely related to its marketing efforts than the designation of its routes. In addition to the caravan that traveled from California to Memphis in 1928—creating a sensation along the way and generating newspaper publicity—the Broadway of America Association also organized what was, at the time, the largest regional press association meeting in history, held in Big Spring in July 1928.³⁴³ To maintain the momentum of marketing efforts, another motorcade trip took place in 1931.³⁴⁴ As the Broadway of America name moved to the forefront of tourists’ consciousness, many towns and cities changed the name of city streets to “Broadway” to attract tourists to local gas stations, restaurants, and lodging. These changing names over time underscore the fluid history of highway designations.

Asa Rountree was slow to embrace both the Broadway of America name and the new advertising methodologies, and the Bankhead National Highway Association met under that name in 1930. At the meeting in Oklahoma City, delegates heard a report on the state of the highway in Texas, where a hard surface road existed between Texarkana and Dallas.³⁴⁵ Eight months later, Rountree made plans to attend the Broadway of America meeting in Little Rock,³⁴⁶ apparently reconciled to the dual name. The delegates would have much to celebrate: Mitchell County, which had proved so problematic because its portion of the Bankhead had required special funding, had seen completion of 21

miles of paving. The Bankhead at last was completely paved from Texarkana to El Paso.³⁴⁷

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS ALONG HIGHWAYS

Response to Demographic Patterns

Texas' population continued to grow in the period from 1917 to 1932, rising from 4,444,000 to 5,961,000.³⁴⁸ Unlike the era of railroad construction, few new towns were founded along newly constructed highways. Instead, cities with strategic economic locations prospered, while many rural areas and small towns plateaued or declined. Growth increasingly was concentrated in big cities. For example, between 1910 and 1930, the population of Dallas increased from 92,104 to 260,475.³⁴⁹ In cities, suburban growth continued to expand, now concentrated along highway corridors instead of along streetcar lines.³⁵⁰ As a result of this trend, the interurban rail line between Dallas and Fort Worth ceased operations in 1934.³⁵¹

Transportation of People and Goods

This period witnessed the beginning of a comprehensive system of highways across Texas. At the same time, the state also began producing a wide variety of new goods and products that needed to be transported on these new highways. In addition to oil drilling, oil refining, cotton ginning, textile manufacturing, meat packing, dairy processing, and poultry processing all were growing industries. As the highway began to supplant the railroad as the primary mode of transportation for people and goods, the number of motor vehicles in the state grew rapidly, rising from 125,000 to 1,210,929. As commercial trucking became more important, the proportion of trucks grew as well, increasing from 2.4 percent to 16.68 percent.³⁵²

Oil Production

Agriculture remained a key part of the Texas economy, but oil- and petroleum-related products assumed greater significance and importance. Oil production in selected regions of Texas rapidly increased in the early 1920s. Highways were indispensable for bringing labor and supplies to oil wells and transporting oil to refineries and to market. As a result, the locations of the five most productive oil fields in 1922 correlated closely with highway development. For example, the Mexia oilfield was located near the Meridian Highway, the Burkburnett and Electra oilfields were near the North Texas Highway, and the Stephens County, Eastland County, and Mitchell County oilfields were along the Bankhead Highway.³⁵³ (See *Figure 65.*)

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Figure 65. Photo of oil production in Colorado City, Mitchell County, Texas, January 1, 1939, Views of Division 8, Headquarters at Abilene. Source: Photo Collection, Texas Department of Transportation, on file at the Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.



Military Use

As the United States prepared for World War I, the military established a number of new Army camps in Texas near existing railroad lines. The subsequent construction of highways running parallel to these railroad lines provided vehicular access that relieved the strain on railroads during World War I.³⁵⁴ For example, Camp Bowie in Fort Worth was located near the Texas and Pacific rail line, and the Bankhead Highway later was constructed alongside it. In 1921, Congress codified the relationship between military installations and highways into law by creating the Federal Aid Highway System. Under this system, potential highway routes that provided access to existing military installations received priority for federal funding. As a result, three early state highways—the Bankhead Highway, the Meridian Highway, and the Old Spanish Trail—extended to the two most important military installations in Texas: Fort Bliss in El Paso and Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

Tourism

In 1917, many soldiers stationed in Texas during World War I joined the growing number of automobile tourists who were visiting tourist sites and creating demand for gas, lodging, and other amenities.³⁵⁵ Intercity bus lines also began to emerge after 1916, especially in West Texas, transporting soldiers and oilfield workers as well as tourists.³⁵⁶ By the late 1920s, commercial air travel began to supplement railroads and highways in the market for transporting tourists. Most civilian airports originated as Army airfields during World War I, and their locations along highways proved advantageous for transporting travelers between airports and their destination cities.³⁵⁷

Prior to World War I, the condition of roads discouraged overnight travel via automobile. Those travelers who were adventurous enough to brave rough roads typically lodged overnight in downtown hotels that

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Figure 66. Tourist campground in Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Texas. Brackenridge Park just north of downtown San Antonio was a favorite with tourists, who could access it easily from the Meridian Highway and Old Spanish Trail. Source: File 66.24.39, John Asa Rountree, Sr., Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama.



had been constructed during the railroad era. Similarly, the “filling stations” that sold gasoline typically were preexisting general stores that simply installed a pump out front. As tourist travel increased during and after World War I, new building forms that were custom-designed to accommodate the automobile began to appear along highways. One of the earliest types of lodging was the tourist camp. During the era, many of the named highway routes passed through towns and cities that provided travelers with tourist camps. (See *Figure 66* and *Table 5*.) Waco, for example, had such a camp, as did Houston. The camp in Navasota was 10 tree-shaded acres with shower baths, stoves, and other amenities half a mile from the business district.³⁵⁸ Through the 1920s, tourist camps began to evolve into tourist courts, which included permanent rooms or cabins arranged around a courtyard. Gas stations evolved too, as national corporations began to establish franchises with standard architectural plans that included features like drive-through canopies designed with automobiles in mind. (Refer to Section III.2 for a more detailed discussion of property types.)

Table 5. Typical Tourist Camps, 1926.³⁵⁹

Location	Name of Camp	Amenities	Highway(s)
Abilene	Green Gate Camp	Several houses built of fire clay	Bankhead
Austin	Deep Eddy	Cottages of various sizes, bathing beach; on Colorado River	Meridian
Belton	Belton Park	Several cottages	Meridian
	Camp on banks of Nolan Creek	Several cottages	
Big Spring	Big Spring Camp	[not specified]	Bankhead

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*Table 5. Typical Tourist Camps, 1926.*³⁵⁹

Location	Name of Camp	Amenities	Highway(s)
Corpus Christi	Midway Garden Bayside Water's Tourist Park [9 camps total]	100 cottages Cottages Cottages	[No highway listed]
Dallas/Fort Worth	Dal-Oak Tourist Camp	One- to three-room cottages, golf course, swimming pool	Bankhead/North Texas
Eastland	Lancaster Park	[not specified]	Bankhead
El Paso	Camp Grande	"Finest camp in the United States"	Bankhead/Old Spanish Trail
Fort Worth	Trinity Park	10 cottages, community kitchen, shower baths, laundry, reading and recreation room	Bankhead/North Texas
Greenville	[free camp]	[not specified]	Bankhead
Houston	Dixie Auto Camp	One- to four-room cottages; second best in state	Old Spanish Trail
Midland	Red Star Camp	[not specified]	Bankhead
Mineral Wells	Mineral Wells Tourist Park Dolla Heights	30 cottages, community kitchen [not specified]	Bankhead
Mount Vernon	Owl Camp	Several cottages and large house with rooms for tourists	Bankhead
New Braunfels	Landa Park	Cottages	Meridian
Palo Pinto	Lovers' Retreat	Several cottages of various sizes	Bankhead
Pecos	Green's Camp	[not specified]	Bankhead
San Marcos	Rogers Park	One- and two-story cottages of one to four rooms, bathing beach, café, etc.	Meridian
Sweetwater	Camp Joy	Cottages, apartment houses, and one-, two-, and three-room "bungalettes"	Bankhead
Texarkana	V. T. Hannon Tourist Camp	Several cottages and other conveniences	Bankhead
Van Horn	Toolen's Camp	Several three-room adobe houses with stuccoed walls with private baths and stoves	Bankhead
Waco	Standard Camp Waco Tourist Park	Several cottages Several cottages	Meridian

By the late 1910s, automobile culture participation also extended to African-Americans who purchased automobiles and traveled U.S. highways as tourists and vacationers as part of the post-World War I

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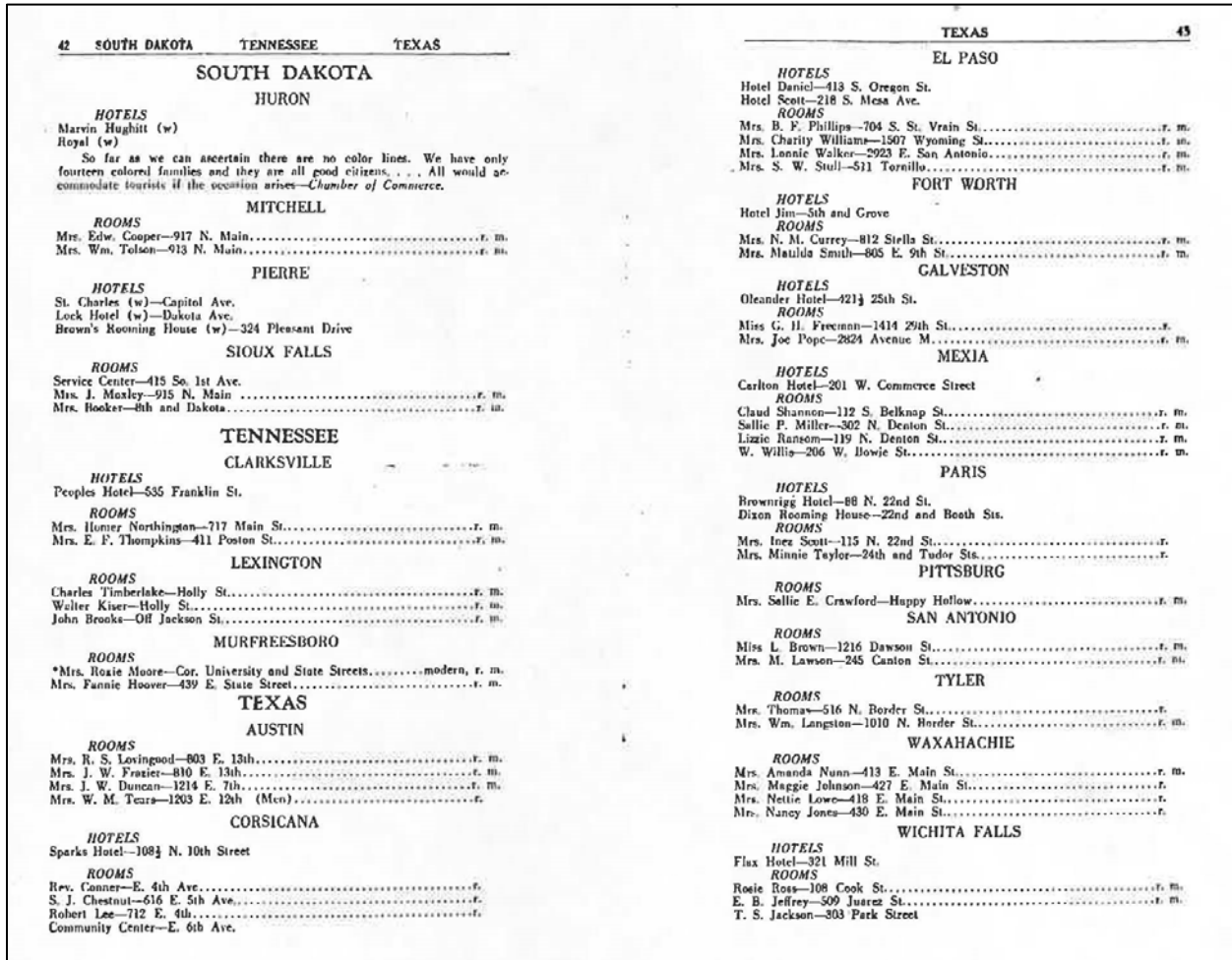


Figure 67. Cover of the 1930 edition of Hackley and Harrison's *Hotel and Apartment Guide for Colored Travelers*. Source: Texas Historical Commission, History Programs Division, Austin, Texas.

racial uplift movement.³⁶⁰ Having had success with the participation of African-American soldiers during World War I, middle-class African-Americans—many of them professionals and veterans—sought equal status in all aspects of their daily lives. Black motorists, however, were not welcomed by groups such as the AAA. Further, they faced segregation on the road—with limited access to mechanical aid, medical assistance, shelter, and food³⁶¹—just as they did in their communities across the nation. Still, tourist culture of the interwar years extended to African-Americans with an emerging black tourism in place by the early 1930s.³⁶² In 1930, Colorado attorney, poet, and playwright Edwin Henry Hackley sought to aid black motorists with his publication of *Hackley and Harrison's Hotel and Apartment Guide for Colored Travelers* (Figure 67). The booklet boasted board, rooms, and garage accommodations in 300 cities in the United States and Canada.³⁶³ El Paso and Fort Worth were the only two Texas cities along the Bankhead Highway listed in the guide and represented by hotels and tourist homes.³⁶⁴ While not always directly on the route, the lodgings were located within a few blocks of the highway and usually in predominantly African-American neighborhoods and on the fringe of downtown development. Six

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Figure 68. Photograph of Broadway Street in Van Horn [no date]. Source: *The Portal to Texas History*, crediting Clark Hotel Museum, Van Horn, Texas, <http://texas.history.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph14000/> (accessed February 25, 2014).



lodging establishments in El Paso were listed in *Hackley's Guide*. Of these, however, only a tourist home operated by A. Winston in a commercial building was directly located on the Bankhead Highway.³⁶⁵ In Fort Worth, Hotel Jim was not on the Bankhead Highway, but located in the downtown area. Two women-owned tourist homes were located in the vicinities of various railroads southeast of Fort Worth's downtown core.³⁶⁶

Land Development along Highways

The routes of highways constructed in the 1920s traveled through the center of some communities but bypassed others, depending on the availability of right-of-way and the ease of construction. In either case, though, highway construction spurred new development and/or redevelopment. In Arlington, for example, the Bankhead bypassed the existing central business district, but new businesses thrived along the route.³⁶⁷ Even where highway routes entered historic downtowns, new businesses and suburbs were constructed at the periphery of town.³⁶⁸ The new highway strip often was less dense than the earlier downtown, allowing space for surface parking and drive-through canopies on businesses that catered to motorists (*Figure 68*). In the early 1920s, camp grounds and tourist courts opened to offer lodging to highway travelers.³⁶⁹ Toward the close of the decade, more permanent and elaborate complexes appeared, including lodging, gas stations, and restaurants.³⁷⁰ Auto-oriented businesses and commercial shopping centers also began to appear in outlying areas along the highway in the late 1920s, drawn by the availability of ample land to construct parking lots for patrons.³⁷¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from the late 1920s show that residential development, commercial development, and auto-oriented businesses such as auto repair shops often were intermingled at the edges of town. In cities like Dallas, downtown business districts began to demolish buildings to provide parking to

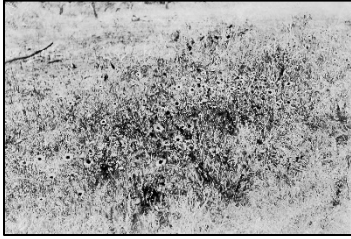


Figure 69. Photograph showing wildflowers planted along the roadside as part of a Federal Aid road project near Abilene, 1921. Source: Federal Aid Project Notebooks, Taylor County, Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

compete.³⁷² As the era progressed, community groups and city governments attempted to beautify and organize highway development through roadside landscaping projects and urban planning measures.

Roadside Landscape

In the early 1920s, the Texas Highway Department minimized right-of-way acquisition beyond the roadway itself when constructing new highways. This practice limited the possibilities for landscaping along the roadside.³⁷³ In response, in many communities, civic garden clubs planted flowers and shrubs to “beautify” the roadside.³⁷⁴ However, around 1930, the Texas Highway Department began to realize that these narrow right-of-ways were undesirable for engineering and safety reasons as well as for aesthetic purposes. Steep terracing often was required to navigate grade changes on either side of the road, creating drainage and erosion problems.³⁷⁵ Roadside vegetation also obscured the view of oncoming traffic where the highway curved. As a result, the Texas Highway Department began to acquire wider right-of-way and implemented a statewide landscaping plan.³⁷⁶ Under State Engineer Gilchrist, the Texas Highway Department strategically preserved or relocated native trees to create shade and enhance scenery while removing brush to open safe vistas for drivers.³⁷⁷ Wildflowers and native plants also were added to the roadside landscape (*Figure 69*).³⁷⁸

Urban Planning in the Automobile Era

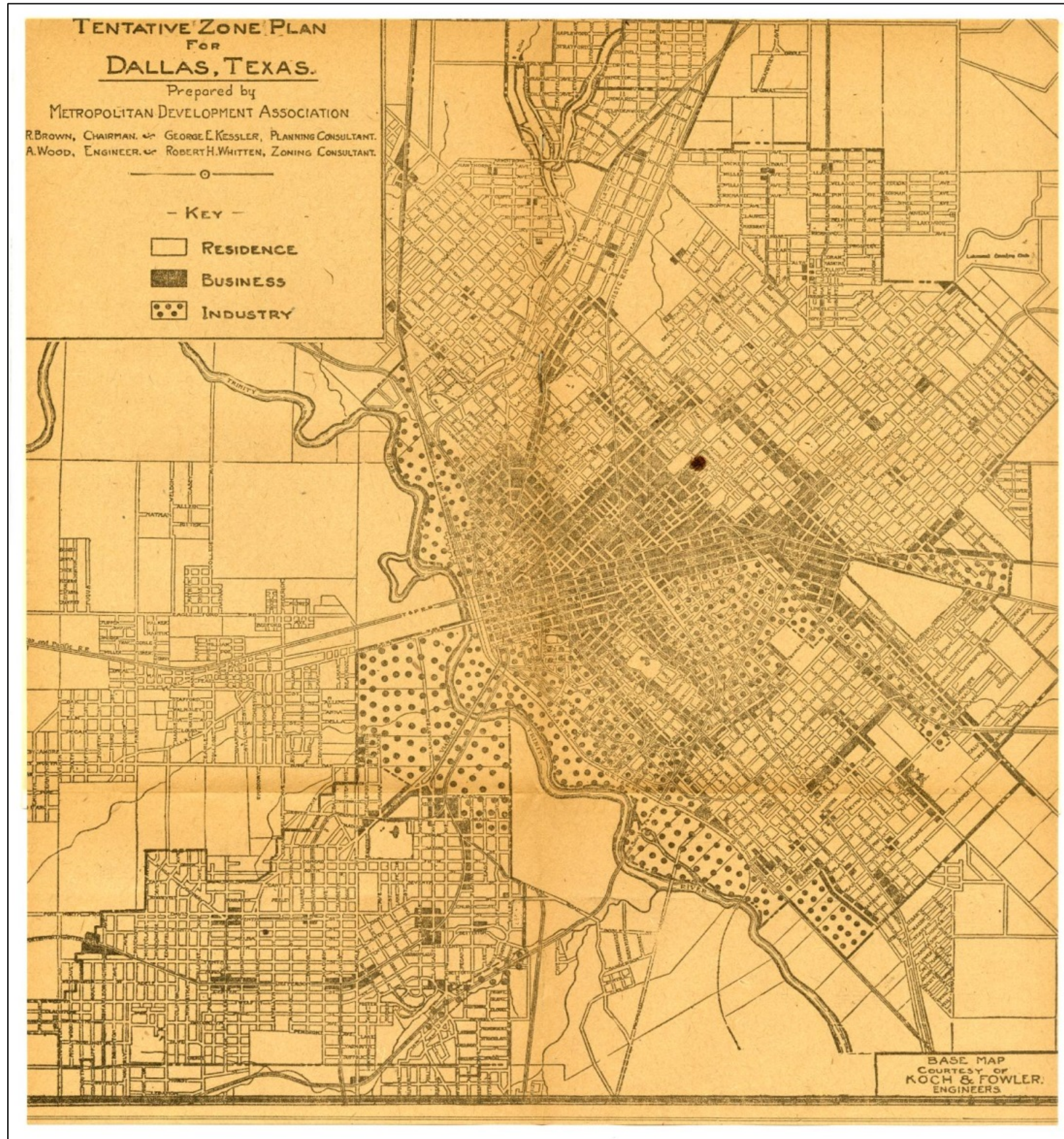
Many of the urban planning ideas introduced by noted landscape architect and planner George Kessler and his colleagues in the early 1900s began to come to fruition in the 1920s. Kessler, for example, began working with the City of El Paso in 1907 and the City of Dallas in 1910, but he continued to work with both cities until his death in 1923. Kessler’s plan for El Paso was not published until 1925, after his death.³⁷⁹ The delay in the implementation of Kessler’s plans was due, in part, to the fact that the Texas Legislature did not pass enabling legislation granting zoning powers to municipalities until 1927.³⁸⁰ This legislation also allowed municipalities to regulate building line setbacks in cities with populations greater than 15,000 and to acquire park land by eminent domain (although in practice most park land was purchased).³⁸¹ In Dallas, the zoning code that put many of Kessler’s ideas into law was not passed until the 1930s.³⁸² Typical of zoning codes of the era, the Dallas zoning code separated areas for residential use from land devoted to commercial and industrial purposes. It also plotted where land should be developed beyond the current city limits and segregated residential areas by race.³⁸³ The 1930 “Map of the Tentative Zone Plan for Dallas” illustrates land-use patterns still seen along the path of the Bankhead Highway in Dallas today. (See *Figure 70*.)

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Figure 70. Map of the Tentative Zone Plan for Dallas, Texas, 1930. Source: Dallas City Plan Commission, A Zoning Ordinance: For the City of Dallas, Dallas, Texas, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph207134/> (accessed May 4, 2013).



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¹⁸⁵ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁶ According to Stewart, “designation” meant the routing of a state highway or Federal Aid road between control points that weren’t necessarily related to location. Control points named by the Commission usually were towns. Designation also usually had to relate to location itself. Location, which required the agreement of the Bureau of Public Roads, was “the actual route of a highway between two field or control points.” *Ibid.*, pp. 121–122.

¹⁸⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, March 25, 1917, part 5, p. 1; *History of the Texas Highway Department*, pp. 5–6, Good Roads, Box 13, Folder 9, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. Cited hereafter as Good Roads.

¹⁸⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, March 25, 1917, part 5, p. 1; “An Historical Overview of the Texas Gasoline Tax,” p. 2, Good Roads, Box 6, Folder 16; *History of the Texas Highway Department*, pp. 5–6, 8, Good Roads, Box 13, Folder 9.

¹⁸⁹ Hagan, *An Informal History of the Texas Department of Transportation*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, March 30, 1919, part 3, p. 8.

¹⁹¹ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 114

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 36n.

¹⁹³ *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, March 30, 1919, part 3, p. 8.

¹⁹⁴ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 114.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36n.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁹⁷ Peter J. Hugill, “Good Roads and the Automobile in the United States 1880–1929,” *The Geographical Review*, Vol. 72, no. 3 (July 1982), p. 340.

¹⁹⁸ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 114.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Hugill, p. 344.

²⁰⁶ Hagan, p. 12.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *The Times Herald*, October 6, 1931.

²¹⁰ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, pp. 116–117.

²¹¹ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 122.

²¹² *Dallas Morning News*, October 14, 1917, Automobile Section, p. 23; *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, February 21, 1917, p. 8; Hilton Hagan, *An Informal History of the Texas Department of Transportation* ([Austin]: Texas Department of Transportation, 1991), p. 40; Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, pp. 1, 7, 17.

²¹³ *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, January 20, 1917, p. 2; *ibid.*, February 13, 1917, p. 4.

²¹⁴ *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, February 13, 1917, p. 4; *ibid.*, February 21, 1917, p. 8.

²¹⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1917, p. 18. Flook wrote that there was a “well-connected highway from Texarkana to El Paso via Dallas and Fort Worth” by 1917. Jerry Flook, *History of the Bankhead Highway Presented in the Context of Experience of Garland, Texas, a City on Its Route*. <http://douglasatlas.net/blogs/iex.php/bankhead.flook4>. Accessed July 29, 2012. However, early maps indicate that the eastern segment extended only as far as Greenville.

²¹⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, June 17, 1917, part 1, p. 8; *ibid.*, June 20, 1917, p. 15; *ibid.*, June 21, 1917, p. 9.

²¹⁷ Prior to the Mineral Wells meeting, the Dallas County Commissioners’ Court decided to apply for state and federal aid to build four miles of concrete roadway and steel or concrete bridges along the Dallas–Fort Worth road.

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Aid might be available if the segment formed “a part of the transcontinental highway which, in Texas, would have its termini at Texarkana and El Paso.” *Dallas Morning News*, June 17, 1917, part 4, p. 12.

²¹⁸ Most histories state that the Commission designated 22 roads, but Commission minutes and the *Dallas Morning News* documented three additional roads: No. 23 from Fort Stockton to El Paso, No. 24 (the Southwest Trail, also called Old Southern Trail), and No. 25 (Fort Worth to Hillsboro, where it connected with No. 6, King of Trails). The Commission also approved signage for the Southwest Trail: SW. At the same meeting, Chairman Hancock noted that not all the proposed highways could be accepted by the Commission, and the minutes of the meeting noted that some of the newer named roads overlaid other, previously named and numbered roads. *Dallas Morning News*, June 22, 1917, p. 10; *ibid.*, June 24, 1917; Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, pp. 19–23.

²¹⁹ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Book No. 1, pp. 19–21.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Dallas Morning News*, June 10, 1917, part 5, p. 3; *ibid.*, June 30, 1917, p. 6.

²²² *Ibid.*, June 23, 1917, p. 5; Hagan, *An Informal History*, p. 5.

²²³ *Dallas Morning News*, June 23, 1917, p. 5; *ibid.*, August 5, 1917; September 23, 1917, part 2, p. 4; *ibid.*, October 4, 1917, Automobile Section, p. 23; *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, August 19, 1917, p. 1; Hagan, *An Informal History*, p. 5; Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, pp. 67, 73, 79.

²²⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, August 12, 1917, part 1, p. 7.

²²⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, September 9, 1917, part 5, p. 12.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, October 14, 1917, Automobile section, p. 27.

²²⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, October 9, 1917, p. 2; *ibid.*, October 12, 1917, p. 10; *ibid.*, October 13, 1917, p. 10; *ibid.*, October 14, 1917, part 1, p. 2.

²²⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, October 18, 1917, p. 9.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, October 21, 1917, part 1, p. 7.

²³⁰ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, pp. 52–53, 36–37, 106.

²³¹ *Dallas Morning News*, November 9, 1917, p. 4; *ibid.*, January 27, 1918, part 2, p. 5.

²³² The tourism potential was not lost on road promoters, either, and they speculated about the thousands of motorists who would visit Texas to see family members in the military or simply look at the national army camps and aviation fields. *Dallas Morning News*, October 14, 1917, Automobile section, p. 16.

²³³ *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, May 3, 1917, p. 5.

²³⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, January 6, 1918, part 4, p. 6. By May 1918, the situation was sufficiently serious that the Texas Highway Commission passed a motion that counties would make no more applications for funding “except where roads can be constructed out of local materials, and that projects involving railway shipments be discouraged.” Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, pp. 197, 199.

²³⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, January 6, 1918, part 4, p. 4; Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, p. 185; United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Public Roads, Public Voucher for Construction of Roads, March 5, 1918, Box 3, NRM 19 G thru S19, E-30 TX-1, NARA-Fort Worth, Fort Worth, Texas, cited hereafter as NARA-Fort Worth; *ibid.*, Final Inspection, Project No. 26, Box 3, NRM 19 G thru S19, E-30 TX-1, NARA-Fort Worth; *ibid.*, Final Inspection, Project No. 27, Box 3, NRM 19 G thru S19, E-30 TX-1, NARA-Fort Worth; *ibid.*, Final Inspection, Project No. 28, Box 3, NRM 19 G thru S19, E-30 TX-1, NARA-Fort Worth; *ibid.*, Final Inspection, Project No. 42, FAP 41 through S 51, Box 6, E. 30 TX-1, NARA-Fort Worth.

²³⁶ Howard Lawrence Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885–1935* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), pp. 32–36, 75–76, 80–82, 84, 89.

²³⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, February 15, 1918, p. 3.

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²³⁸ Rountree's machinations resulted in some confusion in Abilene, where County Judge E. M. Overshiner had been contacted by the Dallas Automobile Club concerning the proposed Bankhead Highway. He wrote in March 1918 that he was not familiar with the Bankhead Highway, but assumed that it followed the route of the Fort Worth–El Paso Highway through Taylor County. "We have organized, promoted and financed for nearly two years as a member of the Ft. Worth El Paso Highway Association." In addition, Abilene had paid a Colonel Potter \$700 to \$800 in logging expenses about eight or 10 years earlier. Since then, the city had been visited by various road organizations and highways that went over the same route. The Dixie Overland Highway came down the Albany branch, and the Ozark Trails proposed route tapped in at Abilene and then went on west. E. M. Overshiner to Dallas Automobile Club, March 21, 1918, Folder 66.7.8, John Asa Rountree, Sr., Papers and Scrapbooks, 1913–1935, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama, hereafter cited as Rountree Papers.

²³⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, February 15, 1918, p. 9.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, February 16, 1918, p. 6; *ibid.*, February 18, 1918, p. 4.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, March 10, 1918, part 5, p. 6; *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, April 5, 1918, p. 2; Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, p. 179.

²⁴² *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, April 21, 1918, p. 4.

²⁴³ Arthur P. Dyer to J. A. Rountree, July 2, 1918, Folder 66.7.8, Rountree Papers.

²⁴⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, April 21, 1918, part 3, p. 4.

²⁴⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, May 9, 1918, p. 13; *ibid.*, May 19, 1918, part 1, p. 7.

²⁴⁶ *The Commerce Journal*, July 4, 1918.

²⁴⁷ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, pp. 235, 237, 239.

²⁴⁸ C. R. Lancaster to J. A. Rountree, November 9, 1918, Folder 66.7.8, Rountree Papers.

²⁴⁹ M. V. [N. W.?] Eldridge to J. A. Rountree, January 13, 1919, Folder 66.7.9, Rountree Papers; S. M. Johnson to Mr. Rountree, January 11, 1919, Folder 66.7.9, Rountree Papers; S. M. Johnson to Col. T. S. Plowman, January 11, 1919, Folder 66.7.9, Rountree Papers.

²⁵⁰ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 38.

²⁵¹ S. M. Johnson to Mr. Rountree, February 20, 1919, Folder 66.7.9, Rountree Papers. Perhaps in anticipation of an increase in federal funding, the Texas Highway Commission provisionally allotted additional federal aid to Tarrant, Nueces, Lamar, Gillespie and Titus counties, all of which were proposing county-wide bond issues for the purpose of building county-wide highway systems. Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, pp. 297, 299, 301.

²⁵² *Dallas Morning News*, February 20, 1919, p. 9; *Fort Worth Star–Telegram*, March 30, 1919, part 3, p. 8.

²⁵³ *Dallas Morning News*, April 18, 1919, pp. 1–2; *The Wellington Leader*, June 27, 1919.

²⁵⁴ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 1, pp. 381, 383, 385. Construction of the Robert E. Lee Highway was endorsed by the Texas Highway Commission at its July 21, 1919, meeting. *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, April 18, 1919, pp. 1–2; *ibid.*, April 27, 1919, Automobile Section, p. 1. Identification of an "official" route did not stop controversy. In May, a committee from Commerce successfully petitioned the Texas Highway Commission to route the highway through Commerce. This drew the concern of Cumby residents, who had assumed that the Bankhead would run through their town via the Jefferson Highway, which Cumby-ites had already paid to have graveled. They wrote Rountree to inform him of the actions of the Highway Commission. James W. Parker to J. Asa. Rountree, May 23, 1919, Folder 66.7.10, Rountree Papers; *The Commerce Journal*, May 23, 1919, p. 1.

²⁵⁶ Contract between the Bankhead National Highway Association and the National Highway Marking Association, April 19, 1919, Folder 66.7.9, Rountree Papers.

²⁵⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, April 24, 1919, p. 11.

²⁵⁸ J. G. Thweatt to J. A. Rountree, April 24, 1919, Folder 66.7.9, Rountree Papers.

²⁵⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, July 30, 1919.

²⁶⁰ Richard Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System*, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/numbers/cfm> (accessed September 3, 2012).

²⁶¹ Richard Weingroff, "Clearly Vicious as a Matter of Policy": The Fight Against Federal-Aid, Part One: Unease in the Golden Age, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/hwyhist04b.cfm> (accessed February 26, 2013).

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²⁶² Hon. John E. Raker, "A Bill to Create a National Department of Highways," December 5, 1919, Other Federal, Box 13-Folder 35, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. Cited hereafter as Thomas H. MacDonald Papers.

²⁶³ Richard Weingroff, "Zero Milestone – Washington, D.C.," <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/zero.cfm>, (accessed July 29, 2012).

²⁶⁴ C. B. Drake to J. A. Rountree, May 10, 1920, Folder 66.7.15, Rountree Papers.

²⁶⁵ [Old Spanish Trail Association], *Old Spanish Trail Travelog, West Texas Edition*, p. 43.

²⁶⁶ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 2, pp. 61, 63. Taking no chances with possible objections from other named highway associations, the United Daughters of the Confederacy convinced the 37th Legislature to confirm the decision of the Texas Highway Commission by naming the portion of the highway in Texas the Texas Division of the Jefferson Davis National Highway. Decca Lamar West, History Articles and Profiles, Series 1, Box 1:2, Mss. 32, Texas Federation of Women's Clubs Collection, Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas. Cited hereafter at TFWC Collection.

²⁶⁷ T. H. Webb, compiler, *Texas State Highway Commission Maintenance Manual, Inaugurating the Patrol System of Maintenance* (Austin: [Texas State Highway Commission], 1922), pp. 5–7, 9–11.

²⁶⁸ Official Minutes of the Texas Highway Commission, Book No. 2, pp. 73, 75–78.

²⁶⁹ The Townsend Bill was favored by the Bankhead National Highway Association, which believed that transcontinental highways, specifically the Bankhead, would benefit immediately from passage. Rountree's perception was that the federal government would take over some of the highways then under construction. [J. A. Rountree] to James Sproull, June 23, 1921, Folder 22.8.8, Rountree Papers; [J. A. Rountree] to Geo. H. Belding, March 28, 1922, Folder 22.8.10, Rountree Papers.

²⁷⁰ Nebraska Monthly Report (May 1921), pp. 1–3.

²⁷¹ "A Few Country Boulevards and Mud Roads vs. Development of a Great Road System," Other Federal, Box 13-Folder 37, Thomas A. MacDonald Papers. One proponent of the Dowell Bill was even more direct, asking, "Why build a highway for the idle rich and leave our food and raw material for clothing at the far end of a mud road?" Along the same lines, Representative Robison asked if Congress wanted to "create a 'tourist' system of roads or strengthen and build up our present farm-to-market system." Did they want to "destroy the 'producers-to consumers' system and install a 'joy-rider' system?" Gray Silver, "American Farm Bureau Presents Arguments Against Townsend Highway Bill Before Committee on Post Roads of the Senate," Other Federal, Box 14-Folder 1, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers.

²⁷² Thomas H. MacDonald, "The Public Roads Administration and Its Work, Revised November 1946," Interagency, Box 9-Folder 7, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers.

²⁷³ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, pp. 38–40.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

²⁷⁵ [Harral Ayres], "Suggested Subjects for the Annual Convention Old Spanish Trail," Conventions Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives.

²⁷⁶ Decca Lamar West, Report of Good Roads Division, Department of Conservation, Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, Administration, Reports 1914–1925, Box 3-147, Series 3, Mss. 32, TFWC Collection; *ibid.*, "Suggested Address for Texas Highway Week," Administration, Reports 1914–1925, Box 3-147, Series 3, Mss. 32, TFWC Collection; *ibid.*, "Resolved," History, Archives and profiles written by Decca Lamar West, Box 1:2, Series 1, Mss. 32, TFWC Collection; Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, *Yearbook & Precinct Programs, 1922–1923*, Yearbooks, Handbooks, Directories 1922–1926, Box 7-9, Series 7, Mss. 32, TFWC Collection.

²⁷⁷ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, pp. 46–47.

²⁷⁸ *History of the Texas Highway Department*, n.p., Good Roads Collection, Box 13, Folder 9.

²⁷⁹ Minutes of the Texas Highway Commission, Book No. 2, p. 290.

²⁸⁰ *History of the Texas Highway Department*, n.p.

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²⁸¹ Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers*. Fletcher Davis, manager of the Jackson County, Oklahoma, Chamber of Commerce, encountered one of the more disreputable examples in 1922 and reported that, after paying \$1,000.00 into the Bankhead treasury, a competitor had solicited funds from Altus, Oklahoma, citizens. When the citizens turned the promoter down, he redirected his proposed road route to Vernon, Texas. Davis opined, “When the railroads built across the continent we had a scourge of promoters and grafters who. . . milked the communities for all they were worth. Are we going to have this thing repeated as our highways are being built?” Fletcher Davis to J. A. Rountree, October 27, 1922, Folder 66.8.12, Rountree Papers.

²⁸² Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 2, p. 290.

²⁸³ *Times Union*, January 8, 1922. The March 1923 brochure for the Old Spanish Trail referenced the “Lake Charles Declaration” that spoke out against the efforts of some highway promoters to “seize sections” of the highway. “[T]he slogan of the faithful became: One Great Highway, One Marking Along Its Line, One Name on the Maps, An Individuality and Distinction, not a Medley and Confusion.” The Old Spanish Trail Association, *The Highway of the Southern Borderlands*, p. 8.

²⁸⁴ John C. Nicholson to Harral Ayres, December 16, 1922, [Highways] Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives; Harral Ayres to John C. Nicholson, April 16, 1924, [Highways] Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives. Ayres had plans to introduce legislation to give highway commissioners authority to designate the names of highways and approve their marking so that “preying promoters and parasitic highway movements” could be controlled. [Harral Ayres], “Suggested Subjects for the Annual Convention, Old Spanish Trail.”

²⁸⁵ Official Minutes, Book No. 2, pp. 73, 75, 290.

²⁸⁶ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 10, 1921, p. 19; Final Inspection, December 9, 1922, F235 (pt.) through S243, Box 30, E.30 TX1, RG 30, National Archives and Records Administration-Fort Worth; Final Inspection, July 12, 1922, FAP 244 through S256, Box 31, E. 30 TX-1, RG30, National Archives and Records Administration-Fort Worth; Final Inspection, December 4, 1925, FAP 439 (pt.) through F440 (pt.), Box 53, E. 30 TX-1, RG30, NARA-Fort Worth.

²⁸⁷ Texas Highway Commission Minutes, Book No. 2, pp. 113–115, 233; *Dallas Morning News*, July 15, 1921; *ibid.*, October 28, 1922, section 2, p. 11.

²⁸⁸ Thomas H. MacDonald to Hon. W. B. Bankhead, March 29, 1924, Folder 66.9.3, Rountree Papers.

²⁸⁹ *The Commerce Journal*, March 18, 1921, p. 4; Ray B. Leach to J. A. Rountree, May 13, 1922, Folder 66.8.11. The Bankhead National Highway Association and its affiliates didn’t help with problems associated with a plethora of routes. In June, the Northeast Texas Bankhead Highway Association voted to route the Bankhead Highway between Texarkana and Omaha by way of New Boston in honor of Bob Hubbard, chairman of the Texas Highway Commission. *The Commerce Journal*, June 24, 1921, p. 2.

²⁹⁰ *Dallas Morning News*, May 27, 1921, p. 2.

²⁹¹ J. M. DeArmond to J. A. Rountree, June 30, 1921, Folder 66.8.8, Rountree Papers.

²⁹² *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 17, 1921, part 3, p. 8.

²⁹³ Contract and Agreement between the Bankhead National Highway Association, Inc., and J. Ad Wylie and J. M. DeArmond, 1925, Folder 66.9.6, Rountree Papers.

²⁹⁴ A letter from a representative of the Bankhead in Hot Springs, Arkansas, George Belding, told Rountree about the repeated communications he had received from a Mr. Wilhite, who wanted to “assume control of the Bankhead Highway and call it the Lone Star Route or the Gulf and Coast State Highway, Incorporated.” Belding also had been approached by the Pershing and Robert E. Lee Highway Associations. George R. Belding to J. A. Rountree, May 25, 1921, Folder 66.8.7, Rountree Papers.

²⁹⁵ [J. A. Rountree] to Mrs. Albert E. Thornton, May 7, 1923, Folder 66.8.16, Rountree Papers.

²⁹⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, February 18, 1923, part 3, p. 4.

²⁹⁷ Gibb Gilchrist to W. B. Bankhead, May 13, 1924, File G-C-3, 2002/101-23, Texas Highway Department Historical Records, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas. Cited hereafter as Texas Highway Department Historical Records.

²⁹⁸ J. A. Rountree to Hon. W. B. Bankhead, December 7, 1923, Folder 66.9.2, Rountree Papers.

²⁹⁹ [J. A. Rountree] to Ms. Arthur H. Lund, December 10, 1920, Folder 66.19.1, Rountree Papers.

³⁰⁰ *Birmingham Age-Herald*, December 19, 1920.

³⁰¹ J. A. Rountree to Ms. Albert E. Thornton, November 30, 1923, Folder 66.9.1, Rountree Papers; J. A. Rountree to Judge J. M. DeArmond, January 14, 1925, Folder 66.9.4, Rountree Papers.

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³⁰² *Dallas Morning News*, January 18, 1925, part 4, p. 6.

³⁰³ James Wright Steely, *Parks for Texas: Enduring Landscapes of the New Deal* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), pp. 6-7.

³⁰⁴ D. E. Colp to D. J. Malmstrom, July 9, 1924, Box 2H443, David E. Colp Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin. Cited hereafter as Colp Papers. In September 1924, Colp wrote Stephen P. Mather, Director of the National Park Service, request information about the layout and beautification of 42 park sites that had been donated to the state. He noted that the Glacier to Gulf Association had agreed to “help finance the expense of a high class landscape engineer to lay out some or all of the parks along its route.” D. E. Colp to Stephen P. Mather, September 17, 1924, Box 2H443, Colp Papers.

³⁰⁵ D. E. Colp to Sam Mackin, July 10, 1924, Box 2H443, Colp Papers; D. E. Colp to Ms. W. C. Martin, August 16, 1924, Box 2H443, Colp Papers; D. E. Colp to W. R. Marsh, February 20, 1924, Box 2H443, Colp Papers.

³⁰⁶ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 52.

³⁰⁷ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 3, p. 152.

³⁰⁸ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 52; *History of the Texas Highway Department*, Good Roads, Box 13.

³⁰⁹ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, pp. 48–49.

³¹⁰ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, pp. 51, 53.

³¹¹ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 3, p. 75.

³¹² A. H. Belo Corporation, *The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide* (Dallas, Texas: The Dallas News, 1927), p. 322. *The Texas Almanac* referred to the Archer County case, stating that the Supreme Court of the United States found the road district law of Texas invalid because it was “in contravention of the ‘due process’ clause of the fourteenth amendment of the Constitution of the United States.”

³¹³ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 114.

³¹⁴ The Dallas News, *The Texas Almanac*, p. 322.

³¹⁵ In 1927, the Legislature required that a first class highway be 80 feet wide. Gibb Gilchrist, *Location and Construction Features of Unit I on Texas Highways*, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers, State, Box 19-Folder 15.

³¹⁶ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 3, pp. 169–170.

³¹⁷ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, pp. 122–23, 139, 199.

³¹⁸ G. A. Glaser to R. S. Sterling, February 23, 1927, Texas Highway Department Historical Records; W. R. Ely to Judge G. A. Glaser, February 25, 1927, Texas Highway Department Historical Records.

³¹⁹ During the 1927 legislative session, highway commissioners urged passage of a bill that would result in enough tax revenue to allow the Highway Department to have sufficient income “to construct real State highways without calling on counties and localities to furnish any of the funds for their construction. . . .” *An Historical Overview of the Texas Gasoline Tax*, p. 6, Good Roads, Box 6, Folder 16.

³²⁰ Hagan, p. 2; Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, pp. 138, 157–158; Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 4, p. 11.

³²¹ Stewart, *Highway Administration in Texas*, p. 139.

³²² *Ibid.*, pp. 140–171; *An Historical Overview*, pp. 8, 10–11.

³²³ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 3, p. 92; Report on Final Construction, December 22, 1927, FI 52 Through SG 55, Box 7, E.30 TX-1, RG30, NARA-Fort Worth.

³²⁴ Minutes of the State Highway Department, Volume 3, pp. 20–23.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³²⁶ *The Abilene Morning News*, January 7, 1927, p. 7.

³²⁷ Hagan, p. 3.

³²⁸ Cook, *Travel with the Memory of Jefferson Davis*, pp. 15–16.

³²⁹ Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers*.

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³³⁰ *Lincoln Highway Forum*, March 1926, [three-ring binder], Old Spanish Trail Association Archives; Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers*. One named highway proponent facetiously suggested “substituting arithmetic for history, mathematics for romance.” Why should the fame and memory of Jefferson and Lincoln be commemorated in a highway? “Burden the minds of school children with the events of yesteryear? ‘Perish the thought.’” In fact, why not just refer to the presidents, legislators, and notable physical landmarks by number? Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers*.

³³¹ D. E. Colp To the friends and officials of the Glacier to Gulf Highway Assn., June 12, 1925, Box 2H448, Colp Papers.

³³² Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers*.

³³³ Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers*.

³³⁴ *Times Picayune*, June 13, 1929; [Thomas H. MacDonald], “The Highway Departments Turn to Beauty,” April 1929, p. 598, MacDonald Personal, Box 6-Folder 98, Thomas H. MacDonald Papers.

³³⁵ Weingroff, *From Names to Numbers*.

³³⁶ Mead & Hunt and Heritage Research, Ltd., *Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey*, pp. 73, 76, 78.

³³⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, May 22, 1925; *The Big Spring Herald*, August 6, 1926.

³³⁸ Administrator for the Estate of John Perrin to the Old Spanish Trail Association, Inc., November 4, 1925, Land Deed Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives.

³³⁹ [Harral Ayres], “Developing Travel on the Old Spanish Trail,” Travel Development Program Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives; [Old Spanish Trail Association], *Two Ways of Getting Business*, Business Development Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives; [Old Spanish Trail Association], *Travel Bulletin*, March, 1927, 3-ring binder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives.

³⁴⁰ *Dallas Morning News*, October 17, 1926, part 6, p. 2; *ibid.*, September 11, 1927, part 3, p. 2; *ibid.*, November 14, 1927, part 2, p. 12; December 16, 1927, part 1, p. 11; *The Big Spring Herald*, June 24, 1927, p. 18; *ibid.*, July 29, 1927, p. 1.

³⁴¹ *The Big Spring Herald*, November 18, 1927, p. 16.

³⁴² [Harral Ayres], “Important Travel Routes Developing that Affect San Antonio and the Midland Old Spanish Trail Country,” [Highways] Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives; Russel H. Miles to Harral Ayres, March 7, 1929, Motorcades Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives. Ayres saw the potential in motorcades and helped coordinate one from San Diego, California, to St. Augustine, Florida in 1929. Additional publicity was associated with dedication of the Old Spanish Trail monument and Ponce de Leon celebration in St. Augustine as part of the general convention. Russel H. Miles to Harral Ayres, March 7, 1929, Motorcades Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives; Harral Ayres, “Suggestion to Help Motorcade Plans, March 14, 1929, Motorcades Folder, Old Spanish Trail Association Archives.

³⁴³ “Highway Tour Gains Impetus in Visit here,” *Dallas Morning News* 18 June 1928, page 6, from www.newsbank.com; “Big Spring Plans for Press Meet,” *Dallas Morning News* 01 July 1928, page 9, from www.newsbank.com.

³⁴⁴ “Dallas Delegation to Join Broadway of America Tour,” *Dallas Morning News* 10 April 1931, page 13, from www.newsbank.com.

³⁴⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, July 11, 1930, part 1, p. 10.

³⁴⁶ A. L. McNeil to Asa Rountree, March 28, 1931, Folder 6.9.9, Rountree Papers.

³⁴⁷ *Big Spring Daily Herald*, February 9, 1931, p. 1.

³⁴⁸ “United States and Texas Populations: 1850–2012,” *Texas State Library and Archives Commission*, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/census.html> (accessed May 4, 2013).

³⁴⁹ “Texas Almanac: City Population History from 1850 to 2000,” <http://www.texasalmanac.com/sites/default/files/images/CityPopHist%20web.pdf> (accessed April 30, 2013).

³⁵⁰ Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClellan, *Historic Residential Suburbs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002) <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/> (accessed May, 2013).

³⁵¹ Rieder, Robert A., “ELECTRIC INTERURBAN RAILWAYS,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eqe12> (accessed May 03, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

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³⁵² "Highway Statistics Summary to 1995," *Federal Highway Administration*, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/summary95/section2.html> (accessed May 14, 2013).

³⁵³ 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, Texas.

³⁵⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, "Improving Highways Urged to Help Relive Railroads," January 27, 1918, p. 5, from proquest.com.

³⁵⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, "Numerous National Army Camps and Aviation Fields Expected to Bring Thousands of Motorists to Texas," October 14, 1917, p. 17, from proquest.com.

³⁵⁶ Rhodes, Jack, "BUSING INDUSTRY," Handbook of Texas Online <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/erb01> (accessed May 04, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

³⁵⁷ Nolen, John et al, "Airports and Airways and their Relation to City and Regional Planning," *Planning: selected papers from the ASPO National Planning Conference 1928*.

³⁵⁸ *Hearne Democrat*, December 16, 1921, p. 8; *Brownsville Herald*, June 14, 1921, section A, p. 4; *San Antonio Express*, March 5, 1922, p. 64; *ibid.*, May 14, 1922, p. 29; *ibid.*, May 28, 1922, p. 57; *ibid.*, November 19, 1922, p. 70; *Galveston Daily News*, April 1, 1922, p. 2.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ Kathleen Franz, "'The Open Road: Automobility and Racial Uplift in the Interwar Years,'" in Daniel Miller, ed., *Technology and the African-American Experience* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004): 131–154.

³⁶¹ Cotton Seiler, *Republic of Drivers: A Cultural History of Automobility in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 108–109.

³⁶² Frank Andre Guidry, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 155.

³⁶³ *Hackley & Harrison's Hotel and Apartment Guide* (Philadelphia: Hackley & Harrison Publishing Company, 1930).

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* The A. Winston Tourist Home was located at 3205 Alameda Avenue. The building is an extant but greatly altered; it is occupied by El Torito Grocery. One tourist home was located a few blocks south of the Bankhead Highway on East San Antonio Avenue, while two more tourist homes were located north (across the railroad lines) and south of downtown, respectively. In addition, two hotels were located in the vicinity of the intersection of US highways 62 and 85.

³⁶⁶ One of them, the Evan's Tourist Home, is extant at 1213 E. Terrell Avenue.

³⁶⁷ Barnes, Steve, "Bankhead Highway through Arlington," Official Texas Historical Marker Application, submitted to the Texas Historical Commission, 2010.

³⁶⁸ *Big Spring Herald*, "Note Well!" [advertisement], February 9, 1923, p. 2, from <http://newspaperarchive.com/>.

³⁶⁹ Heitmann, John A., *The Automobile and American Life* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2009): 79.

³⁷⁰ *The Abilene Morning News*, "To Build a New Chain Station at Eastland," September 3, 1929, p. 9, from <http://newspaperarchive.com/>.

³⁷¹ Nichols, J. C., "The Development of Outlying Shopping Centers," *Planning: selected papers from the ASPO National Planning Conference, 1929*.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ Nichols, Arthur R., "Landscape design in highway development: a coordinating factor in the layout of traffic ways," *Landscape architecture* 30 (Apr 1940): [112]–120.

³⁷⁴ *Big Spring Herald*, "Garden Club Hears Talk on Flower Boxes," May 8, 1931, p. 5, from <http://newspaperarchive.com/>.

³⁷⁵ Nichols.

³⁷⁶ *The History of the Texas Highway Department* (Austin: Texas Highway Department, n.d), on file at the Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.

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³⁷⁷ Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., *Preliminary Guidelines for Assessing NRHP Eligibility for Roadside Parks*, Submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation, Environmental Affairs Division, 2005.

³⁷⁸ Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc.

³⁷⁹ *The City Plan of El Paso, Texas*, Prepared for the City Plan Commission, El Paso, Texas, 1925, <http://www.planelpaso.org/wp-content/reports/The-1925-City-Plan-for-El-Paso-TX.pdf> (accessed April 20, 2013).

³⁸⁰ McDonald, Brenda N. and Karen Mitchell, "The Texas Zoning Enabling Act," *A Guide to Urban Planning in Texas Communities*, http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDQQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Ftxplanningguide.utexas.org%2Ftxplanningguide%2Findex.php%2Fftpg%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F13%2F9&ei=Q3OFUeOwEYrM0wHomoHoBA&usg=AFQjCNGqda4-7-TUYwlfITXbYV_0anikFw&sig2=m5d_Y0oW_Xhoy6X9kz4Nrg&bvm=bv.45960087,d.dmQ (accessed May 4, 2013).

³⁸¹ Kemble, George C. et al, "Legal Phases of Urban Planning in Texas," *Planning: selected papers from the ASPO National Planning Conference 1928*.

³⁸² Dallas City Plan Commission, "A Zoning Ordinance: For the City of Dallas," Pamphlet, 1930, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph207134/ark:/67531/metaph207134/> (accessed May 4, 2013), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Dallas Municipal Archives, Dallas, Texas.

³⁸³ *Dallas Morning News*, "Zoning Bill to be Written," July 31, 1926, p. 6, from proquest.com.

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I.5. DEPRESSION, MOBILIZATION, AND WAR: 1933–1944

STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

While much of Texas' economy was not affected as severely as that of other states in the nation, the Depression nonetheless triggered widespread hardship throughout the state, and various Federal Aid programs and other government sponsored programs provided greater employment opportunities. The Texas Highway Department, for example, was one such agency, and the influx of federal dollars spurred road construction and improvements that state and county governments financially could not undertake on their own.³⁸⁴ The increased federal funding for the highway system was coupled with greater federal involvement and oversight. Although states set their own priorities regarding highway construction, decisions about which roads could receive funding were subject to federal approval. (Refer to *Figure 46* in previous Section I.4). Moreover, the nomenclature for highways continued to shift away from named highways and state highway designations toward U.S. highway numbering and standardized signage that was consistent across state lines. The use of the term Bankhead Highway or even State Highway No. 1, for example, waned in popularity with widespread acceptance of the federal highway designations. Within the federal highway designation, the Bankhead Highway was actually “split” into two U.S. highways; the segment of the alignment east of Dallas became known as US 67, while the route west of Dallas was known as US 80. Both highways extended along new alignments that differed somewhat from the historic route of the Bankhead Highway.

Continued federal funding during the era also enabled greater highway improvement and expansion. Between 1929 and 1934, Texas spent \$165 million to build and maintain the state highway system.³⁸⁵ Despite ongoing political battles and controversies over funding, the Texas Highway Department continued to improve, enlarge, and maintain the increasingly complex highway system, even as debates over county debt and state funding persisted.³⁸⁶ In the late 1930s, the Department built new roads, upgraded existing ones, and improved traffic flow with the construction of bridges, viaducts, overpasses, and underpasses, as well as roadside parks. These new roads encouraged and facilitated an influx of automobile tourism—especially during the Texas Centennial celebration in 1936—as well as the development of roadside commerce along the highways. (See *Figure 71*.) Even so, the state highway system still contained 14,000 miles of unpaved roads.³⁸⁷



Figure 71. Vintage postcard of the Federal Building at the Texas Centennial Exposition at Fair Park in Dallas, 1936. The Exposition was part of a series of events scheduled to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Texas' independence from Mexico. For the Exposition, the City of Dallas and a group of private businessmen constructed a grand complex of Art Deco Style pavilions, designed by architect George L. Dahl, on the site of Fair Park in Dallas, which had hosted the Texas State Fair since 1899. The location was directly on the route of the Bankhead Highway and attracted motorists from throughout the state and nation. Source: Flickr, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/christianspenceranderson/8299086240/in/set-72157623753877103> (accessed March 13, 2014).

During the 10 years before World War II, the Texas Highway Department expended an average of \$42.5 million per year, primarily on new road and bridge construction.³⁸⁸ The state highway system steadily increased during this period from 19,913 miles in 1934 to 21,376 miles in 1936 to 22,058 miles in 1938.³⁸⁹ Material and manpower shortages during World War II put a halt to most work on the state highway system, except on roads that were considered essential to national defense. However, in the closing years of the war, the federal government looked toward a postwar road building program, which the Department readily supported and embraced.

1933–1937

During the mid-1930s (1933 to 1937), the Texas Highway Department undertook a significant construction campaign to combat the economic depression that gripped Texas and the rest of the nation at that time. Over this period, the Department received approximately 40 percent of the state's share of relief funds from the federal government under the New Deal.³⁹⁰ Most of the Department's work was conducted in rural areas that were isolated due to the lack of roads.³⁹¹ New roads also benefitted the state's economy in that they created jobs for contractors, laborers, and suppliers, and spawned roadside businesses such as hotels and restaurants.³⁹² The early years of the Depression also included the completion of a new Texas Highway Department building in Austin in 1933.³⁹³ The building served as headquarters for the Department's administrative offices and districts statewide. The same year saw an important event directly related to highway roadside infrastructure when the state's first roadside park was built on U.S. Highway No. 71 in Fayette County between Smithville and West Point. (See *Figure 72.*)

In the 1930s, the Texas Highway Department took official steps to continue the work of beautifying Texas' roadways that was initiated and emphasized by named highway associations and Federated Women's Clubs in the 1920s. Painter and sculptor Gutzon Borglum, the man who the federal government contracted to carve the Black Hills Memorial (Mount Rushmore), moved to Texas in 1925 to complete a commission in San Antonio. There, he became interested in promoting local beautification and, thus, offered his services to the State of Texas and the Texas Highway Department.³⁹⁴ At the Texas Highway Commission meeting of January 11, 1933, commissioners approved the appointment of Borglum as State Chairman of a campaign to beautify the state's highways, cities, towns, and homes in preparation for the Texas Centennial.³⁹⁵ In 1933, the Texas Highway Department established the Office of Landscape Architect to incorporate both aesthetics and safety into landscaping the state's highways – the Department's contribution toward Texas' Centennial celebration.³⁹⁶ The Department's campaign for Centennial-related beautification projects included the creation of roadside parks, planting of native shrubs and flowers along roadways,

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Figure 72. Historic photograph of the first roadside park in Texas, located along SH 71 in Fayette County between Smithville and La Grange. Note signs crediting the work of the National Youth Administration and the Texas Highway Department. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Media Communications Library, Austin, Texas.



and addition of granite markers to historic sites.³⁹⁷ State Highway Engineer Gilchrist hired Jac Gubbels as Landscape Engineer to supervise roadside beautification and the creation of roadside parks.³⁹⁸ Concerns were numerous for the creation of the landscape architect position: maintenance, water, supply and protection on public roads; replacement of trees and shrubs destroyed by previous years' highway improvements; and landscaping needs of the state's diverse planting zones.³⁹⁹ In addition to addressing aesthetic issues, landscaping along the state's highways also served environmental purposes such as erosion prevention.⁴⁰⁰

The federal government took steps to combat the economic crisis and job shortages by continuing aid efforts for road construction after 1933.⁴⁰¹ The New Deal was geared toward road construction, allocating 100 percent of government funds to road projects since they were considered the best and most economical public work to create more jobs.⁴⁰² In addition to the existing Federal Aid Highway Program and Federal Aid Secondary Highway Program established in 1916, several federal programs funded road work in Texas during the Depression. The U.S. Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA, Public Law 73-90), on June 16, 1933, authorizing the President of the United States to regulate industry in order to stimulate economic recovery. The law authorized the president to make grants to state highway departments "for emergency construction of public highways" on the Federal Aid Highway System, including surveys, plans, highway and bridge construction, railroad grade separation, and "the cost of any other construction that will provide safer traffic facilities or definitely eliminate existing hazards to pedestrian or vehicular traffic."⁴⁰³ (See *Figure 73*.) On July 5, 1933, the Texas Highway Commission prepared the preliminary assignment of funds for projects under NIRA. Under the Act, Texas received an allocation of \$24,244,024.⁴⁰⁴ The state planned to assign 50 percent to work on the existing Federal Aid Highway System (refer to *Figure 46* in Section I.4), 25 percent to extend the system through municipalities, and 25 percent to undertake work on

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Figure 73. Photograph of the bridge over the Brazos River in the vicinity of Millsap, Palo Pinto County, constructed from 1933 to 1934. This bridge is indicative of the kind of public works program that not only provided employment opportunities during hard economic times, but also improved the highway network and supported commerce, trade, and tourism. The Texas Highway Department used federal monies to build bridges and other transportation-related structures (overpasses, etc.), improve roads, and improve safety. Source: Historical Sites Atlas, Texas Historical Commission, http://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/viewform.asp?atlas_num=2096001115&site_name=Bridge%20at%20the%20Brazos%20River%2C%20State (accessed March 13, 2014).



secondary roads in each of the state's 254 counties.⁴⁰⁵ After going through the appropriate channels, the assignment was presented by Thomas McDonald, Chief of the Bureau of Public Works, to Secretary of Agriculture R. G. Tugwell and approved on July 18, 1933.⁴⁰⁶ By August, the Texas Highway Commission updated the preliminary assignment to include work in 127 counties to cost \$12,291,253.⁴⁰⁷

The Texas Highway Commission issued many orders as a means by which to allocate federal funds in increments for highway projects. One such example was Minute Order No. 8404. At its meeting on October 19, 1933, the Commission appropriated funds totaling \$1,782,833.11 to be divided among various county projects. The roadways slated for improvements included segments of State Highway Nos. 1 (Hudspeth County), 3 (Terrell County), and 5 (Montague County), and a loop of State Highway No. 2 in McLennan County.⁴⁰⁸ At the same meeting, the Commission authorized the State Highway Engineer to execute agreements with municipalities or other political bodies for road maintenance and improvements on secondary roads on behalf of the State of Texas to fulfill requirements of NIRA.⁴⁰⁹ The Recovery Act earmarked funds for secondary road improvement, but most states including Texas lacked knowledge about the condition, use, and significance of their secondary roads (most of which were in rural areas) in order to determine what projects and monies were necessary for secondary road construction and maintenance. This dilemma led Congress to include a stipulation that states be allowed to use 1.5 percent of the amount apportioned to each "for surveys, plans, and engineering investigations of projects for future construction in such State" in the Hayden–Cartwright Act signed into law on June 18, 1934.⁴¹⁰ This measure was to assist states in planning for secondary road development. The status and condition of primary roads, on the other hand, were well known. Maps published by the Bureau of Public Roads clearly depict Texas roads by region that were eligible for Federal Aid in 1934.

Federal monies also paid for beautification and construction projects. At the April commission meeting, the board granted \$1,052,553.08 in State and National Recovery Fund appropriations for construction work on 17 projects on state highways in 19 different counties.⁴¹¹ The work consisted of grading, draining structures, paving, underpasses, viaducts,

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Figure 74. Historic postcard showing an aerial view of the Texas Centennial Exposition. The celebration of the state's independence was a great source of pride for Texas, and particularly to the city of Dallas, which was selected to host the celebration. Dallas was a logical selection because of its central location, numerous amenities, and strategic location on both rail and highway networks. Specifically, SH1/US 80 extended just north of the exposition grounds and turned south where it ran directly in front of the main entrance at the bottom left-hand side of this image. Many in-state and out-of-state tourists used this highway to visit the Texas Centennial Exposition. Source: Card Cow, http://www.cardcow.com/images/set527/card00650_fr.jpg (accessed March 13, 2014).



railroad bridges and approaches, and surfacing projects. (Refer to aforementioned Figure 73.)

At mid-year, highway beautification and construction agendas began to turn in earnest toward preparations for the coming Texas Centennial. The Texas Centennial Commission chose Dallas as the site of the exposition for several reasons – the city offered the largest cash pledge, had strong political and public support, and offered the greatest infrastructure from the State Fair grounds to hotels and highways; the city was served by 11 state highways and five U.S. highways, including the Bankhead Highway/SH 1/US 80 (Figure 74).⁴¹² Road improvements for the preparation of large numbers of motorists during the Centennial year was considered by the Texas Highway Department and Texans to be a “capital investment” that would “return a handsome dividend to the citizens of this state through the adequate promotion of tourist traffic from other sections of the country.”⁴¹³ R. L. Thornton, chairman of the Centennial Corporation Executive Committee, encouraged individual Texans to promote tourism by engaging in letter-writing campaigns to out-of-state acquaintances. Among the state’s amenities, Thornton suggested these letter writers highlight Texas’ “system of cardinal highways which rank equal to or greater than the highway system of any other state.”⁴¹⁴ The Texas Highway Commission quickly took up the mantle to encourage roadside improvement, especially in support of the statewide celebration. In August 1934, the Commission authorized the State Highway Engineer to receive donations of land for highway right-of-ways to erect fences and make the roadsides more attractive in preparation for the Centennial.⁴¹⁵

When James Allred was elected governor in 1934, he sought to reallocate highway funds to other state programs, such as an old age assistance fund. However, the Texas Legislature prevented this, and the

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Figure 75. Photograph of Federal Aid project in the Sierra Diablo Mountains along US 80 west of Van Horn, Culberson County, 1936. Improvements along this segment of one of the state's most significant and heavily-used highways enabled motorists to travel faster and safer through less populated areas of West Texas. Other contemporary road-related improvements along US 80 in the region included the construction of roadside parks and historical markers, and the implementation of a beautification program that relied on the use of native plants and vegetation. Source: Photograph Collection, Record Group 30, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.



Highway Department forged ahead with its Depression-era road program. The types of work included regular Federal Aid, emergency work, Public Works Administration and Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects, work relief, and regular state construction (*Table 6*). In order to maximize availability of Federal Aid, the Texas Highway Department more or less halted construction on state projects, instead focusing on major highways—namely cardinal highways—that supported large volumes of traffic (*Figure 75*). Starting in 1935, the Department expended approximately \$100,000 a day (\$6,500 per mile) on road construction. They maintained this pace until 1939.⁴¹⁶

Table 6. Breakdown of Funding for State Highway Construction from August 1934 to June 1936 (Source: Texas Parade, June 1936).⁴¹⁷

Funding Program	Mileage of Texas Highways	Project Costs
First National Recovery Program	1,846	\$26,666,267
Second National Recovery Program	764	\$12,969,886
Regular Federal Aid Program for 1936	618	\$10,401,620
Works Progress Administration	902	\$10,797,781
Works Progress Administration ⁴¹⁸ (grade elimination)	n/a	\$3,390,119
Emergency Relief Program ⁴¹⁹	1,415	\$3,729,074
Emergency Flood Program ⁴²⁰	n/a	\$363,362
State Projects	211	\$3,459,899
TOTAL	5,756	\$71,778,008

During the mid-1930s, the Texas Highway Commission devoted most of its meetings to the expenditure of federal funds and the improvement of the highway system. Commissioners also set aside valuable time to commemorate the efforts of one individual who supported the agency's to commemorate the state's centennial celebration. At a meeting in January 1935, commissioners approved the dedication of the Guadalupe

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Figure 76. Historic photograph of a Centennial Marker in Socorro, El Paso County. The Texas Highway Department placed 264 historical markers throughout the state to educate and inform travelers about the state's rich history as part of the centennial celebration. Many of the markers were located on or near the state's major highways, which handled the highest volumes of traffic and tourists. This example was constructed near the historic trail that later evolved into the Bankhead Highway/SH 1/US 90/SH20/Alameda Road, which are among the many names the route has been called over time. The marker commemorates the establishment of the mission and pueblo of Nuestra de la Concepcion Del Pueblo de Socorro in 1683. Source: Texas Department of Transportation Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

River Bridge carrying State Highway No. 2 in Comal County in honor of Houstonian Louis Wiltz Kemp for his "service to the Highway building program of Texas and to the remarkable work he has done in collecting and preserving historical documents and his contributions toward general preservation of historical spots in Texas."⁴²¹ Among other projects, Kemp worked on the compilation of the book *Monuments Erected by the State of Texas to Commemorate the Centenary of Texas Independence*. The publication included descriptions of markers placed along the state's highways by the Texas Highway Department.⁴²² In total, the Department placed 264 granite historical markers across the state in observance of the Centennial (*Figure 76*).⁴²³ In a similar vein, local and county organizations also erected commemorative structures on the state's highways. Among the numerous other road beautification projects undertaken by San Antonio groups, the Alamo Mission Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas placed concrete and stone benches surmounting by iron grills with the letters "OST" honoring the heroes of the Alamo on Old Spanish Trail at Fredericksburg Road.⁴²⁴ Monuments such as these, along with the state's vastly improved, federally funded roads, were part of a larger strategy to welcome Texans as well as out-of-state and international travelers to the state during the year-long Texas Centennial celebration.

The Texas Highway Department also prepared to serve large numbers of tourists by erecting 14 information bureaus on the main highways entering the state.⁴²⁵ (See *Figure 77*.) Newly constructed roadside parks were additional amenities planned by the Texas Highway Department for highway travelers. Because funds for roadside parks were limited, the Department encouraged local groups to donate time, labor, and supplies for roadside park development much in the same way they cooperated with private groups interested in highway beautification in the previous decade. Some federal assistance came in the form of the construction of the parks by the National Youth Administration such as one constructed in Bell County on the west side of State Highway No. 2.⁴²⁶ The Department's Office of the Landscape Architect appointed Jeannette Sorrell of San Antonio as head of a citizen's beautification organization that encouraged local groups to promote highway improvement at the local level.⁴²⁷ Women's groups contributed to highway improvement and beautification in various ways. As they had done in earlier decades, they promoted roadside parks and lobbied to restrict billboard advertising and livestock grazing along state highways.⁴²⁸ For example, a member of the Garden Club of Royse City (Rockwall County) took steps to contact Thomas H. MacDonald, Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads in Washington, D.C., regarding possible aid. In her letter, she appealed directly to McDonald to ask if "[the Garden Club of Royse City] may secure some Federal Aid or assistance from the Highway Commission. Bankhead [H]ighway No. 1 passes through our little city...as we are making plans for the 1936 Texas Centennial."⁴²⁹ As

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Figure 77. Information Bureau on U.S. Highway 67 in Texarkana, Bowie County. As part of the centennial celebration, the Texas Highway Department constructed tourist information offices to accommodate the influx of visitors to the state and the Centennial Exposition in Dallas. This building was located along SH 1/US 67; although, the Texas Highway Department constructed similar facilities along the other major highways in the state. This image appears in a photo scrapbook assembled by one of the Highway Department's regional offices, Division 19, which was based in Atlanta, Cass County. These scrapbooks date to the late 1930s and provide graphic documentation of the activities of the state agency at that time. They are an invaluable source of historic photos associated with highway construction and maintenance. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



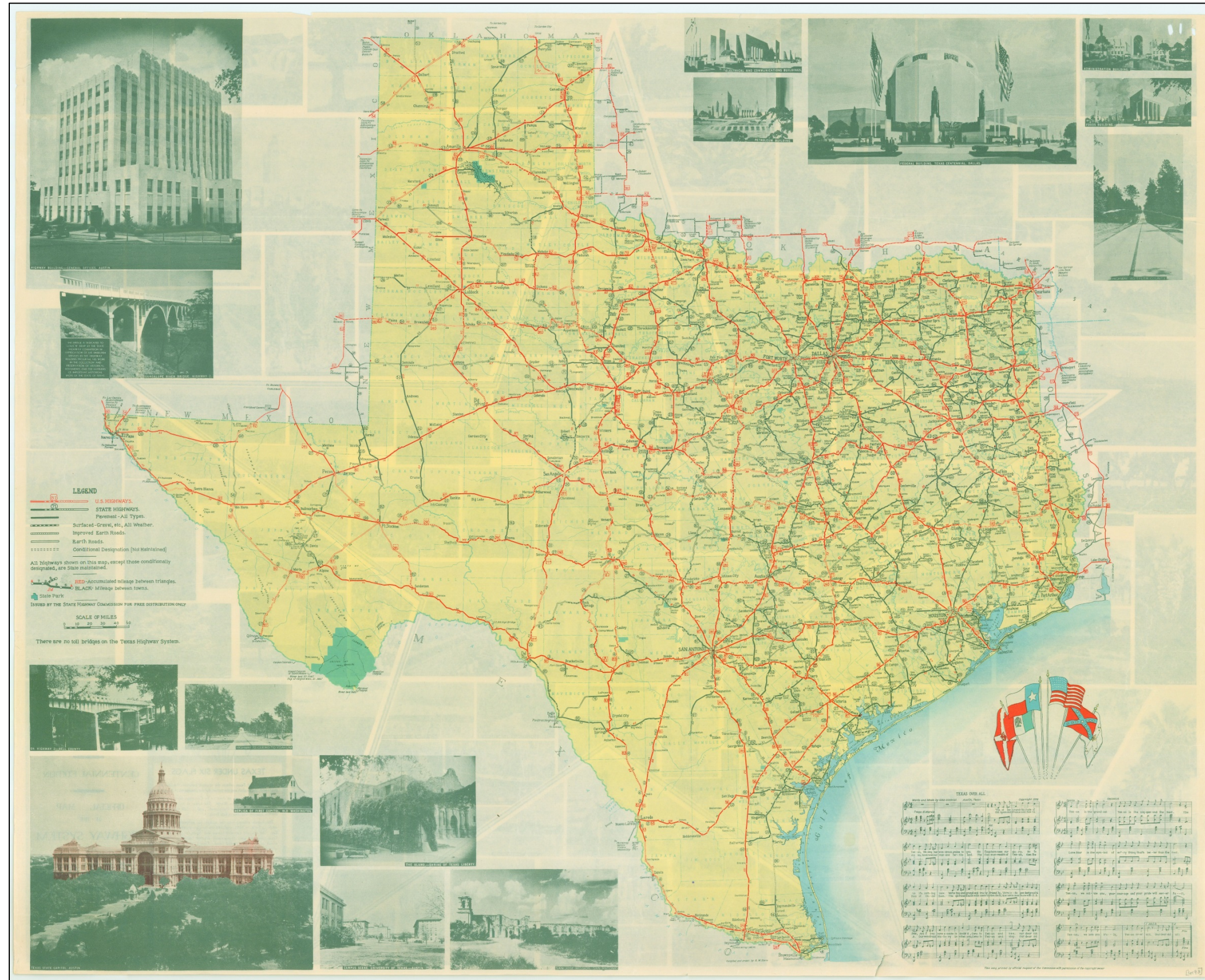
the highway was on the Federal Aid System, the garden club asked whether any federal and state funds would be available to assist with beautification. It is unknown whether this request was fulfilled. The Citizens' Highway Beautification Organization also contributed to statewide efforts with plantings of various species and trees as well as development of roadside parks in chapters' respective counties.⁴³⁰ The Highway Department conducted regional beautification projects at entrances to the state on major highways.⁴³¹ Interestingly, "road beauties" potentially included landscaped bridle paths along highways outside areas such as to Nacogdoches and Beaumont to decrease accidents between horseback riders and motorists.

Strategies to improve the experience of highway travelers to and from the Centennial included making travel more efficient on the state's highways. By this time, sections, if not all, of these historic roads were identified with portions of numbered state or U.S. highways, including four of the best known historic trails in Texas: the Old San Antonio Road, the Old Spanish Trail, the Butterfield Trail, and the Chisholm Trail.⁴³² The goal of the Texas Highway Department was to re-identify the disparate sections of the historic trails for the benefit of travelers and tourists as part of Centennial celebrations. (See *Figure 78.*)

Another major initiative of the era was the improvement of railroad grade crossings due to safety concerns. In 1935, for example, President Roosevelt approved a list developed by the Bureau of Public Roads (no doubt with assistance from the Texas Highway Department) allocating \$5.1 million to grade crossing elimination projects in Texas. *Table 7* below presents a select list of some of those projects that were located on roadways in the federal highway system that were eligible for such expenditures, many of which were along historic named highways.

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Figure 78. Official Map of the Highway System of Texas corrected to March 1, 1936. The Texas Highway Commission approved the preparation and publication of the map to help the many out-of-state tourists expected to visit Texas during the centennial celebration. The map includes a number of photographs intended to arouse interest in the state and identify popular tourist destinations. The map also shows how the evolution of mapping had progressed and presented a more sophisticated look, compared to the maps from as recent as the 1920s (see Figure 37 in previous Section I.4), published by T. A. Dunn for the Bankhead National Highway Association). Source: Map Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.



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Table 7. List of 1935 Railroad Grade Elimination Projects (Grade Separation or Highway Relocation) along Historic Named Highways in Railroad/County/Rural/City order.

U.S. Highway	Railroad	Location	County	Cost
Rural Location (Outside Municipalities)				
81 (Meridian)	Fort Worth & Denver City	1 mile south of Bowie	Montague	\$49,000
82 (North Texas)	Fort Worth & Denver City	near Oklaunion	Wilbarger	\$87,000
81 (Meridian)	International-Great Northern (INGN)	3 miles north of Pearsall	Frio	\$55,000
81 (Meridian)	International-Great Northern	1 mile north of Derby	Frio	\$50,000
81 (Meridian)	International-Great Northern	1 mile north of Devine	Medina	\$55,000
81 (Meridian)	International-Great Northern	Near Webb	Webb	\$50,000
81 (Meridian)	Missouri, Kansas & Texas	near Ringgold	Montague	\$101,000
67 (Bankhead)	St. Louis & Southwestern	2.8 miles east of Mt. Vernon to Titus Co. Line	Franklin	\$41,000
67 (Bankhead)	St. Louis & Southwestern	Franklin County Line to Mt. Pleasant	Titus	\$35,000
90 (OST)	Texas & New Orleans	Near Lobo	Culberson	\$45,000
80 (Bankhead)	Texas & Pacific	18 miles east of Big Spring	Howard	\$41,000
80 (Bankhead)	Texas & Pacific	west of Weatherford	Parker	\$111,000
5 (North Texas)	Texas & Pacific	1 mile west of Annona	Red River	\$69,000
Within Municipalities				
81 (Meridian)	Fort Worth & Denver City	Alvarado	Johnson	\$80,000
8 (East Texas)	Kansas City Southern	Port Arthur	Jefferson	\$99,000
82 (North Texas)	Missouri, Kansas & Texas	Muenster	Cooke	\$118,000
1 (Bankhead)	Missouri, Kansas & Texas	Cisco	Eastland	\$80,000
90 (OST)	Panhandle & Santa Fe	Alpine	Brewster	\$120,000

Source: Franklin Roosevelt to The Secretary of Agriculture, November 15, 1935, Box No. 3010, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

The Texas Highway Commission meeting of February 26, 1936, proved busy. The board prepared to award contracts for road improvements totaling \$1,011,476.⁴³³ (See *Figure 79*.) Costs for new projects to be advertised the following month amounted to \$2,175,000. Despite the significant amount of work to be done, Commission Chairman Harry

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Figure 79. View of the Old San Antonio Road (OSR) near Bastrop, July 1941. The OSR was one of four historic trails that the Texas Highway Department improved, marked, and promoted as part of the agency's efforts to support state's centennial celebration. This image shows an upgraded highway with OSR signage to mark the historic trail. The OSR generally followed SH 21 from Nacogdoches to San Antonio. It also was known as the El Camino Real, or King's Highway. The Texas Highway Department recognized the importance such highway signage had to the large number of tourists who visited the state. Source: Bastrop County project files, Texas Highway Department Records, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.



Hines attributed delays on some projects to waiting on action from Congress on President Roosevelt's recent budget message. In his statement, the President recommended discontinuation of federal funding for the federal highway system in 1937. He deemed the previously authorized amount of \$125 million expendable, given that \$60 million remained available under the General Works Program from the 1936 appropriation, which he claimed "would be sufficient for work in 1937."⁴³⁴ He also noted that emergency funds for highways and grade eliminations were available as well as other funds specifically earmarked for construction of farm-to-market and secondary roads.

Otherwise, the business of highway construction and the promotion of the state highway system continued. The Texas Highway Commission issued a special Centennial edition, *Official Map of the Highway System of Texas*. (Refer to aforementioned *Figure 78*.) The map indicated U.S. highways in red and state highways in black. Even newly completed sections of roads planned as part of the highway department Centennial program were shown.⁴³⁵ In addition to brief historic narratives and illustrations of the six flags that have flown over Texas, the full-color map featured views of tourist attractions and historic, industrial, agricultural, educational, and scenic points of interest across the state

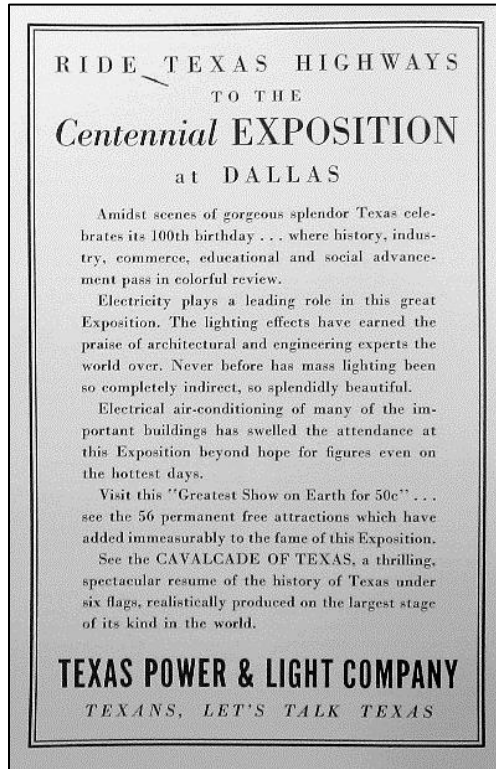


Figure 80. Advertisement promoting traveling on Texas highways to the Centennial. This full-page advertisement appeared in *Texas Parade*, a publication of the Texas Good Roads Association, established in 1936. This ad shows how the private sector complemented Texas Highway Department efforts to promote the state's increasingly important tourism industry, and its reliance on a well-maintained and improved highway system. Source: September 1936 issue of *Texas Parade*, Texas Department of Transportation archives, Austin, Texas.

such as the San Jacinto Battlefield (Houston), LaBahia Mission (Goliad), the Alamo (San Antonio), Lake Waco (McLennan County), Spindletop Oil Field (Jefferson County), Rock Canyon (Mitchell County), a wheel thresher in the Texas Panhandle, and a ranch in West Texas.

The Dallas Exposition of the Texas Centennial opened on June 6, 1936. Centennial supporters, including the Texas Highway Department, encouraged vehicular travel to the exposition and around the state. One brochure available to Centennial visitors targeted motorists and emphasized the "smooth, paved" highways over which they would travel while visiting Texas.⁴³⁶ Interestingly, in direct contrast to these efforts, none of the exhibits in the Centennial's Transportation Building highlighted the state's expanding highway system. Instead, they focused on railroads and travel by that means.⁴³⁷

The same month that the Centennial Exposition opened, the Texas Good Roads Association began publishing *Texas Parade*, a monthly periodical aimed at presenting Texans (and visitors to Texas) with a "picture of Texas" and at furthering the mission of the organization to publicize the state's "beauty spots, recreational facilities, natural resources and industrial opportunities to stimulate interest among Texans in their state and to tourists and investors to Texas from other states."⁴³⁸ The magazine's contents supported of the organization's efforts to promote:

- Preservation of gasoline taxes and motor vehicle registration fees for highway construction and maintenance;
- Beautification of roadsides; and
- Continuation of the educational campaigns for highway safety.

Through the magazine, the Texas Good Roads Association also promoted travel to and from the Centennial on Texas highways. Other organizations and businesses used the publication to promote highway travel. An advertisement by the Texas Light and Power Company clearly underscores the company's promotion of electricity used at the exposition, but the headline is an invitation to "Ride Texas Highways to the Centennial Exposition" and highlights the types of sites along the way (Figure 80).

Consideration of international travel was also on the Texas Highway Department's mind. In an effort to boost travel and tourism between the United States, specifically Texas, and Mexico, a U.S. delegation, including State Highway Engineer Gilchrist and his assistant H. H. Allen, traveled a newly completely section of the Pan-American Highway from Laredo to Mexico City before its official opening. For Gilchrist and Allen,

the trip underscored the importance of highway engineering and the reality of a highway from Canada into South America through Texas. In fact, the idea of the Pan-American Highway was an outgrowth of the Meridian Highway, which was originally conceived in 1911 and was envisioned to extend from Winnipeg, Canada, to Mexico City, Mexico. The Meridian Highway extended through Texas and its route generally followed what the Texas History Department designated as State Highway No. 2. It was later designated as US 81 and was the state's major north-south conduit of traffic. The opening of this new segment of the Pan-American Highway in Mexico occurred as the Texas Highway Department continued work on the construction, maintenance, and expansion of the state highway system, notably State Highway No. 2 (the old Meridian Highway) that was part of the Pan-American Highway. The trip along the Pan-American Highway also emphasized the lure of Mexico and the permanent importance of scenic motor routes. These themes extended into and beyond the Centennial year.

With the Centennial underway, the Texas Highway Department finally took advantage of the provisions of the Hayden–Cartwright Act (now two years old) and established a new branch within the Department, the Texas Highway Planning Survey, to conduct a survey with four primary foci: a rural road inventory survey, traffic survey, financial survey, and road life survey.⁴³⁹ Among the many survey tasks spearheaded by C. G. Edwards, Construction Engineer and Chief of the Road Planning Survey, was the cataloguing of the state highway system in order to classify the roads according to use and importance, as well as the investigation of the state's tax system as a way to provide better and more reliable highway financing.⁴⁴⁰ Although the results of the extensive survey would not come for another two years, new problems posed by the changing nature of the state-maintained system began to come to light, including:

- Maintenance costs,
- Rerouting and reconstruction of the existing system,
- Addition of rural routes to the state system,
- Relief of congestion in urban areas (see *Figure 81*),
- Improvement of highways of military importance, and
- The need for new sources of funding.⁴⁴¹

Otherwise, 1936 was a productive year for development of the state highway system. During the year, on average, 26,300 laborers worked on highway projects per month. With assistance from the WPA, local agencies built or improved 6,233 miles of highways. Roadway projects under construction at the year's end amounted to 3,724 miles. Of all the work completed or under construction in 1936, 9,507 miles were on farm-to-market roads, improving access between rural areas and commercial centers.⁴⁴²

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Figure 81. Photograph showing traffic congestion in downtown Greenville, at the intersections of US 67, US 69, SH 24, and SH 34, ca. 1940. This scene is representative of many Texas downtowns, where highways traveled through the center of the commercial district. Source: Photos of US 67, Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



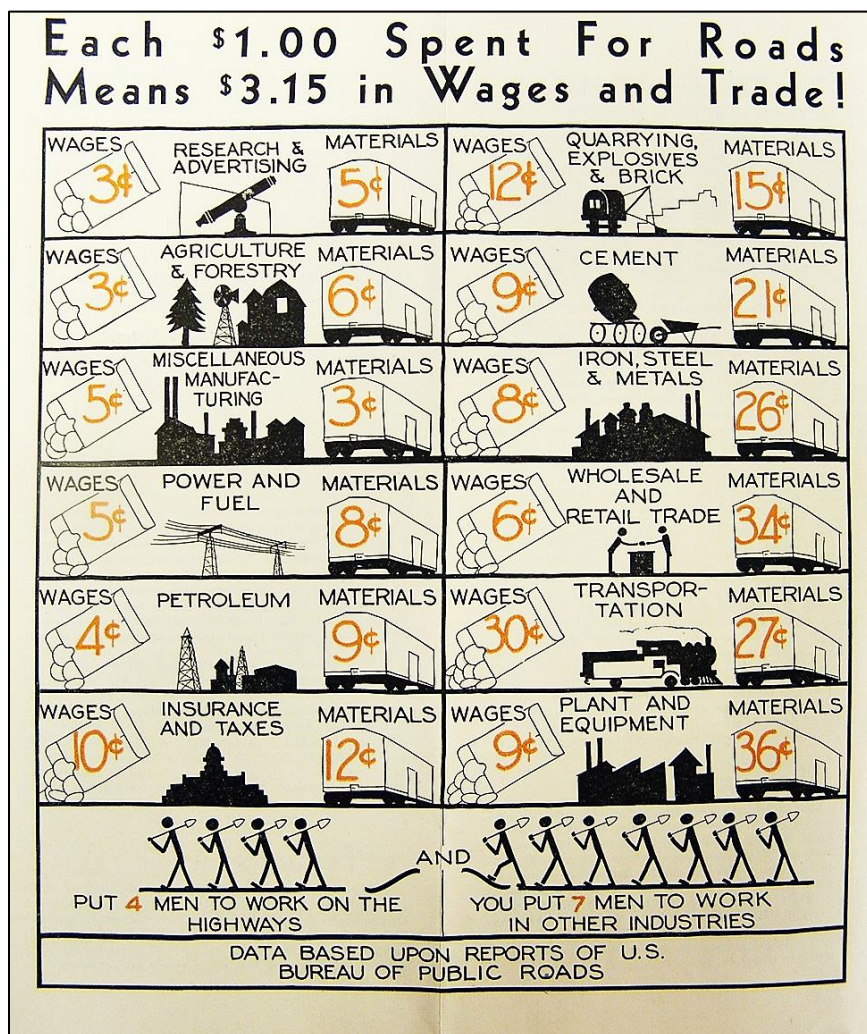
1937–1939

The years 1937 through 1939 witnessed a continuation of the shift away from state- and local-level highway priorities to broader, national highway planning. In some ways, this shift was a return to the grand visions that the named highway associations had set forth prior to 1917. By the time Texas Highway Department Engineer Gilchrist resigned in 1937,⁴⁴³ the Department had completed all of the goals set forth when the agency was formed in 1917.⁴⁴⁴ With the help of county bonds and Federal Aid funds, the Department was able to establish a network of statewide highways.⁴⁴⁵ As part of this effort, in 1937 the Texas Highway Commission also continued its authorization of road beautification projects to make highway travel more enjoyable when it approved projects in 32 counties to cost \$269,500.⁴⁴⁶ State Highway Nos. 1 (Bankhead), 2 (Meridian), 3 (Old Spanish Trail), and 4 (Del Rio-Canadian) were among the almost two dozen roadways to receive landscape work.

Taking a more comprehensive view, the Bureau of Public Roads first proposed an interstate highway system after being authorized by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1938 to prepare a feasibility study for a six-route toll network as envisioned by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁴⁴⁷ As opposed to the three east-west and three north-south super highways, the report, *Toll Roads and Free Roads* (1939), proposed an interregional highway network of 26,700 miles.⁴⁴⁸ After the report was published, President Roosevelt formed a National Interregional Highway Committee (1941) to investigate the feasibility of a system of national highways despite critics of a massive highway program. Part of the president's support included the idea that construction of an interregional system could prevent the country from experiencing another financial crisis by "utilizing some of the manpower and industrial capacity expected to be available at the end of the war."⁴⁴⁹

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Figure 82. Graphic documenting the economic return generated by road construction. This graphic illustrates the ongoing effort to justify the expenditure of public monies for road and highway construction. Similar arguments were made for other public works projects during the severe economic hardships of the 1930s. Most of the historic named highways that had been absorbed into the federal highway system were subject to numerous improvements during this period. Using federal monies for road construction helped stimulate local economies along these routes. Source: *Looking at the Texas Highway System from All Angles* (San Antonio, Texas: Good Roads Association, 1938), from the Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

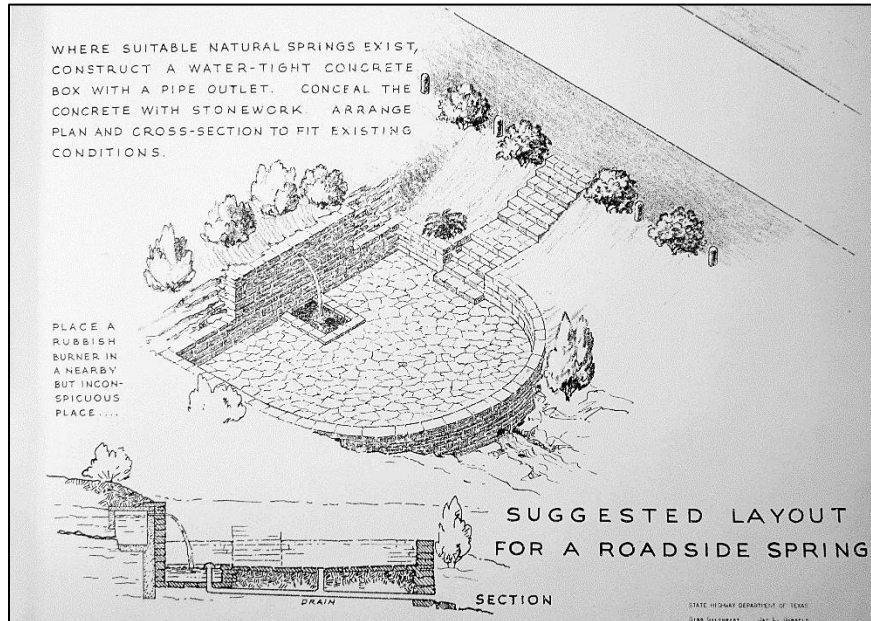


Recognizing the increasing importance of the U.S. highway system, the Texas Good Roads Association published a brochure in 1938 entitled *Looking at the Highway System from all Angles* that promoted continued expansion of the state highway system.⁴⁵⁰ It presented facts and figures that would be of interest to a variety of users utilizing the state's roadways – farmers, schools, manufacturers, motorists, and tourists. The publication noted that the number of registered motor vehicles in Texas had grown from 194,720 in 1916 to 1,590,375 by 1937. These vehicles traveled on 223,289 miles of roads, of which 21,225 were on the state system. The primary aim of the brochure was to educate and garner more support from Texans about the economic benefits of a comprehensive and safe state highway system and, ultimately, to encourage funding for the continued development of the system (Figure 82).

In September 1937, the Texas Highway Commission received bids for projects to commence the following year under the regular Federal Aid program.⁴⁵¹ On the agenda was work on 1,373 miles of the Federal Aid

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Figure 83. Illustration entitled, "Suggested Layout for Roadside Spring," showing suggestions for using roadside landscaping to address drainage and erosion issues, published in *Suggested Plantings, Preservations & Arrangements for Highway & Roadside Improvements*. Source: Box 3041, Record Group 30, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

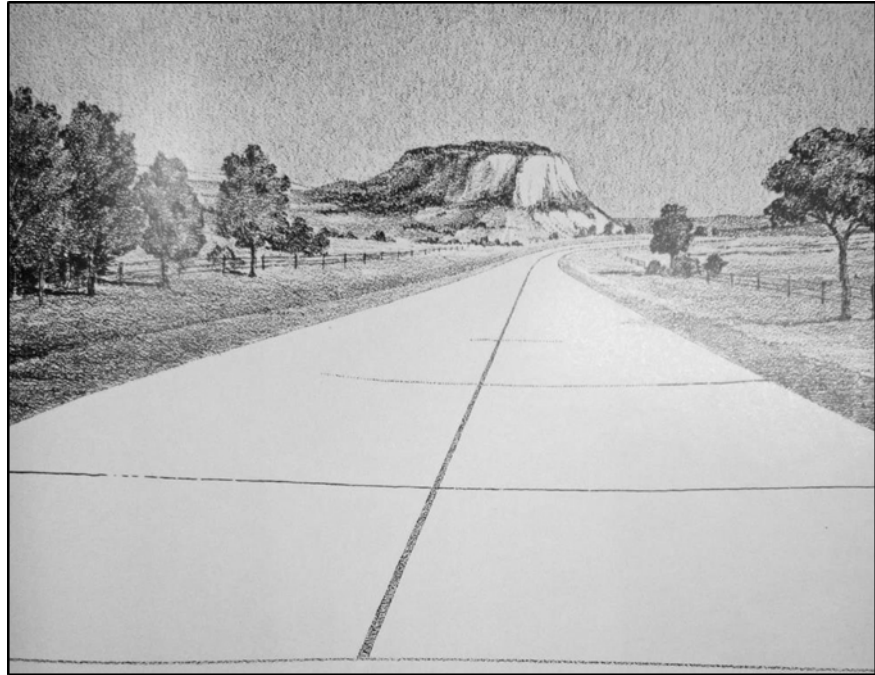


system and construction of 12 bridges with total funds available of \$15,915,220 (one-half state; one-half federal). The Commission also approved \$3,183,044 (one-half state; one-half federal) to spend on a secondary road program pending approval from the Bureau of Public Roads. This appropriation was significant in that it was higher than the amount originally allowed to Texas under the regular aid program. A 1938 grade-separation program to cost \$2,724,825 would be fully funded by the federal government. At its meeting of May 25, 1939, the Texas Highway Commission made special allotments totaling \$506,178 for 76 maintenance and improvement projects to highways throughout the state, in addition to more standard appropriations for road construction and improvement and traffic light projects.⁴⁵²

Meanwhile, the practices of Texas Highway Department Landscape Engineer Jac L. Gubbels not only proved beneficial to the state highway system, but also were shared at a federal level. In 1937, the Department published *Suggested Plantings, Preservations & Arrangements for Highway & Roadside Improvements*, which illustrated various schemes for using roadside landscaping to enhance erosion control and grading (Figure 83).⁴⁵³ In 1938, Gubbels went on to author *American Highways and Roadsides*, a volume that discusses roadside landscaping, roadside park development, highway location and alignment, right-of-way, bridges, and grade separation.⁴⁵⁴ Along with other concerns for the appearance of the state's roadsides, the Highway Department considered how the commercialization of rural and country roads encouraged greater proliferation of signage and commercial enterprises that might be unsightly. The department suggested that zoning might prove necessary in rural areas, just as it existed in many urban areas, as a tool to preserve the natural beauty of the rural landscape in the face

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Figure 84. Illustration of a direct approach designed to maximize the driver's appreciation of the scenic quality of the landscape while enhancing safety. As the publication states, "A full view is more valuable than a side glimpse; a glance to the side is frequently the cause of accidents." Source: *The Aesthetics of Highway Location* (Austin, Texas: Landscape Division, Texas Highway Department, September 1, 1939), Box 3022 - Corresp. Gen. Texas., 1939, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



of the highway system's expansion.⁴⁵⁵ As a way to make road travel more enjoyable, the Commission established a policy prohibiting counties from placing signs within 300 feet of the right-of-way during beautification projects. The new rule also allowed for the removal of existing signs.⁴⁵⁶ These principles were defined further in the Department's 1939 publication entitled *The Aesthetics of Highway Location*. This document discussed how engineering factors and aesthetic motivations could be better integrated when plotting the location of new road alignments, arguing that scenic vistas should be placed within the head-on view of the motorist to enhance safety, and that distractions like billboards should be eliminated (Figure 84).⁴⁵⁷ These publications, shared with the Bureau of Public Roads in Washington, D.C., enabled the Texas Highway Department to influence highway design nationwide. In an era when increased federal funding carried the risk of usurping the state's autonomy, the Texas Highway Department learned that they could retain autonomy by leading the way in advancing highway design.

1940–1944

The role of the federal government in highway planning increased further as the United States began to prepare for the possibility of entering into World War II. By November 1940, when the Texas Highway Department published the results of its statewide planning survey in *Texas Highway Facts*, the improvement of highways of military importance was identified as a key issue.⁴⁵⁸ While the United States was not actively engaged in the conflicts in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific at the start of World War II, the federal government recognized the need

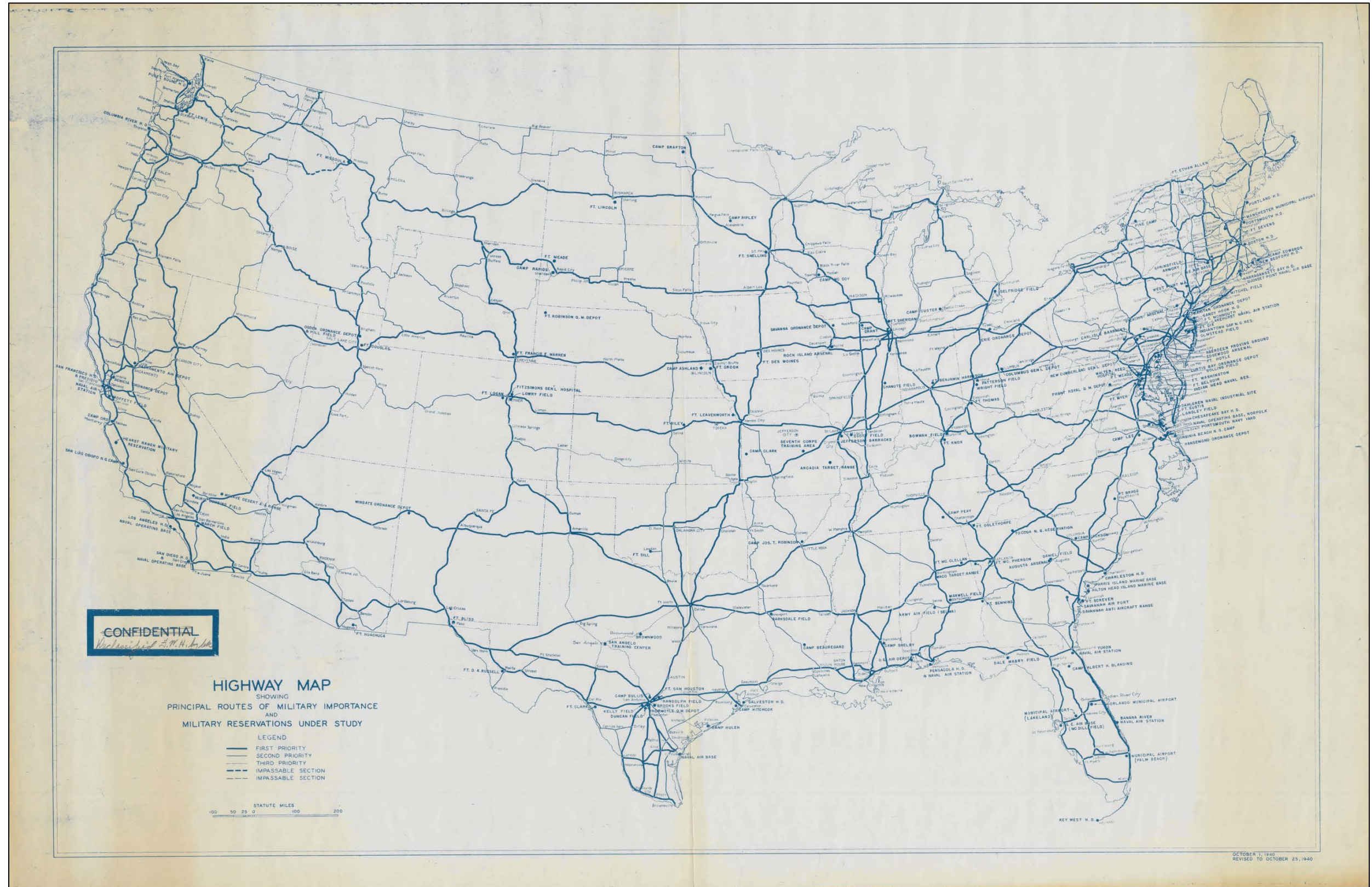
for military readiness. Following the enactment of the Federal Highway Act of 1940, Congress rededicated federal funds to planning and building highways for defense. The Act provided, among other things, \$160.5 million for fiscal years 1942 and 1943 to improve highways designated of strategic importance to national defense.⁴⁵⁹ The monies could be used to pay entire costs for surveys, plans, specifications, estimates, and construction supervision of national defense highways. In Texas, 6,375 miles of roadways were designated as having “prime military importance” and placed on the nation’s “Strategic Military Network” primarily because of the number of existing military installations and the state’s vast oil reserves and refining facilities.⁴⁶⁰ The Texas Strategic Military Network included several old named highways including the entire routes of the Bankhead (SH 1/US 67/80) and Meridian (SH 2/US 81) highways and Old Spanish Trail (SH 3/US 90) as well as portions of the North Texas (from Bowie northwestward) (SH 5/US 82) and Del Rio–Canadian (between San Angelo and Del Rio) (SH 4/US 277) highways. (See *Figure 85*.) With that mileage, Texas contained one-twelfth of the national network. The roads also supported 55 percent of existing peacetime traffic. In order to support both current and projected wartime loads, it was necessary for the roads on the network to be reconstructed to modern standards, with 22-foot-wide pavement, and for bridges on the network to be replaced with those providing proper clearance of 26 feet with nine-inch flexible bases. The poor state of the strategic roadways and necessity for funds to improve them was underscored when portions of State Highway No. 21, a strategic roadway in East Texas, were destroyed by the movement of light equipment and vehicles during Army maneuvers conducted in the spring of 1940.⁴⁶¹ These exercises supported mobilization efforts to gauge the nation’s military preparedness as hostilities in Europe, Africa, and Asia escalated.

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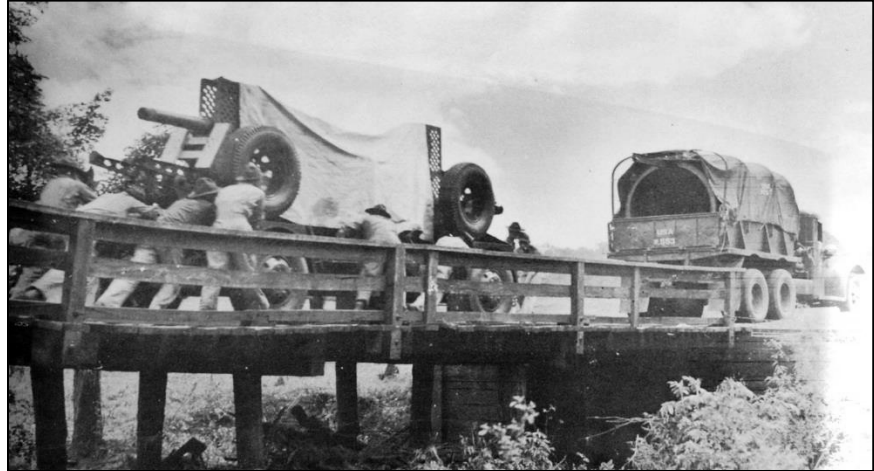
Figure 85. "Highway Map Showing Principal Routes of Military Importance and Military Reservations Under Study," October 1940. This map shows those highways deemed to have the greatest military strategic significance. The maps show the locations of the existing military installations just before the United States officially entered World War II. Most "first priority" roads in Texas followed the routes of the historic named highways that dated to the 1910s, when the highway associations and the Texas Highway Department promoted and established the state's highway network. This map was part of the nation's efforts to mobilize and prepare for war prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Source: Record Group 30, Historic Map Collection, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



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Figure 86. Photograph with caption stating, “this picture of troops moving a gun by hand over a bridge on a main state highway was taken during the May, 1940, maneuvers of the United States Army in East Texas. The bridge was so weak it was necessary to uncouple the gun from its towing truck, move the truck over the bridge, then push the gun across by hand to be recoupled to the truck. The gun is one of relatively small calibre [sic].” Published in The Texas Highway System as Related to National Defense Transportation (Austin, Texas: Texas Highway Department, December 1940). Source: Box 3038, Record Group 30, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.



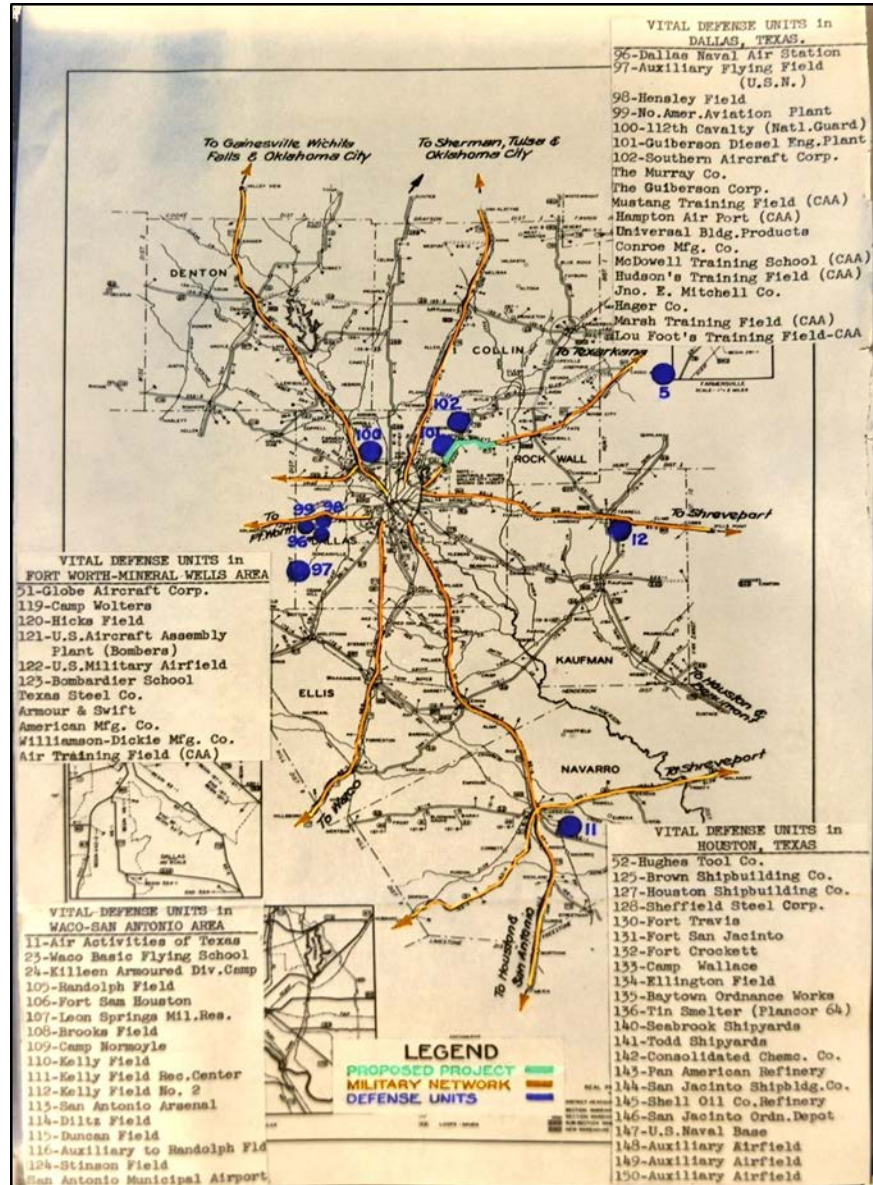
While the Texas Highway Commission appropriated \$15 million for highway construction in support of the national defense program at its March 1, 1941 meeting, delegations from four counties were informed that, even though their projects would be considered, they would probably not be financed due to a “shortage of funds,” as reported in an unidentified newspaper clipping in the Dallas Public Library vertical files.⁴⁶² Throughout the war years, precedence was given to roads of military importance in Texas that provided access to the U.S. border or coastline, transported materials and goods to support war industries, or connected military bases in and out of the state (*Figure 86*).⁴⁶³ Support for financing the strengthening, widening, and improving of these roads was garnered by promoting their value beyond wartime. As most of these roads were historic named highways, this practice harkened back to earlier attempts by highway associations to gain recognition for their highways by arguing that they had national military significance

With the United States’ entry into World War II in December 1941 came a cessation of road construction as the Texas Highway Commission canceled non-strategic highway work – the work not on federally designated roads of strategic or military importance.⁴⁶⁴ The amount of road construction and maintenance work also decreased due to labor shortages and rationing of asphalt, tar, gasoline, and other materials and products. In order to keep workers employed, the Texas Highway Department volunteered entire efforts of construction crews to support the war effort.⁴⁶⁵

In recognition of the importance of state-maintained roads during wartime, Robert Lee Bobbitt, a member of the Texas Highway Commission, made a statement to the House Roads Committee at a hearing in Washington on a bill to authorize Federal Aid for highways for fiscal year 1942–1943. In his speech, Bobbitt noted that the state of Texas contained 6,180 miles of military importance and 15 Army posts, forts, flying fields, and harbor defense points.⁴⁶⁶ Many of these were located along the historic named highways. Military installations and

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Figure 87. Map of the Dallas metropolitan area, showing Vital Defense Units and the Military Network of highways, 1942. The state's major metropolitan centers developed into strategic military hubs, in part, because of the existing transportation (highway and rail) networks that served these locales. This example shows military and industrial facilities in the greater Dallas area and underscores the importance of the highway network. Besides the many military bases, other manufacturing operations were located on or near the historic Bankhead Highway, such as the North American Plant at the Dallas-Grand Prairie city limits, and the Murray Co., John E. Mitchell Co. plants in the Deep Ellum neighborhood of Dallas. Source: Box 2995, Record Group 30, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.



military-industrial plants in the Dallas area (Figure 87), were among the many military installations that relied on the Bankhead Highway as a transportation link, as well as Army air fields in Abilene, Big Spring, and Odessa-Midland. In addition, the military facilities in the San Antonio area benefitted from improvements to the Meridian Highway, and the shipbuilding facilities in Beaumont, Orange, and Port Arthur benefitted from improvements to Old Spanish Trail.⁴⁶⁷ Due to the already considerable expense of constructing and reconstructing highways, Bobbitt advocated that the additional funds needed to accommodate military traffic come from funds specifically allocated by Congress for military roads “to be expended with, or supplementing, regular Federal Aid funds or state funds.”⁴⁶⁸

The Texas Highway Department successfully combined efforts to reduce traffic in urban cores while also improving and expanding roads and highways to service the many new military installations established just before and during the war. For example, in Dallas, US 80 was expanded to provide access to the Naval Air Station and weapons plants in Grand Prairie. State Highway Loop 13 in San Antonio (1939) was designed to ease traffic congestion between US 81 and the military facilities on the south and west sides of the city that might otherwise impede travel in the city center.⁴⁶⁹ The bypass was expanded in 1940 and 1941 based on plans and surveys by San Antonio District Engineer Frank S. Maddox.⁴⁷⁰ Likewise, in preparation for the planning, design, and construction of bypass routes around Austin, the Department authorized surveys, preparation of right-of-way, and “delivery of deed” to areas adjacent to and outside of the city limits.⁴⁷¹ Along these lines, the Landscape Division published *Urban Highway Routes and Parking Facilities* in 1942, which was an illustrated bulletin with schemes proposing off-street parking solutions and bypasses around commercial centers in urban areas.⁴⁷²

As the war ensued and the nation focused on supporting the war effort, the Texas Highway Department also began planning and preparing for continued expansion of the highway system after the eventual conclusion of the conflict. To fund this campaign and keep department staff employed during the war, State Highway Engineer Gilchrist invested revenue from the State Highway Fund in government securities. One of the projects in which the Department was involved in 1943 was a master plan in Dallas for the expansion of Central Boulevard (present-day Central Expressway) and an outer loop.⁴⁷³ The idea was a bold undertaking and illustrated the state agency’s innovative planning efforts at a time of war. By the beginning of 1944, the Department and the Bureau of Public Roads also initiated efforts to build both an east-west interregional express route (along U.S. Highway Nos. 67 and 80) that intersected in Fort Worth and a north-south interregional highway (along U.S. Highway No. 81).⁴⁷⁴ The selection of these two highways/paths reinforced the continued significance of the historic Bankhead and Meridian routes as the primary and most important highways in the state. These plans signaled a major turning point in the history of these highways, as new ideas in the design, construction, and location of roadways began to take shape in the postwar period.

During 1944, the Public Roads Administration continued to receive numerous requests for changes to the Texas portions of the Federal Aid system, as the State debated the relative importance of different highway segments. In April, the Texas Highway Commission approved minute order no. 20527, which called for transfer of all or parts of 33 routes from the Federal Aid primary system to the Federal Aid secondary system.⁴⁷⁵ The Commission took this measure in order to “coordinate the Federal-aid and Federal-aid secondary highway systems

on the basis of volume and character of traffic using the several roads in accordance with Public Roads Administration memoranda and correspondence relative to selection of the Federal-aid secondary systems.”

Over the course of the remainder of the year, more requests for additions to the Federal Aid system from the Texas Highway Commission were presented to the Public Roads Administration via J. A. Elliott, who was the agency’s regional district engineer overseeing federal highway projects in Texas. In June 1944, Elliot forwarded the Texas Highway Department’s request to add two portions of US 80—from Weatherford to Highway 16 east of Ranger and an alternate location of US 80 from El Paso to White Spur—to the Federal Aid system.⁴⁷⁶ The district office favored these revisions to the system. In July, Elliot informed Commissioner McDonald of the Department’s desire to add State Highway No. 67 from Eastland to Breckenridge to the system.⁴⁷⁷ He cited the thoroughfare’s importance as a route from rural areas to commercial centers and the increase in traffic on the road since 1941 as justification of its importance. Furthermore, State Highway No. 67 from Waco to Eastland was already on the Federal Aid system.

Other very forward-thinking and ambitious ideas about highway planning and programs also began to take hold during the latter stages of World War II. Specifically, the National Interregional Highway Committee produced a report in 1944 that supported the creation of an interstate system of 33,900 miles with an additional 5,000 miles of roadway for auxiliary urban routes.⁴⁷⁸ The report led Congress to begin considering the creation of such an interstate system. Of more immediate importance, however, was the creation of H.B. No. 4915 as a result of debates over the interregional survey in the House of Representatives. The bill delineated the proposed amounts of federal money that would be appropriated for postwar road construction as soon as the war ceased. On July 15, 1944, Texas Highway Department Chief Engineer Greer explained the bill, and the figures enumerating both Texas’ and the federal government’s share for road construction for the three-year program appropriating a total of \$167,433,000 for the Federal-Aid roads and secondary-aid roads programs after the end of the war (*Table 8*).⁴⁷⁹

Table 8. Figures for the Postwar Road Plan from H.R. No. 4915.

Year	Federal Aid Roads			Secondary Aid Roads		
	Federal Contribution	Texas Contribution	Ratio	Federal Contribution	Texas Contribution	Ratio
1	\$13,297,000	\$8,865,000	60:40	\$7,386,000	\$4,924,000	60:40
2	\$13,297,000	\$13,297,000	50:50	\$7,386,000	\$7,386,000	50:50
3	\$13,297,000	\$13,297,000	50:50	\$7,386,000	\$7,386,000	50:50

Given those numbers and the already approved projects on the Texas Highway Department's books for the next three years, Greer noted that the Department could only add an additional \$6 to \$8 million in projects on the rural primary system and \$20 million in projects on the secondary (farm-to-market) system. A significant amount of additional funds would be necessary to complete the state's urban roads program. After debates in the House and Senate, Congress increased funding and appropriated (for a three-year period) \$225 million per year for primary roads, \$150 million per year for secondary and feeder roads, and \$125 million for urban Federal Aid construction.⁴⁸⁰ President Roosevelt signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 (Public Law 78-521) into law on December 20, 1944. The law authorized the creation of 40,000 interstate miles, with Congress designating a system "so located as to connect by routes, as direct as practicable, the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers, to serve the national defense, and to connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance in the Dominion of Canada and the Republic of Mexico."⁴⁸¹ This measure did not provide for construction funds or commit the federal government to constructing the system, however. The legislation was also problematic in that it sparked contention between the federal government and states over authority, between the states over route apportionment, and between urban and rural interests within the states.⁴⁸²

One major accomplishment of Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 was the provision for postwar appropriations to fund projects on the Federal Aid secondary system, a system of principal and secondary feeder routes such as farm-to-market roads, rural mail routes, public school bus routes, local rural roads, county and township roads, and their urban extensions. The development of the farm-to-market system would be an important aspect of the Texas Highway Department's mission to improve and expand the state highway system in the decade following World War II.

With the end of World War II, Texas and the rest of the nation made a rapid and largely successful transition to a peacetime economy. Although the war effort diverted so much of the nation's energy, resources, and attention to support the military, the end of hostilities enabled a refocusing of priorities. The rebuilding of Europe created demands for American-made goods, which contributed to the rise of the middle class that, in turn, spurred still more demand for consumer goods. The success of the GI bill enabled many returning veterans to obtain better educations and jobs. These and other factors contributed to a period of unprecedented wealth and prosperity. The war had continued to demonstrate the importance of a well-maintained highway system for strategic military needs; however, a rapidly expanding and more affluent middle class exerted still more pressures and demands on the highway infrastructure and heralded a new era in highway planning,

design, and construction that directly affected the role of the named highways and land uses and the kinds of buildings and businesses abutting them.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS ALONG HIGHWAYS

Response to Demographic Patterns

Between 1933 and 1944, the population of Texas grew modestly from 6,014,000 to 6,876,000.⁴⁸³ In the Texas Panhandle, the population declined sharply due to the Dust Bowl, and an estimated 34 percent of farmers left the area from 1935 to 1937 alone.⁴⁸⁴ Many of these farmers migrated west along Route 66, as well the Bankhead and the North Texas highways. This migration was part of a continuing widespread pattern that had begun earlier in the twentieth century, as much of the state's and nation's populace moved from rural to urban areas. Cities accounted for Texas' population growth during the period stemmed, in part because of preparations for World War II that stimulated defense industries.⁴⁸⁵ The population of Houston, for example, grew from 292,352 to 384,514 between 1930 and 1940, driven largely by the growing demand for petroleum products for military readiness. Shipbuilding centers also experienced rapid increases in population. The city of Orange, for example, nearly tripled its population due to the shipbuilding industry during the 1940s, growing from 7,472 to 21,174.⁴⁸⁶

Transportation of People and Goods

By the period 1933 to 1944, motor vehicles already were well established as the primary mode of transportation for people and goods in Texas. During this period, the number of vehicles registered in Texas rose from 1,216,535 to 1,573,502. The percentage of trucks in those totals continued to rise as well, growing from 16.47 percent to 18.91 percent.⁴⁸⁷ Although the transportation of agricultural goods was a key motivation for highway building early in the Good Roads movement, by the 1930s and 1940s, urban traffic surpassed agricultural traffic. Statistics released by the Bureau of Public Roads in 1939 estimated that 71 percent of traffic on primary roads within the Federal Aid system originated in incorporated cities and towns, suggesting that farmers and ranchers were not the primary users of these roads.⁴⁸⁸ (See *Figure 88*.) Complementary statistics from 1940, document that the automobile was far and away the most popular form of transportation within urban areas: "...during 1940, 498,000,000,000 passenger miles were traveled by automobile; 26,780,000,000 passenger miles on electric railways; 23,826,000,000 passenger miles on steam railways; 21,000,000,000 on motor buses; and 1,041,000,000 passenger mile on airplanes."⁴⁸⁹

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The location of jobs at defense industrial plants in outlying urban areas that were accessible by car was noted as a contributing factor in the rise of automobile use. A number of these plants were located on the Bankhead Highway, including the North American Aviation Plant adjacent to Naval Air Station Dallas and the Consolidated Vultee Plant near Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth.

Military Use

In the early 1940s, the federal government began providing direct funding for military access roads.⁴⁹⁰ Highways that the War Department designated as strategically important to the military would be used to transport men, munitions, and supplies. (Refer to *Figure 87* earlier in this section.) The roads were improved to meet the clearances, road widths, and load requirements demanded by military use.⁴⁹¹ The War Department and the Texas Highway Department worked together to determine which roads would be designated as strategically important and therefore become eligible to receive federal funding. Factors influencing this determination included the location of active military installations, potential use for military movement, and potential use for training during peacetime.⁴⁹² In Texas, the Bankhead Highway (US 67/US 80), the Meridian Highway (US 81), and the Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway (US 90) all were given “First Priority” on maps showing highways of military importance. The portion of the North Texas Highway (US 82) between Bowie and Amarillo also was given “First Priority,” as was the segment of the Del Rio–Canadian Highway (US 277) between Del Rio and Sonora. The segment of the Del Rio–Canadian Highway between Sonora and San Angelo was given a “Third Priority” designation.⁴⁹³

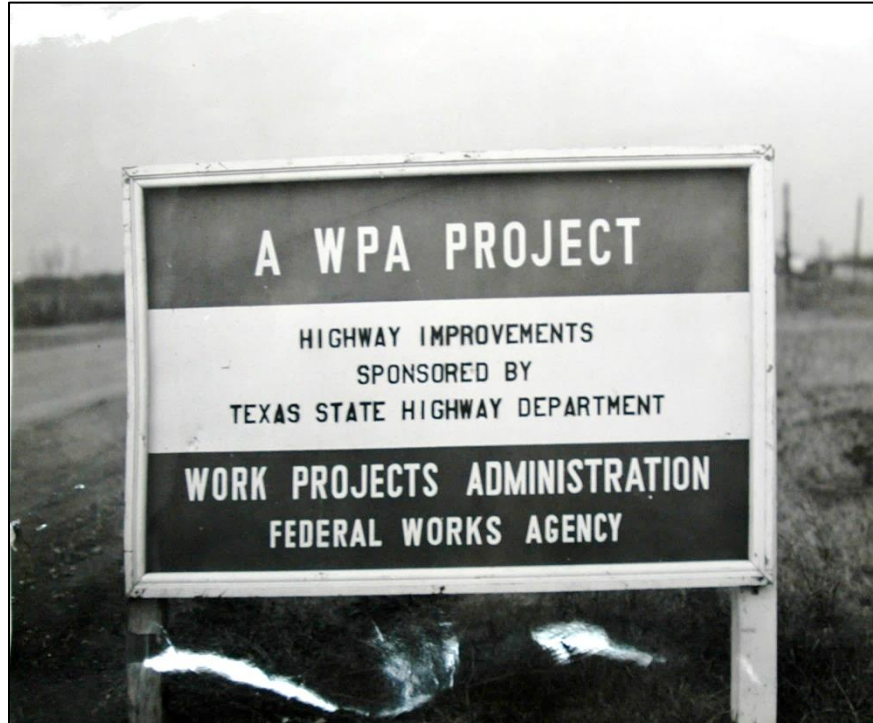
Tourism and Tourist Attractions

Despite the economic hardships of the Great Depression, the tourism industry in Texas boomed during the 1930s. The Texas Centennial celebration in 1936 was the first large-scale event planned to attract tourists in the state’s history, and the Texas Highway Department published a variety of maps and marketing materials to inform and attract visitors. The main Centennial Exhibition was held at Fair Park in Dallas—at the confluence of railroad lines and also right along the path of the Bankhead Highway—and the construction of gas stations, tourist courts, and other amenities accommodated the influx of visitors. (Refer to *Figure 74* near the beginning of this section.)

Amid the bleak economic realities of the Great Depression, tourists sought to capture a spirit of romanticism in their travel. Historical sites and scenic natural parks were the most popular tourist attractions of the day. As WPA and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) projects focused on enhancing parks and restoring historic sites, these public locations

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Figure 89. Photo of a tourist court located on US 80 between Dallas and Fort Worth, taken by photographer Arthur Rothstein in January 1942. Increasing tourism by automobile contributed to the development of a lodging industry that catered directly to motorists. This tourist court is an example of the kinds of businesses that lined many of the major highways that extended through Texas and provided temporary living accommodations for travelers. These tourist courts contributed to a more linear pattern of roadside development that was part of a decentralization of commercial activities in urban areas of all sizes. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000006386/PP/> (accessed September 6, 2012).



further aroused the interest of tourists (*Figure 89*). For instance, along the general route of the Meridian Highway (US 81), the federal government began to fund restoration work on the missions in San Antonio in the 1930s, and by 1941, they were designated as National Historic Sites by the Department of the Interior.⁴⁹⁴ Near the route of the Old Spanish Trail (US 90), the Davis Mountains State Park was established in 1933, and the CCC constructed the Indian Lodge to attract and accommodate tourists.⁴⁹⁵ The Texas State Parks Board worked closely with the Texas Highway Department when planning the location of new parks to ensure tourist access via highways.

Roadside amenities that catered to tourists expanded rapidly during this era. While grand downtown hotels continued to operate, tourist courts cropped up at the edges of towns, consisting of permanently constructed cabins arranged around a central courtyard. (See *Figure 90*.) Garages or carports often accompanied each cabin, providing safe and secure lodging for automobiles overnight. Many tourist courts also were accompanied by restaurants or gas stations.

While tourism flourished during the period, equal opportunities did not exist among all citizens. Longstanding segregation practices and policies prohibited African Americans and people of color the ability to tour the state and other parts of the country, especially in the South. The Jim Crow era limited the availability of many tourist-related activities. By the 1930s, segregation extended to public bathrooms and water fountains, sporting and cultural events, restaurants, and hotels. A tourist court owner in Marshall, Texas, for example, noted his

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Figure 90. Photo of a tourist court located on US 80 between Dallas and Fort Worth, taken by photographer Arthur Rothstein in January 1942. Increasing tourism by automobile contributed to the development of a lodging industry that catered directly to motorists. This tourist court is an example of the kinds of businesses that lined many of the major highways that extended through Texas and provided temporary living accommodations for travelers. These tourist courts contributed to a more linear pattern of roadside development that was part of a decentralization of commercial activities in urban areas of all sizes. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000006386/PP/> (accessed September 6, 2012).



reputation for maintaining a “quality” establishment acceptable to white travelers, “[s]ince I positively do not allow negroes, the tourist is certain he is not renting a cabin recently occupied by one.”⁴⁹⁶ Segregated (or inaccessible) facilities extended to other roadside establishments such as gas stations, restaurants, hotels, and motels.

As a result, Black Texans and people of color traveling through the state were discouraged or outright prohibited from using roadside establishments. Several East Coast publishers began producing guides listing businesses that catered solely to black travelers or provided separate accommodations for them. By the mid-1930s, the U.S. Travel Bureau’s Depression-era tourism promotion campaigns cooperated with publishers to produce guides listing overnight accommodations, dining establishments, and tourist attractions that welcomed black travelers on the nation’s highways in order to promote employment and spur the economy. The Bureau served as a clearinghouse for African-American publishers like Hackley and Harrison Publishing Company; A. Wendell Malliet and Company (New York); and Victor H. Green and Company (New York), to produce race-specific travel guides.⁴⁹⁷ In Texas, the most popular and longest-running guide was Victor H. Green’s *Green Book*. (See *Figures 91* and *92* and a detailed sidebar below).

In Texas, the *Green Book* and other race-specific travel guides for Black Americans listed roadside lodging and dining establishments on or near major highways in most metropolitan areas. Along or in the vicinity of the Bankhead Highway, at one time or another between 1930 and 1964, these cities included Abilene, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Midland, Odessa, Sulphur Springs, and Texarkana. Most establishments advertised for blacks were not located directly on the Bankhead route.

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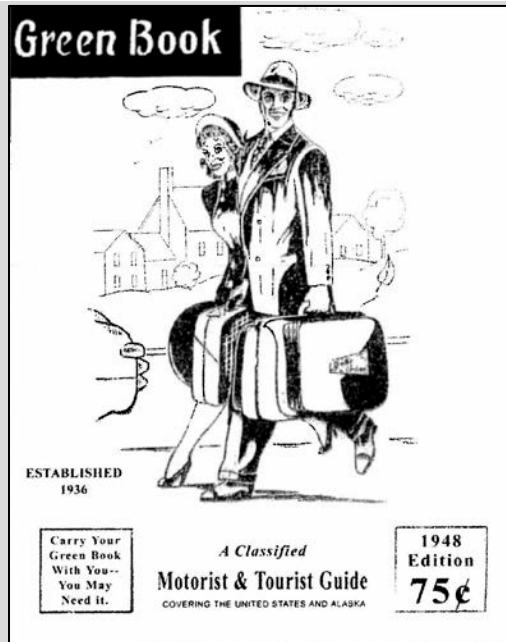


Figure 91. (Left) Example of a cover of the *Green Book*, 1948, reproduced in an article by Cotton Seiler entitled "So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By": African American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism," published in *American Quarterly* 58 (December 2006). Source: History Program Division files, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.

Figure 92. (Right) Photograph of the Powell Hotel located at 3115 State Street in Dallas, no date. Source: *The Roundup*, <http://jesuitroundup.org/5575/part-ii-aint-that-a-shame-the-shadow-of-jim-crow-over-dallas> (accessed March 17, 2014), crediting the Marion Butts Collection, Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.



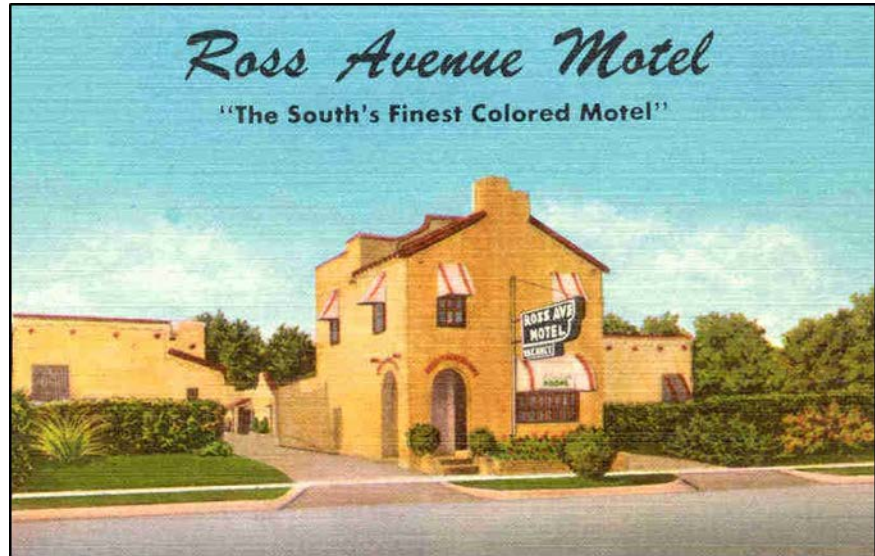
The *Negro Motorists Green Book* and Race-specific Travel Guides

The *Green Book*, the longest-running publication geared toward black travelers, was founded by New Jersey postal worker and civic leader Victor H. Green. During his career as a mail carrier, Green collected information on New York area businesses that accommodated black travelers. With this information, he founded the Victor H. Green Publishing Company in New York City and first published *The Negro Motorist Green Book* in 1936. So that motorists of color might avoid potentially tense and dangerous encounters while traveling the nation's highways, the guide offered suggestions for lodging, eating, and leisure establishments that welcomed black patrons. *The Negro Motorist Green Book* was influenced by similar guides published in the first half of the twentieth century for Jews faced with anti-Semitism when traveling.⁴⁹⁸ The first issue covered only Metropolitan New York. The next year, Green expanded the guide to include the continental United States.⁴⁹⁹ While the *Green Book* contained short articles on traveling tips and advertisements, it focused primarily on the state-by-state lists of businesses that would serve the black traveler as recommended by travel agents and, later, by the general public. By 1942, the *Green Book's* Texas listings on the Bankhead Highway included El Paso and Fort Worth, as well as Dallas and Texarkana. The resources consisted of hotels and motels within short distances of the highway.

In 1947, the Victor H. Green Publishing Company established a Vacation Reservation Service to help black travelers book accommodations at any hotel or resort listed in the publication. Two years later, the guide expanded to include listings in Bermuda, Mexico, and Canada. In 1952, the publication's name was changed to *The Negro Travelers Green Book* in recognition of those African-Americans traveling by means other than the automobile.⁵⁰⁰ The types of establishments discussed also expanded from hotels, tourist homes, and restaurants, to doctor's offices, pharmacies, and grocery stores in black communities.⁵⁰¹ Unlike other travel guides geared toward blacks, the *Green Book* survived into the 1950s and 1960s under the helm of Victor Green's wife, lending the publishing company additional uniqueness as a black-owned and all-female operated enterprise.⁵⁰² The title of the guide changed to reflect the decrease in racial discrimination – to *The Travelers' Green Book* in 1961 and to the *Green Book Guide for Travel and Vacations* in 1962. The *Green Book* began as a 16-page pamphlet covering the continental United States, and expanded to a 128-page book including businesses in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean by the time publication ceased in 1966.⁵⁰³

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Figure 93. Historic postcard of the Ross Avenue Motel in Dallas, no date. Source: History Program Division files, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.



Instead, they were within a few blocks of the thoroughfare on the fringe of historic downtown development or within black neighborhoods that were formerly on the periphery of larger cities. For example, in Abilene in the 1940s, the four accommodations for blacks listed were clustered in the northeastern area of the original town settlement.⁵⁰⁴ In Dallas, the bulk of resources listed in race-specific travel guides were concentrated in the Freedmen's Town neighborhood just north of downtown in North Dallas.⁵⁰⁵

In the Jim Crow Era, many roadside establishments in Texas cities, and across the country, combined several functions in one building to accommodate lodging, dining, entertainment, and social needs for black residents and travelers.⁵⁰⁶ In cities on the Bankhead Highway, these included venues that are no longer extant such as the 20 Grand Hotel Cocktail Lounge and Grill, the Ross Avenue Motel (Figure 93), and the Powell Hotel in Dallas (refer to aforementioned Figure 92 in the *Green Book* sidebar), as well as the Jim Hotel of Fort Worth.⁵⁰⁷ In the case of the Jim Hotel, the hotel clientele was black, while white patrons frequented the establishment during evening hours to listen to jazz and blues performers.⁵⁰⁸ Based on the numerous listings in several race-specific travel guides, however, tourist homes were particularly appealing to black travelers. Historian Henry Lyell notes that tourist homes were more common in small towns with no motels and hotels, but during the Jim Crow Era, tourist homes for blacks were located in cities of various sizes.⁵⁰⁹

The segregation of highway businesses and their availability to black travelers reflected national trends regarding highway travel. The *Green Book* and other guides for African-Americans advertised essentially no hotels, restaurants, or other businesses in small American towns.⁵¹⁰ But,

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Figure 94. (Left) Photograph by Russell Lee in 1940 entitled, "Highway leading into Junction, Texas, which is in the center of the goat and sheep raising country of west Texas." Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., Farm Security Administration – Office of War Information Photograph Collection, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/item/fsa2000016938/PP/> (accessed September 6, 2012).



Figure 95. (Right) Photo of Jac Gubbels caring for newly-planted roadside landscaping, ca. 1932. Source: Dallas Morning News, "Tree Planting Adds to Charm of State Roads," June 24, 1932, from Box 3012 - Corresp. FAS (Federal Aid) Texas, 1934–35, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

like other urban areas in the South and the Border States, major Texas cities such as Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso had several that accommodated blacks.⁵¹¹

Land Development along Highways

Roadside Landscape

During the period from 1933 through the war years, the Bureau of Public Roads and the Texas Highway Department made a number of policy changes that affected roadside landscaping. Beginning in 1933, federal funding was allocated specifically for roadside landscaping. The Bureau of Public Roads adopted a policy that aimed to improve the most mileage at the lowest cost by utilizing local plants and materials and salvaging existing trees and vegetation wherever possible (*Figure 94*).⁵¹² The Texas Highway Department embraced a similar philosophy as it implemented a comprehensive policy for landscaping roadsides from 1932 to 1936. Texas Highway Department maintenance laborers were personally trained by Landscape Engineer Jac Gubbels, who advocated using local and native plants (*Figure 95*). The Department would relocate or salvage trees and shrubs to reduce costs, but they also would purchase nursery-raised plants when necessary. The Department's engineers emphasized erosion control as a greater priority than beautification, but they also were motivated by the upcoming centennial in 1936 and presenting an attractive appearance for tourists coming to Texas.⁵¹³

The Texas Highway Department further codified its roadside landscaping philosophy by publishing standardized designs for roadsides and roadside parks in the late 1930s.⁵¹⁴ Again, utilitarian goals such as

providing clear vistas to enhance safety were emphasized over beautification.⁵¹⁵ In 1937, the Department also began to leverage local government controls to regulate billboards and advertising signage, requiring that local governments prohibit advertising signage within 300 feet of the right-of-way in order to receive funding for roadside beautification.⁵¹⁶ In 1940, the Department extended its philosophy regarding the incorporation of native vegetation along roadways to the use of local building materials in roadside parks as well, training laborers to use locally quarried rock for benches, tables, and other features.⁵¹⁷

Urban Planning in the Automobile Era

On a nationwide scale, regional plans were gaining popularity, recognizing that, with the growth of highways and development of suburbs, the need for planning often extended beyond the city limits of a single municipality.⁵¹⁸ The Texas Highway Department and municipal planning officials began to recognize that highways could have a negative impact on both city aesthetics and human health and safety, and during the 1930s, they began to implement plans and regulations to manage these effects. In 1936, the Texas Highway Commission funded a statewide survey and inventory of highways to set priorities for funding based on citizens' needs.⁵¹⁹ In a 1938 article in *Texas Parade*, the Department advocated the use of zoning at the local level to regulate the appearance of roadside commerce and advertising.⁵²⁰ In addition, the Texas Highway Commission funded a master plan of Austin in 1940 prior to obtaining new right-of-way for proposed bypass routes.⁵²¹

During the 1930s, highway alignments still typically extended through the centers of towns.⁵²² Such a pattern proved to be a boon to local business owners, who drew customers from highway travelers. As the volume of traffic and the speed of cars increased, though, highways through downtowns threatened the safety of pedestrians and contributed to greater traffic congestion. Around 1937, urban planners and highway engineers began proposing to separate highway traffic from local traffic, either by constructing grade separations or by re-routing highways so that they bypassed downtowns.⁵²³ Worldwide, architects and urban planners designed potential solutions for this problem, including some far-fetched proposals. French architect Le Corbusier, for example, proposed a "City of Tomorrow" where all building entrances and sidewalks were elevated above the ground, creating an elevated pedestrian zone and allowing uninterrupted automobile travel at the ground level. In America, industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes constructed an exhibition called "Futurama" at the 1939 New York World's Fair that included a model of a city with grade-separated expressways, but also plans for automating traffic in order to eliminate human error that could interrupt the flow of traffic. Bel Geddes' ideas made their way into the consciousness of engineers at the Texas Highway Department, where they were cited in the May 1940

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Figure 96. Photograph by Richard Garrison, entitled "Bel Geddes With Futurama Diorama," ca. 1939. Source: Faires, Robert, "Don't Stop Thinking about Tomorrow, The Austin Chronicle November 2, 2012, <http://www.austinchronicle.com/arts/2012-11-02/dont-stop-thinkin-about-tomorrow/> (accessed May 6, 2013), crediting the Edith Lutyens and Norman Bel Geddes Foundation/Harry Ransom Center.



issue of *Texas Parade* (Figure 96).⁵²⁴ However, preparations for World War II diverted funding and materials away from highway construction, and grade-separated expressways did not become a reality in Texas until after the war.

³⁸⁴ Mead & Hunt, "Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context," prepared for Texas Department of Transportation, April 2011, pp. 73, 74.

³⁸⁵ R. L. Thornton, "Tourist Trade Brings Texas Many Millions," *The Dallas Morning News*, August 19, 1934, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 1, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³⁸⁷ Texas State Libraries and Archives Commission, "From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: the Texas Highway Department Blazes Texas Trails, 1917–1968," online exhibit available at <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/highways/index.html> (accessed May 31, 2013).

³⁸⁸ Texas Highway Department, *History of Texas Roads and the Texas Highway Department*, p. 24.

³⁸⁹ Texas Highway Department, *Tenth Biennial Report, September 1, 1934 to August 31, 1936*, iii; Texas Highway Department, *Eleventh Biennial Report, September 1, 1936 to August 31, 1938*, v.

³⁹⁰ Texas State Libraries and Archives Commission, "From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways."

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³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ In 1981, the building was named for Dewitt C. Greer, state highway engineer from 1940–1967 and commissioner from 1969–1981.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.; Hugh Nugent Fitzgerald, “Sculptor to Beautify Texas Roads,” *Austin American*, January 18, 1933, *Texas Roads Scrapbook*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas; Caroline Remy, “John Gutzon de la Mothe Borglum,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbo31> (accessed May 10, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

³⁹⁵ *Official Minutes of the State Highway Commission*, Book No. 9, 69; Hugh Nugent Fitzgerald, “Sculptor to Beautify Texas Roads,” *Austin American*, January 18, 1933, *Texas Roads Scrapbook*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas.

³⁹⁶ Bertha McKee Dobie, “Texas Highways Will Be Most Beautiful in World if Plans of Department are Fulfilled” publication unknown, October 8, 1933, DRT Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas; Texas Highway Department, *Texas Highways*, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition (September 1967): 155.

³⁹⁷ Dobie, “Texas Highways Will Be Most Beautiful;” Grant, “Highway Beautification;” Texas Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations, *Monuments erected by the State of Texas to commemorate the centenary of Texas Independence* (Austin: Steck Co., 1939).

³⁹⁸ Charles E. Simons, “What is the Highway Department,” *Texas Parade*, volume 1, no. 4 (September 1936): 30; Dobie, p. 155.

³⁹⁹ A. W. Grant, “Highway Beautification,” *San Antonio Express*, October 1, 1933, DRT Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

⁴⁰⁰ Texas Highway Department, *History of Texas Roads and the Texas Highway Department* (Austin: Traffic Services Division, Texas Highway Department, 1940), p. 16.

⁴⁰¹ Wallace, p. 92.

⁴⁰² Ibid, p. 93.

⁴⁰³ An Act to encourage national industrial recovery, to foster fair competition, and to provide for the construction of certain useful public works, and for other purposes, June 16, 1933; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789–1996; General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11, National Archive, available from <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=66> (accessed May 31, 2013).

⁴⁰⁴ Letter from C. E. Swain to J. B. Cavett, July 18, 1933, Box No. 3014, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁰⁵ Texas Highway Commission to R. G. Tugwell and Harold L. Ickes, July 5, 1933, Box No. 3014, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁰⁶ Memorandum for the Secretary from Thomas MacDonald, July 15, 1933, Box No. 3014, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁰⁷ Of this amount, \$6,145,626.50 was dedicated to the Federal Aid System, 3,072,813.25 to extension of Federal Aid roads into municipalities, and \$3,072,813.25 to secondary roads. “...The Apportionment of Highway Funds Provided by the Act of June 18, 1934,” August 17, 1934, Box No. 3012, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁰⁸ *Official Minutes of the State Highway Commission*, Book No. 10, p. 92–93.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Texas Highway Department, *Texas Highway Facts: A Preliminary Report* (Austin: Texas State Highway Department, 1940), 2; U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, “Highway History,” <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/hwyhist06a.cfm> (accessed June 17, 2013).

⁴¹¹ *Official Minutes of the State Highway Commission*, Book No. 11, April 9, 1934, p. 67.

⁴¹² “National Geographic Society Pays Tribute to Dallas, Host to the World for Centennial,” publication unknown, n.d., “Texas, Centennial – Dallas Exposition,” *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas; “Centennial Award Generally Approved,” *Dallas Journal*, September 1,

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1934, "Texas, Centennial – Dallas Exposition - Planning," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

⁴¹³ Geneva Carr, "The Texas Centennial and Out-of-State Tourists," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 15, 1934, "Texas, Centennial – Dallas Exposition – Planning," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

⁴¹⁴ "Public is told how to help in Centennial," *Dallas Journal*, April 19, 1935, "Texas, Centennial – Dallas Exposition," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

⁴¹⁵ *Official Minutes of the State Highway Commission*, Book No. 11, August 9, 1934, p. 293.

⁴¹⁶ Huddleston, p. 264.

⁴¹⁷ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, volume 1, no. 1 (June 1936): 24.

⁴¹⁸ Seventy-two grade eliminations were completed under this program.

⁴¹⁹ The Texas Highway Department furnished the materials and supervision for the 118 projects funded through the Emergency Relief Program.

⁴²⁰ This program was intended to fund reconstruction of roads and bridges damaged by floods.

⁴²¹ *Official Minutes of the State Highway Commission*, Book No. 12, February 7, 1935, p. 125.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, Gibb Gilchrist, "Louis Wiltz Kemp," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fke15 (accessed April 15, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁴²³ Texas Department of Transportation, "TxDOT History: 1950 to 1931," http://www.txdot.gov/about_us/1950_1931.htm (accessed February 19, 2013).

⁴²⁴ Mrs. Henry Wofford, "Beauty Pioneers," *Texas Parade*, volume 2, no. 3 (August 1937): 3-4.

⁴²⁵ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, volume 1, no. 1 (June 1936): 25.

⁴²⁶ Kirk Kite, "Highway Development," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/erh02> (accessed February 21, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁴²⁷ Texas Highway Department, *Texas Highways*, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition (September 1967): 155.

⁴²⁸ Kite.

⁴²⁹ Mrs. Edna T. Miller to Thomas H. MacDonald, May 3, 1935, Box 3038, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

⁴³⁰ Lax or non-existent stock laws and the lack of fencing along the highway right-of-way in some areas put the plants in danger of grazing livestock, however. Howard Trout, "The High Beautiful," *Texas Parade* (February 1938): 5, DRT Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

⁴³¹ Wayne Gard, "Road Beauties to Lure Future Texas Tourists," *Dallas Morning News*, May 22, 1936, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 2, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

⁴³² "Historic Trails to Receive Attention," *Throckmorton Tribune*, February 12, 1935, *Texas Roads Scrapbook*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas.

⁴³³ "\$1,011,476 in Road Bids Are Opened By Highway Board," *Dallas Morning News*, February 25, 1936, *Texas Roads Scrapbook*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

⁴³⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Annual Budget Message to Congress," January 3, 1936, available from Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15206> (accessed May 31, 2013).

⁴³⁵ Official Map of the Highway System of Texas, corrected to March 1, 1936, Map Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas; "Historic Spots of State Shown on Highway Map," *Dallas Morning News*, April 5, 1936, *Texas Roads Scrapbook*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas.

⁴³⁶ "All America is Invited to Visit Texas Centennial Celebrations," "Texas, Centennial, Dallas Exposition," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

⁴³⁷ "Luxuries of Travel Today Demonstrated," *Dallas Journal*, June 11, 1936, "Texas, Centennial – Dallas Exposition – Buildings," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

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⁴³⁸ Texas Good Roads Association, *Looking at the Texas Highway System from All Angles* (San Antonio: Texas Good Roads Association, 1938), n.p. The other goals of the association were preservation of gasoline taxes and motor vehicle registration fees for highway construction and maintenance, beautification of roadsides, and continuation of educational campaigns for highway safety.

⁴³⁹ Each component was administered by a separate division. Texas Highway Department, *Texas Highway Facts*, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁰ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, volume 1, no. 1 (June 1936): 25.

⁴⁴¹ Texas Highway Department, *Texas Highway Facts*, p. 39.

⁴⁴² Charles E. Simons, "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, volume 1, no. 7 (December 1936): 21.

⁴⁴³ Various sources discuss the Gibb Gilchrist's eventual forced retirement as a result of political conflict on the state level and machinations by Governor Allred and others to control the Texas Highway Department. In particular, see Huddleston, *Good Roads for Texas*, pp. 194–201.

⁴⁴⁴ John D. Huddleston, "Highway Development: A 'Concrete' History of Twentieth-Century Texas," in *Texas: A Sesquicentennial Celebration*, edited by Donald W. Whisenhunt (Austin: Eakin Press, 1984), p. 264.

⁴⁴⁶ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, volume 2, no. 3 (August 1937): 20.

⁴⁴⁷ Charles P. Zlatkovich, "The Interstate Highway System in Texas," reprinted from *Texas Business Review* vol. 64, no. 1 (January 1970): 1, "Highways" Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas; Richard F. Weingroff, "Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956: Creating the Interstate System," *Public Roads* volume 60, no. 1 (Summer 1996), <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/96summer/p96su10.cfm> (accessed February 8, 2013).

⁴⁴⁸ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, "Interstate Construction," *A Guide to Federal-Aid Programs and Projects*, Publication No. FHWA-IF-99-006, May 1999, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/programadmin/proggd2.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2013), updated April 15, 2013 <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/federalaid/projects.pdf#ic> (accessed April 25, 2013).

⁴⁴⁹ Richard F. Weingroff, "Federal-aid Highway Act of 1956: Creating the Interstate System," *Public Roads*, volume 60, no. 1 (Summer 1996), <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/96summer/p96su10.cfm> (accessed February 22, 2013); Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Message from the President of the United States transmitting a report of the Interregional Highway Committee, Outlining and Recommending a National System of Interregional Highways," January 12, 1944, http://ntl.bts.gov/lib/33000/33400/33441/final_report/volume_3_html/09_historical_documents/content9bda.htm?name=05_report (accessed June 17, 2013).

⁴⁵⁰ Texas Good Roads Association, *Looking at the Highway System from All Angles* (San Antonio: Texas Good Roads Association, 1938).

⁴⁵¹ E. J. Amey, "Another Highway Milestone," *Texas Parade*, volume 2, no. 4 (September 1937): 10.

⁴⁵² "Roy Bean's Bar to Live Again West of Pecos," *Dallas News*, May 26, 1939, *Texas Roads Scrapbook*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas.

⁴⁵³ Jac L. Gubbels, *Suggested Plantings, Preservations & Arrangements for Highway & Roadside Improvements* (Austin, Texas: Landscape Division, Texas Highway Department, 1937), Box 3041 - Corresp. PS & E Texas, 1937, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁴⁵⁴ Wayne Gard, "Texas Landscape Engineer Explains Roadside Decoration," *Daily Texan*, December 4, 1938, *Texas Roads Scrapbook*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas; Jac K. Gubbels, *Texas Highways and Roadsides* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1938).

⁴⁵⁵ Charles E. Simons, "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, volume 3, no. 2 (July 1938): 32.

⁴⁵⁶ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, volume 2, no. 3 (August 1937): 20.

⁴⁵⁷ *The Aesthetics of Highway Location* (Austin, Texas: Landscape Division, Texas Highway Department, September 1, 1939), Box 3022 - Corresp. Gen. Tex., 1939, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁴⁵⁸ Texas Highway Department, *Texas Highway Facts*, 1, n. 1.

⁴⁵⁹ "Roosevelt Signs 1940 Federal Highway Act," *Florence (Alabama) Times Daily*, September 11, 1940, p. 5.

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⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² "Military Roads First, State Road Board Rules," [publication title illegible], March 2, 1941, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 2, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

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⁴⁶⁴ Huddleston, "Highway Development," p. 266.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.; Huddleston, *Good Roads for Texas*, p. 227.

⁴⁶⁶ Robert Lee Bobbitt, "Texas Military Highways," *Texas Parade* (date unknown): n.p., DRT Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

⁴⁶⁷ Boxes 2995 and 2996, Record Group 30, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Interoffice Memorandum, J. L. Dickinson to Dewitt Greer, July 14, 1943, Texas Highway Department Records, Texas State Library and Archives, Austin, TX.

⁴⁷⁰ Transportation Planning and Programming Division, Texas Department of Transportation, "Highway Designation File, State Highway Loop No 13," <http://www.dot.state.tx.us/tpp/hwy/sl/sl0013.htm> (accessed May 31, 2013); "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, volume 5, no 6 (November 1940): 30.

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⁴⁷⁴ "'Super-Road' Plans Ready," *Star Telegram*, January 16, 1944, Box No. 2992-93, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912-50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland; Letter from J. A. Elliott to Thomas H. MacDonald, January 22, 1944, Box No. 2992-93, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912-50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

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⁴⁷⁶ Letter from J. A. Elliott to Thomas H. MacDonald, July 8, 1944, Box No. 2991-92, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912-50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁷⁷ Letter from J. A. Elliott to Thomas H. MacDonald, July 12, 1944, Box No. 2991-92, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912-50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. The request from the Highway Department was made on May 16, 1944. H. I. Berg, "Proposed addition to the Texas Federal Aid System," June 12, 1944, Box No. 2991-92, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912-50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

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⁴⁷⁹ "Greer Releases Breakdown on Roads Program," *Dallas Times Herald*, 1944, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 2, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

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⁴⁸² Weingroff.

⁴⁸³ "United States and Texas Populations: 1850–2012," *Texas State Library and Archives Commission*, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/census.html> (accessed May 4, 2013).

⁴⁸⁴ Worster, Donald, "DUST BOWL," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ydd01> (accessed May 05, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁴⁸⁵ Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., *Guidelines for Assessing the NRHP Eligibility of Commercial Historic Districts in Crossroads Communities in Northwest-Central Texas*, submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation, Environmental Affairs Division, 2011.

⁴⁸⁶ "Texas Almanac: City Population History from 1850 to 2000," <http://www.texasalmanac.com/sites/default/files/images/CityPopHist%20web.pdf> (accessed April 30, 2013).

⁴⁸⁷ "Highway Statistics Summary to 1995," *Federal Highway Administration*, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/summary95/section2.html> (accessed May 14, 2013).

⁴⁸⁸ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade* vol. 4 no. 2 (July 1939): 28, from the Texas Department of Transportation Travel Division Library, Austin, Texas.

⁴⁸⁹ *Highway Highlights*, Bulletin No. 142-5 (San Antonio, Texas: Texas Good Roads Association, May 21, 1942), Box 3020 - Corresp. Gen. Tex., 1941–44, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

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⁴⁹⁷ Sorin, 16. Donald F. Joyce, *Black Book Publishers in the United States: A Historical Dictionary of the Presses, 1817-1990* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991), 146.

⁴⁹⁸ Sorin, 21.

⁴⁹⁹ *Green Book* (1949), 1.

⁵⁰⁰ *The Negro Travelers' Green Book* (New York: Victor H. Green & Company, 1956), 6.

⁵⁰¹ Gretchen Sorin, "The Negro Motorist Green-Book," *Ephemera Journal*, volume 13 (2010): 24.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰³ *Green Book* (1956), 6.

⁵⁰⁴ *Travelguide* (New York: Travelguide, Inc., 1949): 78.

⁵⁰⁵ Freedman's Town was founded by newly emancipated Dallas blacks in 1869. Marsha Prior and Robert V. Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown: Community Transformation and Gentrification in Dallas, Texas," *Urban Anthropology*, volume 34, nos. 2-3 (2005): 179. From http://faculty.smu.edu/rkemper/publications/Prior-Kemper_From_Freedmans_Town_to_Uptown.pdf (accessed November 4, 2013).

⁵⁰⁶ Alan B. Governar, *Texas Blues: The Rise of a Contemporary Sound* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 179.

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⁵⁰⁷ Ibid. The three hotels are listed in various issues of race-specific guidebooks between 1930 and 1961.

⁵⁰⁸ Chery L. Simon, "JIM MOTEL," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/xdj01> (accessed November 11, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁵⁰⁹ Lyell, p. 5. Between 1930 and 1964, 15 issues of race-specific guides listed 16 tourist homes in four cities through which the Bankhead Highway was routed. The cities and numbers were as follows: Abilene, 2; El Paso, 5; Fort Worth, 3; and Texarkana, 5. Interestingly, Dallas, a major metropolitan center, offered not tourist home accommodations according to the guides.

⁵¹⁰ *Green Book* (1956), 5.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² "New Deal Roadside Landscape Features," National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/hps/hli/currents/newdeal/introduction.htm> (accessed November 28, 2012).

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⁵¹⁶ "Signs on Highways," *Texas Parade* vol. 2 no. 3 (August 1937): 20, from the Texas Department of Transportation Travel Division Library, Austin, Texas.

⁵¹⁷ Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., *Preliminary Guidelines for Assessing NRHP Eligibility for Roadside Parks*, Submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation, Environmental Affairs Division, 2005.

⁵¹⁸ Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClellan, *Historic Residential Suburbs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002) <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/> (accessed May, 2013).

⁵¹⁹ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade* vol. 1 no. 1 (June 1936): 24–25, from the Texas Department of Transportation Travel Division Library, Austin, Texas.

⁵²⁰ "On Texas Highways: Roadside Commerce," *Texas Parade* vol. 3 no. 2 (July 1938): 32, from the Texas Department of Transportation Travel Division Library, Austin, Texas.

⁵²¹ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade* vol. 4 no. 12 (May 1940): 28, from the Texas Department of Transportation Travel Division Library, Austin, Texas.

⁵²² Photo Collection, Texas Department of Transportation, On file at the Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library.

⁵²³ Bassett, Edward W. and Malcolm H. Dill, "Freeways Versus Highways," Discussion, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* III (1937): 106.

⁵²⁴ "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade* vol. 4 no. 12 (May 1940): 28, from the Texas Department of Transportation Travel Division Library, Austin, Texas.

I.6. POSTWAR ROAD EXPANSION: 1945–1956

STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

By 1945, the Texas Highway Department reported that it oversaw 28,007 miles of state highways to support its share of the nation’s vehicular traffic.⁵²⁵ This complex network relied principally on the increasingly congested historic highways that dated to the agency’s creation in 1917; however, the network also included other federally designated and funded highways that augmented the system. Despite the agency’s successes, many parts of the state remained underserved by the highway system, and the postwar years ushered in a new era of highway construction. The funding for this effort stemmed from the enactment of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944. This legislation approved a Federal Aid Secondary system of 482,972 miles of farm-to-market roads or “feeder roads linking smaller communities and distribution outlets to the primary system.”⁵²⁶ The Act also authorized a 40,000-mile “National System of Interstate Highways” to link all major U.S. cities, key industrial centers, seaports, and international boundaries. The vision for a comprehensive, integrated, nationwide system of highways dated back to the Good Roads movement in the late nineteenth century, but it was not formalized in federal policy until 1944. The Act defined the Interstate Highway System as a network “so located as to connect by routes, as direct as practicable, the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers to serve the national defense and to connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance in the Dominion of Canada and the Republic of Mexico.”⁵²⁷ This ambitious highway network aimed not only to serve long-distance interstate traffic, but also to reduce congestion within the urban areas it transgressed. The network was based upon earlier designations of roadways that were part of the Federal Aid system and Principal Routes of Military Importance. (Refer to *Figure 46* in previous Section I.4.)

Initially, most states experienced a slow process of postwar highway construction, since highway contractors that had largely redirected their operations to support the war effort were slow to make the transition back to their peacetime endeavors. The delay in highway construction also stemmed from labor shortages of former construction workers who were reluctant to return to low-paying jobs, as well as scarcity of materials and inflated prices.⁵²⁸ Texas, however, was among the first states to forge ahead with the federal-aid highway programs of the late 1940s as well as to initiate a system of interstate highways.



Figure 97. Portrait of Dewitt C. Greer published in Texas Parade, vol. 12, no. 7 (December 1951). Greer served as state highway engineer from 1940 to 1967. Under his leadership, the Texas Highway Department embarked on an unprecedented phase of highway planning, construction, and improvement. The expansion and rapid development of the farm-to-market road system in the postwar era not only improved the flow of goods and people to and from smaller communities and rural areas throughout the state, but also placed additional burdens on the state's primary highways. Relying on plans developed during World War II and before funding was even available, Greer directed the initial wave of urban expressway construction. This new configuration relieved congestion in urban areas because of limited access points and continuous traffic flow that avoided stops at intersections. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

Fortunately for Texas, State Highway Engineer Dewitt C. Greer's planning efforts during World War II provided much of the groundwork for postwar improvements and expansion of the state highway system (Figure 97). With Greer's careful administrative and financial skills, the Texas Highway Department's wartime plans began to be realized. By 1950, the state-maintained system contained 41,673 miles of roads, which represented an increase of 67 percent from immediately after the war.⁵²⁹ As with the other states, however, Texas suffered from an inadequate and overburdened network of rural (farm-to-market) and urban roads; even though rural roads carried 81 percent of the nation's traffic, they comprised only 19 percent of road mileage.⁵³⁰ The Texas Legislature's passing of the Colson-Briscoe Act in 1949 placed particular emphasis on farm-to-market roads and continued to transform the state's secondary highway system.

By the early 1950s, all 22,000 miles of the system that were designated as part of the state highway system when Dewitt C. Greer became Chief Highway Engineer in 1940 were paved.⁵³¹ This mileage was of particular use in heavily traveled urban areas. By 1955, 60 million vehicles utilized the nation's highways.⁵³² The postwar boom also affected Texas, and the state experienced unprecedented growth and prosperity. Continued demographic shifts from rural to urban areas changed the character of Texas and its rapidly expanding population centers. As a result, vehicular traffic in urban areas doubled in Texas between 1940 and 1960.⁵³³ To address the growing burdens on the existing highway infrastructure and road network, the Texas Highway Department promoted urban expressways and bypasses in major metropolitan areas to reduce traffic congestion. (See Figure 98.) This transitional period of the postwar era closed with the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (also known as the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, Public Law 84-627), which provided the necessary funding to enact, build, and maintain the new Interstate Highway System that transformed the nation and marked the decline of many sections of the named highways as the major transportation routes in Texas and other states. This transformation affected not only roadways, but also development patterns in cities and towns, bypassing dense traditional downtowns and fostering decentralized commercial development and new types of roadside commercial buildings that catered to the automobile.

1945–1950

After passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944, each state had until July 1, 1945, to submit an initial designation of routes proposed for the interstate system. Suggested highways were to be consistent with the legal limitation of 40,000 miles, with interstate and international route connections, and with national defense needs.⁵³⁴ In some instances, the Texas Highway Department reached agreements with

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Figure 98. Rendering of proposed expressway along Alameda Avenue in El Paso, published in Texas Parade, vol. 9, no. 5 (October 1948). The original caption read, "El Paso's travel problems will be greatly relieved when [the] State Highway Department's program is completed in that far western city. Here is an artist's conception of [the] Alameda Avenue section." Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



bordering states regarding crossings of the interstate system via Texas roads over state lines.⁵³⁵ On February 26, 1945, the Texas Highway Commission acted to comply with provisions of the Act and selected the following segments of US highways in Texas as part of the interstate system (see *Figure 99*):

- US 80 (Bankhead Highway west of Dallas) from the New Mexico state line north of El Paso to the Louisiana state line east of Marshall
- US 67 (Bankhead Highway east of Dallas) from Dallas to the Arkansas state line at Texarkana
- US 81 (Meridian Highway) from Laredo to U.S. Highway No. 77 at Hillsboro; thence US 77 to the Oklahoma state line north of Gainesville
- US 81 (Meridian Highway) from Hillsboro to Fort Worth; thence U.S. Highway No. 377 from Fort Worth to US 77 at Denton
- US 290 at US 80 to US 27; thence US 27 to US 87 at Comfort; thence US 87 to US 90 in San Antonio; thence along US 90 (OST/Southern National Highway) from San Antonio to the Louisiana state line east of Beaumont
- US 66 from the New Mexico state line to the Oklahoma state line; US 75 from Galveston to Dallas.⁵³⁶

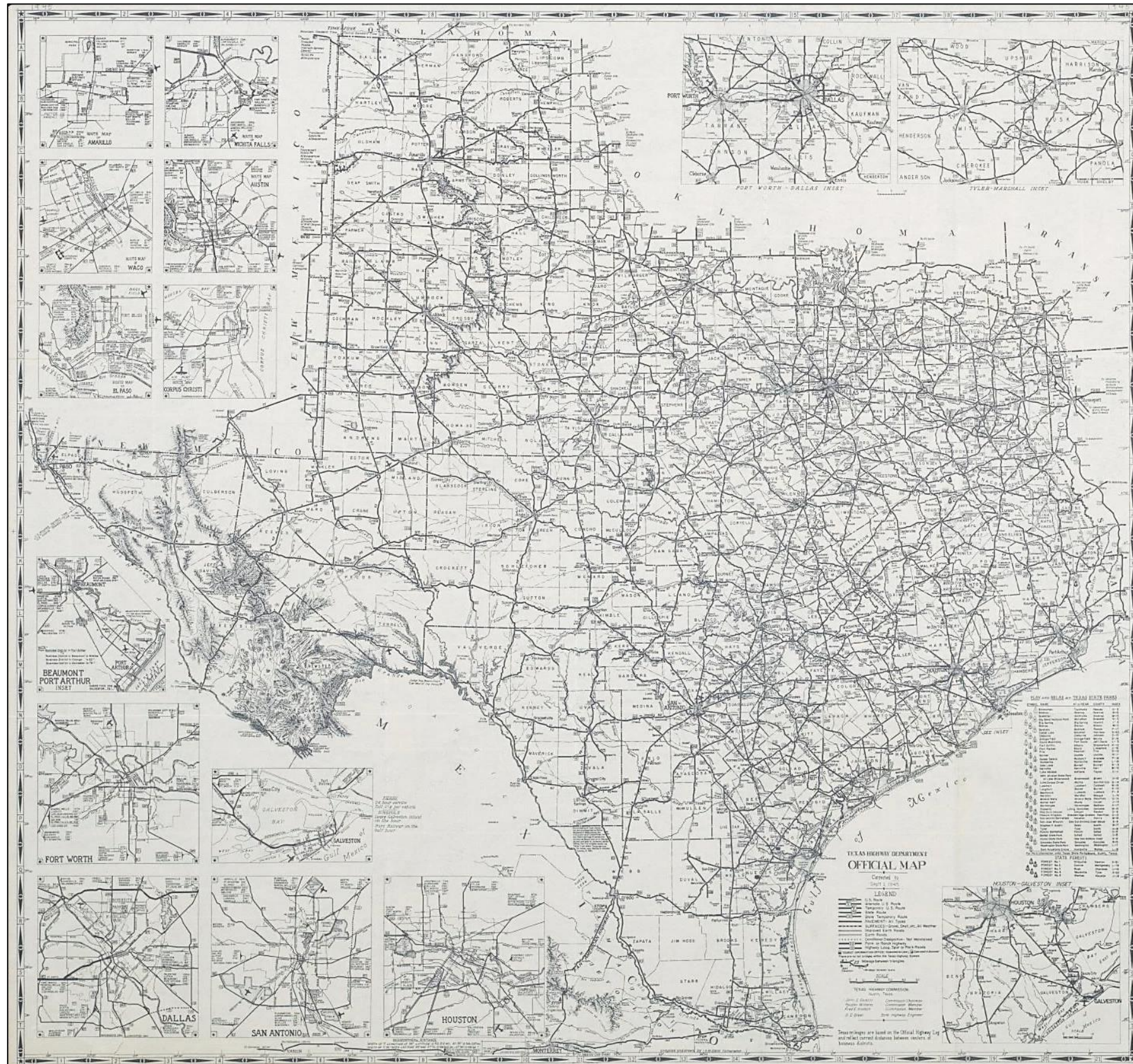
While the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 made no new appropriations for implementing the interstate highway program, the Act made available federal monies that could be used with matching state funds to improve roads to be integrated into the Interstate Highway System.⁵³⁷

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Figure 99. Official Texas Highway Department map, 1945. This map documents the general condition of the state's highway system at the close of World War II. The map depicts an intricate web of highways that served the state's major urban areas, as well as smaller sized cities and communities and many rural areas. In the intervening years, this highway system changed dramatically, affecting not only trends in transportation, but also patterns of development, especially in urban and suburban areas throughout the state. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph193703/> (accessed March 24, 2014), crediting University of Texas at Arlington Library, Arlington, Texas.



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In addition, many people (especially on farms and ranches in more remote locations) considered this inaugural portion of the Interstate Highway System to favor urban areas at the expense of rural areas. Such a perception stemmed from the reliance of the Interstate Highway System upon earlier designations of the Federal Aid Highway System and Principal Routes of Military Importance. Yet much of Texas' population at that time still remained rural; the census reported that 54.6 percent of the state's population lived in rural areas.⁵³⁸ To address these inequities, the Texas Highway Department and state elected officials began planning an ambitious program of farm-to-market road construction concurrent with interstate highway construction that addressed such perceived imbalances. For the farm-to-market road program, Texas allocated \$30 million in state funds from the gasoline tax and vehicle registration fees to cover construction during the first three years after World War II. These monies were to be equally matched by a federal allotment. The Texas Highway Department informed the public that sound construction of the roads was assured with state supervision and federal approval of plans.⁵³⁹ The farm-to-market road selection and funding process was as follows:

- Joint selection of routes to the system by the Texas Highway Department, local officials, and the Public Roads Administration⁵⁴⁰ giving priority to "community importance;"
- Texas Highway Department selects roads for improvement with the approval of the Public Roads Administration;
- Construction details determined jointly by the Texas Highway Department, local officials, and Public Roads Administration.⁵⁴¹

States employed varying mechanisms as to how federal monies were divided between projects. In Texas, funds allocated to the state were converted into mileage and divided amongst the farm-to-market roads on a county-by-county basis. When projects were completed, the mileage was then incorporated into the State Highway System.

On September 19 and 20, 1945, Greer and other Texas Highway Department officials hosted a conference in Austin with Bureau of Public Roads officials to discuss several issues related to the expansion of the State Highway System and Interstate Highway System.⁵⁴² Key discussion points of the conference included:

- Designation of state highways on Texas' Federal Aid Secondary System not on the Federal Aid Primary System, plus an additional 7,200 miles of county roads slated for construction;
- Use of low-water "structures" and culverts on farm-to-market roads not in danger of severe or prolonged flooding;
- Consideration of a highway routed through El Paso not as part of the Interstate Highway System but as a regular federal aid project;

- Postponement of construction and design on proposed sections of the Interstate Highway System in rural areas; and
- Consideration of the fact that construction of proposed urban projects in Fort Worth, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio would exceed the available urban fund allocations already available by \$6 million.

Preparation for postwar construction and maintenance programs—including the regular State Highway System, interstate roads, farm-to-market roads, and urban expressways—received a major boost in 1946 after the 49th Texas Legislature passed a constitutional amendment that proposed a dramatic change to the way the State funded highway construction and maintenance.⁵⁴³ After much debate, the Legislature passed a bill to submit a constitutional amendment for popular vote whereby monies from the key components of the State Highway Fund—gasoline tax, driver’s license fees, vehicle registration fees—would no longer have to be allocated by the Legislature on a year-to-year basis. As such, the legislation made these auto-related revenues less vulnerable for exploitation by politicians for other purposes. All road-user taxes, except for the one-fourth of the gasoline tax for schools, were earmarked for highway building, maintenance, and policing. Further, the amendment gave the Legislature the authority to raise and lower motor vehicle fuel rates and vehicle registration fees without direct voter approval. The law also authorized perpetual use of the funds for roadway construction and for the enforcement of laws to make roads safer. Texans passed what came to be called the “Good Roads Amendment” on November 5, 1946.⁵⁴⁴

Passage of the “Good Roads Amendment” allowed for the Texas Highway Department to spend the \$174 million available at the end of the war (with the federal government and the State of Texas each contributing half). The allotment was divided into three funds: \$50 million on the primary system, \$17 million for expressways, and \$10 million for “future expenditure.”⁵⁴⁵ Postwar plans for highway improvement included implementing roadways with direct alignments, easy grades, proper sight distance, wide right-of-way, safe and sloping shoulders, shallow ditches, and railroad crossing grade separation.⁵⁴⁶ The Landscape Division of the Highway Department published a booklet titled *Illustrated Studies of Controlled Access Highways*. The aim of the publication was to promote various methods of limiting the ability to enter and exit a roadway. This design concept had far-reaching consequences that affected developmental patterns along highways in rural and particularly suburban and urban areas; furthermore, it allowed the highway to accommodate increased traffic volume.⁵⁴⁷ Among the controlled-access features considered were those providing entry to increasingly common roadside business and amenities such as service stations and tourist camps (see *Figure 100*) that took advantage of the

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Figure 100. Images of controlled-access features at a tourist camp from Texas Highway Department's 1946 publication, *Illustrated Studies of Controlled Access Highways*. The concept of the controlled access marked a new era in highway design and construction in Texas. Such ideas and configurations gained widespread popularity and not only enabled traffic to flow more easily, but also affected land use and development patterns along the highways. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

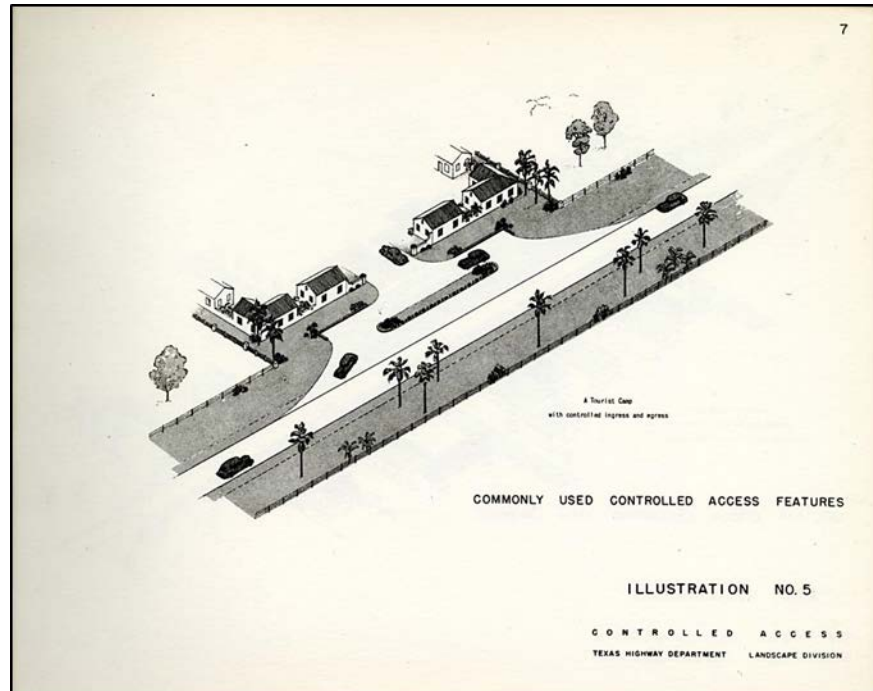


Figure 101. Rendering of the Texas Highway Department's vision for urban expressways, ca. 1945. This image envisions a highly complex system of expressways extending into and out of a major metropolitan area. Created well before the Interstate Highway System of 1956, this rendering reveals how highway designers and planners intended to ease congestion and improve the flow of traffic by controlling access to/from the roadway and creating a more picturesque setting with limited commercial development. Source: Photo No. 45-618, Box 176, Record Group 30, Photograph Collection, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.



high flow of traffic at the strategically placed and limited number of entrance and exit ramps.

In August 1946, State Engineer Greer published an article in *Texas Week* describing the Texas Highway Department's imminent plans. Among them was the announcement of contract lettings for the beginning stages of expressway projects in Dallas, San Antonio, and Houston.⁵⁴⁸ (Figure 101.) Texas continued to make "Road-Building History" during 1946, when the paved mileage in the state increased from 25,088 to 27,150.⁵⁴⁹

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Figure 102. Photograph of the intersection of US 81 and FM 1325 in Williamson County, 1952. The expanding farm-to-market roadway system relied heavily on the existence of primary federal aid highways, such as US 81 (Meridian Highway). These improved highways enabled farmers and ranchers to get their crops and livestock to market on safer and reliable all-weather roads. The network also enabled residents in rural locations a better means of bringing home an increasingly diverse selection of consumer products and goods. This photograph showcases a typical example of many such intersections that supported the state's increasingly complex network of primary and secondary highways in the state from the postwar era. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph129014/citation/?q=farm-to-market> (accessed March 24, 2014), crediting Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, Texas.

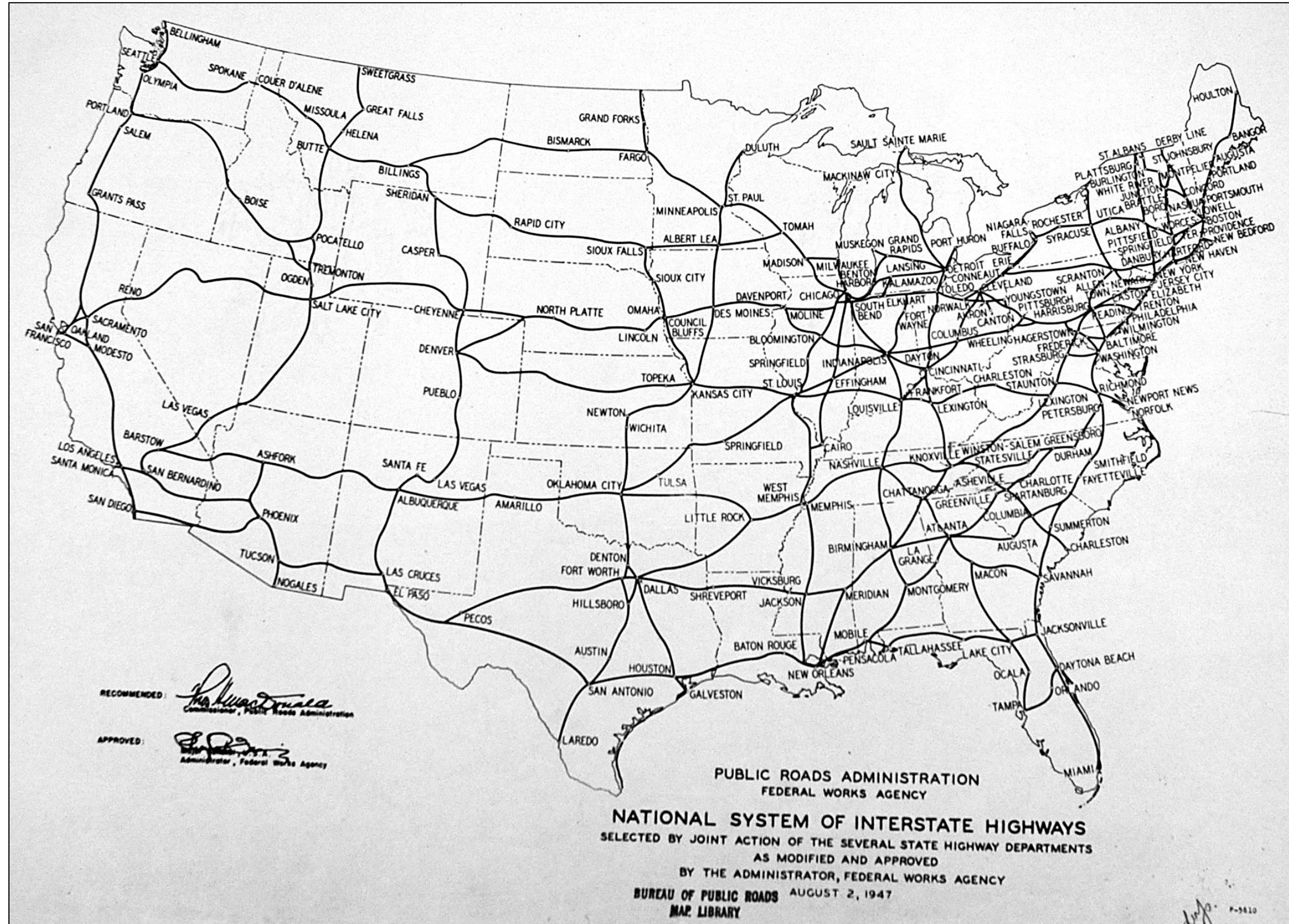


The rapid expansion of the farm-to-market road system in the postwar era complemented the existing highway network and contributed to rising profits and productivity of agricultural yields. These secondary roads also added to the significance of the principal highways as an increasingly important mode of transporting locally produced goods and commodities. These major highways linked major cities and processing centers within Texas and neighboring states, and made new markets available to agriculturalists in the state (*Figure 102*). The growing numbers of trucks and other motorized vehicles in the postwar period further contributed to a transportation system that relied less on fixed rail and the companies that owned them. The farm-to-market roads also afforded new economic development and employment opportunities for the citizens of Texas, especially those in rural areas.

By 1947, in cooperation with the states, much of the nation's Interstate Highway System had been designated and specific highways targeted for improvement and upgrade. (See *Figure 103*.) However, construction on the highways within the system proceeded at a slow pace because Congress did not appropriate funds specifically for new highway construction, even though it made available matching funds for primary and urban highways.⁵⁵⁰ Provisions for the construction of secondary roads, on the other hand, were clear. On June 2, 1947, the Texas Highway Commission approved Minute No. 23476, which allowed the Texas Highway Department to supplement county or local funds for farm-to-market roads meeting certain conditions.⁵⁵¹ As a result, the State Highway System grew. On July 1, 1947, the Texas Highway Department reported 25,734 miles of paved mileage, including county-maintained roads.⁵⁵² The Department had spent \$934,197,811.55 between 1929 and 1947 to increase that amount four-fold since the 6,061 miles of paved highways that the Department reported in 1929 when Department engineers made the first accurate count of paved mileage in the state.⁵⁵³

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Figure 103. National System of Interstate Highways, August 2, 1947. This map notes the highways considered to be among the most significant within the nation. Although the map was prepared shortly after World War II, it largely predicted where the Interstate Highway System of the 1950s would be established. Most of these routes extended along alignments that followed exactly on or ran near the named highways that had existed for several decades. This trend underscores the continued significance and relevance these highways have had on vehicular transportation throughout the nation. Source: Record Group 30, Series 5, Maps of Highway Systems (Interstate and Defense Highways), National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



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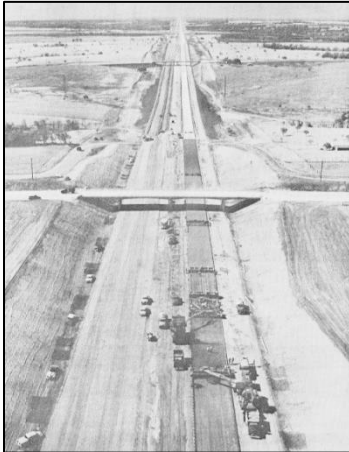


Figure 104. Photograph showing the construction of the Dallas–Fort Worth Turnpike (now IH 30), along new alignment that paralleled the path of US 80 in Tarrant County, 1956. The construction of the expressway along new alignment had the advantage of building the limited-access roadway on less developed and more affordable land. The opening of the new expressway changed the role of the historic route of US 80 between Dallas and Fort Worth to serve local, rather than interstate, traffic. This pattern and configuration became more widespread during the next decade. Source: TexasFreeway.com, http://www.texasfreeway.com/Dallas/historic/photos/images/t_p_dfw_late56_medres.jpg (accessed March 24, 2014), crediting the Texas Department of Transportation archive library and Texas Highways Magazine.

In its final session during September 1947, the Texas Highway Commission appropriated \$2,293,707 for 51 projects, mostly farm-to-market roads.⁵⁵⁴ The Commission also approved designation of the Blue Star Memorial Highway, as requested by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc., and the installation of commemorative markers. The designation was part of a nationwide effort of Garden Clubs to commemorate and pay tribute to military personnel who served the country during World War II. The memorial highway in Texas followed U.S. Highway No. 77 from the Oklahoma state line to Denton, then U.S. Highway No. 377 to Fort Worth, and, finally, U.S. Highway No. 81 (Meridian Highway) to Laredo.⁵⁵⁵ Dealing with matters of highway safety, the Commission also authorized \$48,000 to implement new no-passing measures approved by the American Association of State Highway Officials. The new system called for long, white dashed lines separating traffic lanes. In areas where passing was prohibited, lanes would have solid yellow lines on the driver's side. The first state highways on which the new no-passing zones were tried were on some of the state's most important roadways and included the following segments.

- U.S. Highway No. 67 – Greenville to Dallas
- U.S. Highway No. 75 – Denison to Corsicana
- U.S. Highway No. 77 – Gainesville to Hillsboro
- U.S. Highway No. 80 – Dallas to Wills Point
- U.S. Highway No. 81 – Hillsboro to San Antonio
- U.S. Highway No. 87 – Kendall and Bexar counties
- U.S. Highway No. 90 – Luling to San Antonio

In November, the Texas Highway Department announced tentative plans for a new east-west expressway connecting Dallas and Fort Worth parallel to, but north of, present U.S. Highway No. 80 (*Figure 104*).⁵⁵⁶ The plans would radically transform a stretch of road that, historically, had been part of the Bankhead Highway. This measure, favored by the Department, was to alleviate traffic congestion on U.S. Highway No. 80 near Commerce Street at the Triple Underpass in downtown Dallas. Previously, US 80 followed city streets that directly fronted local businesses, but the new expressway would be a grade-separated, with overpasses at intersections, and limited-access, with entrance and exit ramps only at select cross-streets. The consequence of removing stops at intersections would be that traffic would be diverted away from local businesses. Property owners and the City of Dallas preferred other options such as street widening or a new underpass so that area commercial enterprises would not lose business or properties would not decline in value. (See *Figure 105*.)

As the Texas Highway Department moved forward with its efforts to build expressways in urban areas, the agency's decisions regarding the locations of these improved and more efficient roadways reveal much

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Figure 105. Advertisement opposing the routing of an interstate through downtown Fort Worth, ca. 1946. The idea of an expressway was intended to facilitate the flow of traffic, but the consequences it posed to local businesses was often regarded in very negative terms. This newspaper ad captures the perceived threats such a highway posed to downtown businesses. The reference to an atomic bomb expresses the situation in the most horrific terms possible in the postwar era. While such rhetoric was exaggerated, it indicates the anticipated effects this new highway design would mean to local merchants. Source: 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, Maryland.



about the evolving road network, demographic shifts, and greater diversification of Texas' postwar economy. In addition, they also demonstrated the enduring influence of the named highway from the early period of highway development and how they continued to shape and influence the road network and associated patterns of development. The first highways slated to be developed into four-lane divided expressways were:

- U.S. Highway No. 66 at Shamrock and Amarillo;
- U.S. Highway No. 67 (Bankhead) through Greenville;
- U.S. Highway No. 75 from Denison to Galveston;
- U.S. Highway No. 77 through Gainesville;
- U.S. Highway No. 81 (Meridian) between San Antonio and Fort Worth and between Fort Worth and Cleburne;
- U.S. Highway No. 83 (Del Rio–Canadian) at Abilene;
- U.S. Highway No. 87 at Lubbock; and
- U.S. Highway No. 90 (Old Spanish Trail) between Houston and Beaumont and from Beaumont to Sabine River.

The agency cited several portions of U.S. Highway No. 80—at El Paso, between Midland and Odessa, between Sweetwater and Abilene, and between Abilene and Cisco—as currently under construction or needing expansion.⁵⁵⁷ State highways also received attention. The Texas Highway Department planned improvements for State Highway No. 73

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Figure 106. Photograph captioned, "The new Gulf Freeway through Houston, Texas, July 1949. The parallel side roads serve local traffic movements." Source: Photo no. 49-1926, Box 107, Record Group 30, Photograph Collection, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.



between Houston and Port Arthur and for State Highway No. 183 between Fort Worth and Dallas.⁵⁵⁸ In East Texas, work was to be completed on major roadways in Lufkin, Tyler, Longview, and Kilgore.⁵⁵⁹ In order to facilitate traffic further, the Department planned loops to connect highways converging on major cities at Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and San Antonio.⁵⁶⁰ As the "backbone of the overall modern urban pattern," the urban expressway supported interregional development for Texas cities with "growing industry, a rising population, and an expanded activity in cultural commercial fields."⁵⁶¹ Work on Texas' first freeway began on the stretch of U.S. Highway No. 75 between Houston and Galveston. In December 1948, the name "Gulf Free-Way," submitted by a local bank employee, was selected by the City of Houston as the official name of the new superhighway (Figure 106).⁵⁶²

While so much effort was devoted to urban expressways, many Texans as well as local and state officials did not overlook the necessity of having improved and well-maintained rural roads within the state's highway system. In March 1948, individuals from 11 statewide groups formed the Texas Rural Roads Association to "campaign for a comprehensive farm road program and a tax bill with which to finance it."⁵⁶³ The association represented farmers, laborers, local officials, and schools. Their efforts bore fruit when State Senator Esther Neveille Colson and State Representative Dolph Briscoe co-sponsored and co-authored the Colson-Briscoe Act of 1949 (S.B. 287) under the slogan "Get the farmer out of the mud." Passing almost unanimously in both houses of the Texas Legislature, the bill guaranteed \$15 million annually of permanent funding for new farm-to-market and ranch-to-market

roads.⁵⁶⁴ Under the Act, the Texas Highway Department received monies from the Omnibus Tax Clearance Fund. The Colson–Briscoe Act only covered new farm-to-market road construction but did not provide for the perpetuation or maintenance of farm-to-market roads.⁵⁶⁵ According to the Texas Highway Department, the Colson–Briscoe Act was perhaps the “most dramatic rural highway expansion program in history,” making Texas the only state in the union to have farm-to-market roads as a part of the state’s system of secondary and connecting routes.⁵⁶⁶ In October 1948, the writers at *Texas Parade* magazine remarked that a “complete list of the cities and towns sure sooner or later, to be involved in the highway department’s vast municipal highway program would seem like a transcription for the U.S. postal guide.”⁵⁶⁷

At the federal level, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1948 appropriated \$450 million nationwide in annual highway construction funds for fiscal years 1950 and 1951, which was comparable to the three-year program created following the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944. Under the 1948 Act, Texas received just over \$25.57 million in federal funds for highway projects, a sum slightly smaller than appropriations under the previous highway act (*Table 9*).

*Table 9. Texas Allocation of Federal Funds Apportioned by the Federal Aid Highway Acts of 1944 and 1948.*⁵⁶⁸

Fiscal Year	Primary System	Secondary System	Urban System	Total
1946	\$14,258,270	\$10,043,311	\$4,454,068	\$28,765,649
1947	\$14,263,977	\$10,047,099	\$4,464,068	\$28,775,144
1948	\$14,097,513	\$9,929,186	\$4,406,836	\$28,433,535
1950	\$12,679,694	\$8,930,900	\$3,966,153	\$25,576,747
Total	\$55,299,454	\$38,950,496	\$17,301,125	\$111,551,075

As a new decade dawned, the Texas Highway Department could reflect on a period of remarkable achievement and success. Over a five-year period, the agency had allocated \$270 million in highway projects for construction between August 14, 1945 and January 10, 1950.⁵⁶⁹ During that time span, the Department also let contracts valued at \$22 million in federal aid farm-to-market projects. At the January 10 and 11, 1950 meeting of the Texas Highway Commission, contractors bid on an additional \$4.5 million of work on 300 miles of roadways across the state. To maintain the momentum of road construction for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1950, the federal government allotted almost \$25.6 million to Texas with almost \$12.7 million set aside for the primary system, \$8.9 million for the secondary system and feeder roads, and almost \$4.0 million for urban highways.⁵⁷⁰ According to acting Highway Commissioner W. J. O’Leary, the Department improved 4,309 miles of highway in 1950.⁵⁷¹ This work set the stage for the

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Figure 107. View of downtown San Angelo, ca. 1951. This image captures the congestion that characterized many commercial centers in the state's burgeoning urban centers in the postwar era. Many of the named highways deliberately extended to these densely developed areas. As the volume of traffic and commercial activity increased, downtowns became more crowded and congested, which impeded the flow of traffic and goods. This trend ultimately led highway designers and planners to create new highway alignments that bypassed such busy areas. The construction of expressways, loops, and bypasses enabled through traffic to avoid historic downtowns and changed the character and commercial viability of these centers of activity. Source: Texas Parade, vol. 12, no. 7 (December 1951), Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.



transformation of Texas' highway system in the coming years, when interstate highways would bypass downtowns across the state.

1951–1956

By 1951, Texas boasted approximately 38,000 miles of paved state highway, all of which was built without the need for the Texas Highway Department to issue any bonds.⁵⁷² As part of that effort, in August 1951, the first major section of the Gulf Freeway was dedicated, which marked an important milestone in the development of the expressways in the state. The 50-mile stretch in a populated and rapidly developing area of southeast Houston cost \$28.5 million and had the distinction of becoming Texas' first urban expressway.⁵⁷³ Central Expressway, routed on U.S. Highway No. 75 north of Dallas, was also completed about the same time when Highway Department workers were installing the new speed limit signs.⁵⁷⁴ In other parts of Texas, however, highways continued to travel along city streets through downtowns, and automobile congestion remained a problem. Photographs of San Angelo in 1951, for example, illustrate the type of inner city traffic congestion that showed the growing need to continue with the development of urban expressways in the state's larger cities (*Figure 107*).

Also in 1951, the updated Bond Assumption Act (H.B. No. 285) redistributed the gasoline tax surplus. For the first time, the Act committed a specific amount to farm-to-market roads, stating that a portion of one-fourth of the tax was to go into the State Highway Fund solely for the "construction and improvement" of farm-to-market roads.⁵⁷⁵ This new legislation significantly increased funds for the farm-to-market program. Consequently, the state's goal for farm-to-market road mileage increased to 35,000.⁵⁷⁶ When county judges and commissioners complained at their annual convention in the fall of 1951

that the state's secondary road system was being overshadowed by primary highways, Governor Allan Shivers countered that the state's total investment in farm-to-market roads would be \$244 million by 1953.⁵⁷⁷ While county officials touched upon a long-standing issue regarding the allocation of funds for road construction, the effectiveness of the secondary road system still remained largely dependent on the primary highways that functioned as major arterials that linked major markets within Texas and in other states.

The Texas Highway Department was well aware that major arterials in urban areas and farm-to-market roads in rural areas were interdependent. For the system as a whole to function efficiently, neither could be neglected. The postwar mission of the Texas Highway Department was reinforced by Texas Highway Commission Chairman E. H. Thornton, Jr. in mid-December 1951. At a meeting with various city, county, and chamber of commerce officials in Tyler, Texas, Thornton cited the age of highways and problems with construction, maintenance, and funding among the acute problems of the State Highway System.⁵⁷⁸ Despite the 10-point list of problems that he presented, however, Thornton was optimistic that the state's road system could be great if attention continued to be paid to farm- and ranch-to-market roads, expressways, and primary roads.

This accomplishment came at a time when agencies in other states began assuming responsibility for the publication and distribution of state highway maps to promote tourism and natural resources.⁵⁷⁹ The Texas Highway Department was no exception; the 1951 *Official Travel Map* featured a "photo album" of campfires, cattle, beaches, and missions encouraging Texans to visit attractions in their home state.⁵⁸⁰ At the same time, various auto clubs were encouraging Texans to "See Texas First." This tourism campaign promoted various scenic routes for residents of the state. For example, the Dallas Automobile Club developed a driving tour by spring 1952 that extended through Southeast, South, and Central Texas. The organization suggested that tourists could make the trip by traveling on U.S. Highway No. 75 from Dallas to Galveston (partly on the new Gulf Freeway, which had been part of the Meridian Highway), then continue via State Highway Nos. 6 and 35 to Gregory. (See *Figure 108*.) Drivers were then to take U.S. Highway No. 181 to Corpus Christi, State Highway No. 44 to Robstown, and U.S. Highway No. 77 to Brownsville. From there, the scenic route led from US 281 to McAllen and San Antonio then on U.S. Highway No. 81 (the Meridian Highway) through Austin to Waco, where the traveler picked up U.S. Highway No. 77 for the final leg of the trip back to Dallas.⁵⁸¹

Throughout the 1950s, farm-to-market road construction continued to be partially funded under the Federal Aid Secondary program. Under the program approved in 1952, for example, \$38 million in work on

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Figure 108. Photograph of the Gulf Freeway near League City, 1956. With separate roadways of one-way traffic, wide medians, and controlled access, the Gulf Freeway marked a new chapter in highway design and construction in Texas. It was the first of several such expressways constructed in the mid-1950s, just before President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the pivotal Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. The Gulf Freeway had a profound effect on land-use patterns and development in the Houston area. Source:

*TexasFreeway.com, http://www.texasfreeway.com/houston/historic/photos/images/i45_league_city_july_1956.jpg (accessed March 24, 2014), crediting the Texas Department of Transportation archive library, *Economic Evaluation of the Gulf Freeway*, and the City of Houston.*



farm-to-market roads was completed with \$27 million coming from federal and state matching funds and \$11 million in bond surplus.⁵⁸² The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1952 (Public Law 82-413) authorized \$25 million for interstate highway construction for each of fiscal years 1954 and 1955, with a 50 percent federal share. These funds enabled construction to finally start on the Interstate Highway System in Texas in 1954. A survey of the nation's roads by the Bureau of Public Roads found that a 10-year project to modernize roads—not with new alignments but through widening, modernizing, and repairing existing routes—was needed and would cost over \$101 billion nationwide.⁵⁸³ In 1954, a new highway act (Public Law 83-350) provided for \$175 million (60 percent federal share) to address the immediate needs of state highway construction and maintenance in Texas.

In 1955, the Texas Legislature authorized the first increase (from four cents to five cents per gallon) in the state's gasoline tax since 1929. On a national level, resolution of highway-related funding issues was not so straightforward. During the First Session of the 84th Congress, the House and Senate rejected several proposals for continued Federal Aid highway funding and financing of the Interstate Highway System. At the center of the controversy was the significant increase in federal appropriation for highway construction and concerns as to where the money would come from.⁵⁸⁴

Despite a political log jam in Congress, public demand for accessible and efficient transportation networks persisted. In 1955, the American Automobile Association noted that the rise in vehicular travel was 10 percent higher than the previous year.⁵⁸⁵ Organizations such as the Dallas Automobile Club showed a marked rise in membership and services offered by the mid-1950s as a result of increased motor vehicle and tourist travel.⁵⁸⁶ At this time, many Americans from all income brackets increasingly took family vacations by automobile. The fact that more travelers and vacationers were on the road seeking inexpensive

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Figure 109. Advertisement for a De Soto station wagon in 1956, illustrating the popularity of camping at the time. Source: *Camping in the Old Days*, <http://mredsewingroom.blogspot.com/> (accessed March 24, 2014).



accommodations resulted in a rise in requests for campsites and trailer parks (Figure 109). The primary destinations for these travelers, according to the Dallas Automobile Club travel bureau's manager, were national parks and forests.⁵⁸⁷ State parks were popular destinations as well, although an intense drought in the early 1950s deterred tourists from visiting many of the lakes and rivers in Texas' state parks.⁵⁸⁸

With this public demand, support for an improved highway system continued to mount. As Congress struggled to find a solution to funding such a program, highway planners continued to develop long-range plans that would be ready to implement once Congress reached a compromise. In 1955, the Bureau of Public Roads published *General Location of National System of Interstate Highways*.⁵⁸⁹ The book featured maps of 100 urban areas that showed where interstate mileage would be located. Texas cities included Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. (See Figure 110.) A quick inspection of the map shows how these routes were based on many of the named highways that dated to (and even pre-dated) the founding of the creation of the Texas Highway Department in 1916. Specifically, the new interstate highways closely followed the routes of the Bankhead Highway, Meridian Highway, and Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway, which had functioned as the state's principal roadways for a half century. However, while the older named highways traveled through the centers of cities, the proposed interstate roads often included loops around the cores of these metropolitan centers that would be developed in the 1960s and beyond.

By 1956, Congress finally reached a compromise over funding and passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, which President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed on June 29, 1956. This landmark piece of legislation transformed the nation's highway program and initiated the expenditure of \$25 billion and the construction of 41,000 miles of

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Figure 110. Maps showing proposed Interstate Highway System mileage in Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. Source: *General Location of National System of Interstate Highways, 1956*. Available from <http://www.ajfroggie.com/roads/yellowbook/> (accessed June 10, 2013).

interstate highways throughout the nation for fiscal years 1957 through 1969. The Act also gave the federal government an increasingly important role in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of highways. Furthermore, it provided a funding formula that provided a steady and reliable source of monies for highways. Unlike previous funding efforts, the 1956 Highway Act enabled the federal government to pay 90 percent of the construction cost and the states to pay the remaining 10 percent. Such a state-friendly formula proved to be a boon to state highway departments across the country and resulted in a

dramatic building program that literally and figuratively transformed the nation's landscape and character.

As the Act progressed through Congress toward eventual passage, the Texas Highway Department began to prepare for the far-reaching effects that the Act's passage would bring to Texas. In a letter dictated on May 10, 1956, Chief Engineer Greer informed the Highway Commission that federal appropriations for interstate construction under the Act would amount to \$754 million over the next 13 years. With a requirement of \$83 million in state matching funds, total appropriations for the state amounted to \$837 million. Thus, the passage of the 1956 Highway Act marked a turning point in the history of highway construction in Texas and ultimately relegated many of the historic alignments of the named highways to a lesser role in the transportation of people and goods in the state's highway system.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS ALONG HIGHWAYS

Response to Demographic Patterns

Between 1944 and 1956, the population of Texas grew from 6,876,000 to 8,830,000.⁵⁹⁰ Suburbs were the fastest growing areas in Texas and across the nation. Jobs in the postwar industrial-military economy moved to the suburbs, where the population also relocated in new suburban neighborhoods and subdivisions. For instance, Garland, located just outside of Dallas and close to a North American Aviation plant founded during the war, grew from 2,233 in 1940 to 10,571 in 1950, and would continue to grow to 38,501 in 1960.⁵⁹¹ As described by the National Park Service publication *Historic Residential Suburbs*, suburban growth was "fueled by increased automobile ownership, advances in building technology, and the "Baby Boom." A critical shortage of housing and the availability of low-cost, long-term mortgages, especially favorable to veterans, greatly spurred the trend toward home ownership."⁵⁹² In the postwar era, businesses also increasingly moved to the suburbs, where parking was ample and downtown traffic and associated congestion could be avoided.⁵⁹³ Developers began to plan and construct suburbs at a community level, with schools, community centers, and shopping centers.⁵⁹⁴ As a result, suburbs became more self-sufficient over time, with less necessity to travel back and forth between traditional urban population centers and outlying residential areas. However, the highway network remained an important and vital link between these new suburban areas and central business districts.

Transportation of People and Goods

Motor vehicles continuously increased as a vital mode of transportation for people and goods during the period from 1944 to 1956. In response

to continuing high demand, automobile manufacture remained intensely productive despite the fact that the war efforts diverted materials and labor away from production of many other commercial goods. In Texas, the number of motor vehicles registered in 1944 was 1,573,502; by 1956, that number had climbed to 3,938,402. Once again, trucks accounted for an increasing share of motor vehicles – 20.38 percent by 1956.⁵⁹⁵ This increase may be explained, in part, by the fact that highways took on an increased military significance during World War II as a way to transport troops and materiel. Highways with connections to military installations, ports, and international airports all became strategically important to the U.S. military.⁵⁹⁶ Movement of gasoline for aviation was a military priority for road construction, especially where gasoline could not reach military installations via rail.⁵⁹⁷ In turn, commercial imports and exports took advantage of improved international transportation routes. For example, the availability of air shipping allowed perishable fruits and vegetables to reach far-flung markets. Within Texas, this trend had important implications for the truck crop farmers in the Rio Grande Valley, whose products reached markets via transport along the Meridian Highway and the Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway.⁵⁹⁸ Yet rail lines, which had long provided connectivity to ports and to Latin America, continued to move a significant share of freight. As late as 1950, trucks on highways carried only about 70 percent of the amount of freight that rail lines carried along the same route. (In other words, trucks carried about 40 percent of all freight, while trains carried the other 60 percent).⁵⁹⁹

Although the movement of goods began to take on a wider circumference, the movement of most passenger vehicles along highways was local. (See *Figure 111*.) A 1943 article in the journal *Landscape Architecture* stated that:

“Averaged facts show the radius of local traffic influence increases with the population of the city. Roughly, this range of city influence varies from six to nine miles in the smaller cities of around 24,000 population and runs upward to as much as 25 or 35 miles in metropolitan centers over one million population. Traffic studies have shown that upwards of 80 to more than 90 per cent of the vehicles moving toward these cities on main approach highways are bound to points within the cities themselves. Since more than three-fourths of vehicle traffic is for short trips within the general radius of the population’s influence on cities, only a fraction of the trips being over 50 miles, the urgency of need for improvement in the post-war period to correct critical traffic congestion in and near cities is obvious.”⁶⁰⁰

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Figure 112. Photograph of the Terrace Motor Hotel in Austin, featured in *Architectural Record*, vol. 114, no. 1 (July 1953), page 172. Note the sprawling layout of the building, the surface parking lot, and the integrated carports adjacent to each unit. Source: *Architecture and Planning Library, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.*



highways still were used by tourists. Because the postwar tourism business was so lucrative, many new motels, gas stations, and restaurants continued to be built along older alignments in the postwar era, despite the expectation that they soon would be bypassed by the expressways on new alignment. The tourism-related commercial buildings of this era were situated at the edges of towns, took on more sprawling forms, and provided parking and canopies to accommodate the automobile (*Figure 112*). (Refer to forthcoming Section III.2 for a detailed description of commercial property types.)

The postwar years also saw an increase in the number of race-specific travel guides and the number of cities and types of establishments they listed. In, 1947, the *Green Book* was joined by *Travelguide* which offered African-Americans “Vacation & Recreation Without Humiliation” through its comprehensive listings (see *Figure 113*).⁶⁰² (Refer to the sidebar detailing the *Green Book* in previous Section I.5.) In 1952, the publishers of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* changed the guide’s name to *The Negro Travelers Green Book* in recognition of those African-Americans traveling by means other than the automobile. Nationwide Hotel Association, Inc. (NHA) founded in 1953 to “contribute to the success of those engaged in the business or housing, feeding and servicing transient and permanent guests and assisting in the solution of problems affecting the hotel, motel and tourist home industry” began printing the *Go: Guide to Pleasant Motoring* that was marketed specifically for African American travelers.⁶⁰³ Among the officers of NHA’s Region Six was the owner of Green Acres Courts, a motor court in Dallas.⁶⁰⁴ As a sign of changing times, the *Go: Guide to Pleasant Motoring* did not contain a mention of race in its title and boasted listings where “owners and/or managers have agreed to accept as guests all well-behaved persons regardless of race, creed or color.”⁶⁰⁵ In 1954, the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court case declared that “separate but unequal” laws nationwide were



Figure 113. Cover of the 1952 *Travelguide*. Source: Cotton Seiler, "So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By," *American Quarterly*, vol. 58 (December 2006): 1091-1117, on file at the Texas Historical Commission, History Programs Division, Austin, Texas.

unconstitutional, but segregation endured for many years after and continued to inhibit African Americans and other minorities in Texas and elsewhere.

Between 1949 and 1956, cities along the historic Bankhead Highway route discussed within the *Green Book*, *Travelguide*, and *Go: Guide* included Abilene, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Midland, Odessa, and Texarkana. *Travelguide* listed Mineral Wells as a point of interest despite the fact that the city did not offer any highway lodging, dining, gas, or other services for black travelers.⁶⁰⁶ While all three guides included lodging and eating accommodations, drug stores, barber shops, and beauty parlors, *Travelguide* also specifically listed professional (i.e. doctors and lawyers) offices and professional organizations. The increased availability of Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. facilities, particularly in larger cities, and their use for travel lodging is indicative of their listing under the Dallas and Fort Worth entries. The guides' publishers recognized the expanded needs of African-American travelers with the inclusion of businesses such as South Side Service Station in Fort Worth, Buster and Bates Service Station and Johnnie's Taxi Cabs in Midland, and a Gulf service station in Texarkana.⁶⁰⁷

Land Development along Highways

During World War II, limited access to labor and construction materials severely curtailed any sustained development along highways, and this trend stemmed from the nation's all-out effort to support the military, its installations, and related industrial operations. Although these military-related facilities often abutted the highway, they typically were on large parcels of land, with buildings set back from the highway and access restricted to authorized personnel. After the conclusion of the war, pent-up demand generated a boom in construction of housing and commercial development. The bulk of this development occurred in the suburbs. Street layouts in new subdivisions typically followed the pattern of the postwar curvilinear suburb, with limited points of access from the highway, few arterial streets, curving secondary streets, and cul-de-sacs.⁶⁰⁸

Urban redevelopment attempted to retain residents and businesses within downtowns despite the pull of the suburbs. Parking structures and surface parking lots began to emerge in downtowns, as illustrated on fire insurance maps published by the Sanborn Map Company.⁶⁰⁹ However, as the construction of expressways bisected existing urban neighborhoods and limited access to downtown businesses with grade-separation structures, these efforts were not sufficient to curb the tide of suburban growth.⁶¹⁰ (See *Figure 114*.)

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Figure 114. Photograph of grade separation structure at US 81 and Allen Avenue in Tarrant County, 1951. The construction of this new facility changed the physical character, aesthetic quality, and even circular patterns in this interwar (1918 – 1941) neighborhood on the south side of Fort Worth. The grade separation structure improved traffic flow but disrupted many of the cohesive qualities of this residential area. Source: Box 62, Prints: Highway Transport, 1900–1953, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



Urban Planning in the Automobile Era

The construction of expressways in the postwar era drew a philosophical division within the planning profession. On the one hand, planners argued that the construction of expressways could alleviate blighted conditions within cities (see *Figure 115*). The Texas Highway Department typically advocated such an approach, as noted in a 1948 article in *Texas Highways*. The author of this Highway Department periodical pointed out that, “[e]xpressways are routed through slum areas or undeveloped sections of cities whenever possible, because right-of-way costs are less.” Furthermore, the article argued that the redevelopment of properties along the new highway right-of-way would increase tax revenue and compensate for the cost of acquiring right-of-way.⁶¹¹

However others, including city and urban planners, community activists, and downtown business alliances, took a contrary view of this practice and argued that construction of expressways tore apart neighborhoods and hurt local businesses.⁶¹² Demolition of housing for highway construction was especially controversial after World War II because of the housing shortages faced by returning veterans. In El Paso, for example, where construction of federal aid road projects threatened demolition of homes along Davis and other streets, a veterans committee wrote to President Truman and to the Public Roads

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Figure 115. Photographs showing road conditions before Central Boulevard was built (above right) and after (below right), Dallas, Dallas County, no date. Source: Photograph No. 50-2442, Box 211, Prints: Highway Transport, 1900–1953, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.



Administration to protest such a highway project.⁶¹³ In response, the Public Roads Administration wrote:

“Highway construction throughout the nation was deferred for the several war years, but traffic congestion and the economic needs of the cities now make it desirable to begin such construction as expeditiously as possible. It is expected that where the construction of highways might cause the demolition of existing home units every effort will be made to schedule the

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Figure 116. Photograph of a roadside park along US 80 (formerly the Bankhead Highway) in the vicinity of Palo Pinto, Palo Pinto County. Note the brick and metal construction materials. Photo by HHM.



work so that no hardship will be experienced by residents along the right-of-way.”⁶¹⁴

Roadside Landscape

The trend toward attempting to regulate the aesthetic and visual qualities of roadside development that had begun years earlier continued into the period from 1944 to 1956. Across the nation, highway departments acquired wider right-of-ways, in some instances even acquiring scenic easements beyond the right-of-way.⁶¹⁵ Local governments also continued to regulate billboards and the aesthetics of roadside development.⁶¹⁶ Within the right-of-way, the Texas Highway Department embarked on an ambitious program of constructing roadside parks and scenic turnouts. (Refer to *Appendix A – Physical Evolution* for a detailed discussion.) This increase necessitated the use of more man-made materials such as metal and brick, based on the belief that they would be less expensive to construct and maintain than local materials like wood and stone that had been used earlier (*Figure 116*).⁶¹⁷

⁵²⁵ *History of Texas Roads and the Texas Highway Department*, p. 26.

⁵²⁶ Allen, p. 1.

⁵²⁷ Quoted in Richard F. Weingroff, “The Genie in the Bottle: The Interstate System and Urban Problems, 1939–1957,” *Public Roads* vol. 64 no. 2 (Sept./Oct. 2000), <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/00septoct/urban.cfm> (accessed March 20, 2014).

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⁵²⁸ Letter from Thomas MacDonald to Wright Putman, January 26, 1949, Box No. 2985-86, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁵²⁹ Texas Highway Department, “The Great Challenge,” p. 7.

⁵³⁰ Allen, p. 3.

⁵³¹ Texas State Library and Archives Commission, “From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways.”

⁵³² Allen, p. 3.

⁵³³ “The Great Challenge,” p. 16.

⁵³⁴ Letter from Thomas H. MacDonald to Fritz Lanham, June 6, 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.

⁵³⁵ Letter from J. A. Elliott to Dewitt C. Greer, March 6, 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.

⁵³⁶ Letter from Dewitt C. Greer to J. A. Elliott, March 3, 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.

⁵³⁷ Letter from Thomas H. MacDonald to Omar Bursleson, April 22, 1947, 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, MD.

⁵³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/urpop0090.txt> (accessed March 20, 2014).

⁵³⁹ “Farm-to-Market Roads,” *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, May 31, 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.

⁵⁴⁰ In 1939, the Bureau of Public Roads was renamed Public Roads Administration and remained a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The office was later shifted to the Federal Works Agency. In 1949, the Public Roads Administration’s name reverted to Bureau of Public Roads and was transferred to the Department of Commerce. The duties of the Bureau of Public Roads were transferred to the Federal Highway Administration in 1967.

⁵⁴¹ Letter from Thomas H. MacDonald to Paul J. Kilday, August 9, 1948, Box No. 2986-87, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁵⁴² J. A. Elliot, “Memorandum of Conference in Austin September 19 and 20, with Mr. Greer and the Head of his Departments,” September 27, 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.

⁵⁴³ Whisenhunt, p. 267.

⁵⁴⁴ Robert M. Hayes, “Good Roads Amendment Called Remedy for Diversion of Funds,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 27, 1946: 18, “Highways - Texas,” Folder no. 1, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas; Robert M. Hayes, “Rural Homes, Good Roads Key to Sound Economy,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 28, 1946, “Highways - Texas,” Folder no. 1, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas; Richard M. Moorehead, “The First 35 Years,” *Texas Parade*, volume 12, no. 7 (December 1951): 26.

⁵⁴⁵ “Texas Tops Nation in Farm-Market Roads,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 7, 1947, “Highways - Texas,” Folder no. 3, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

⁵⁴⁶ *History of Texas Roads and the Texas Highway Department*, pp. 25–26.

⁵⁴⁷ Landscape Division, Texas Highway Department, *Illustrated Studies of Controlled Access Highways*, no. 12, April 1, 1946.

⁵⁴⁸ Dewitt C. Greer, “Texas Highway Program, Stalled by War, Gets Going,” *Texas Week*, August 31, 1946: 29, “Highways - Texas,” Folder no. 2, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

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⁵⁴⁹ "Texas Makes Road-Building History in 1947."

⁵⁵⁰ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, "Interstate Construction."

⁵⁵¹ Letter from unknown author to Eugene Worley, October 14, 1947, 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, MD.

⁵⁵² "Texas Paving Quadrupled in 18 Years," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 20, 1947, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 3, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁴ "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.

⁵⁵⁵ "Highway Commission Designates Fifty-One Roads;" Ann Edens, "Blue Star Highway Given Added Beauty," *San Antonio Light*, January 16, 1955, "Roads," *Clipping File*, DRT Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, TX.

⁵⁵⁶ Leonard, Kimsey, "State is Planning New Expressway," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 20, 1947, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 3, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁵⁷ "Design for Traffic," *Texas Parade* vol. 9 no. 5 (Oct. 1948): 28–29.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁶² "'Gulf Free-Way' Chosen as Road's Name," *Dallas Morning News*, December 18, 1948, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 3, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁶³ Ray Osborne, "Concerted Drive on for Farm Road Plan," *Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1948: section 5, page 12, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 3, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁶⁴ "Farm Roads U.S. Finest," *San Antonio Light*, January 19, 1966, 5-A, "Highways" Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, TX. The law, an amendment to Article of House Bill No. 8, Chapter 184 (47th Legislature), provided for \$1,250,000 per month for the construction of farm-to-market roads beginning September 1, 1949. S.B. 287 attached to Administrative Order No. 17-57, Dewitt C. Greer, State Highway Engineer, to District Engineers, July 19, 1957, Box 65, Folder 44 – "Farm-to-Market Roads," Marshal Formby Collection, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX; Letter from Dewitt C. Greer to Thomas H. MacDonald, March 29, 1949, Box No. 2985-86, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁵⁶⁵ Texas Highway Commission, "The Texas Farm to Market Road Program," pp. 7, 8.

⁵⁶⁶ Texas Highway Department, "The Great Challenge: Texas Highway Needs," 1966, 6; "Farm Roads U.S. Finest."

⁵⁶⁷ "Design for Traffic," p. 30.

⁵⁶⁸ Letter from Thomas H. MacDonald to Wright Putman, January 26, 1949, Box No. 2985-86, Bureau of Public Roads Classified Central File, 1912–50, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁵⁶⁹ "Texas Leads All States in Road Work," *Dallas Morning News*, January 11, 1950, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 3, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁷⁰ Leslie Carpenter, "Uncle Sam Prodding Texas to Speed Up Highway Building," *Daily Times Herald* (Dallas), November 10, 1949: 8-1, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 3, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁷¹ Richard M. Morehead, "Bankhead's Broadway Through Texas," *Texas Parade* Vol. 14 (Number 4): 27.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵⁷³ After a dedication ceremony on September 30, 1948, a small portion of the "Interurban Expressway" was opened to traffic.

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⁵⁷⁴ "Speed 'Minimum' On Dallas Road," *San Antonio Express*, August 23, 1951: 11, <http://newspaperarchive.com/> (accessed June 10, 2013).

⁵⁷⁵ H. B. No. 285 was approved on June 8, 1951 and became effective on September 1, 1951. "H. B. No. 285 – 52nd Regular Session, Bond Assumption Act," Box 65, Folder 44 – "Farm-to-Market Roads," Marshal Formby Collection, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; Texas Highway Commission, "The Texas Farm to Market Road Program," p. 1.

⁵⁷⁶ Texas Highway Commission, "The Texas Farm to Market Road Program," p. 2.

⁵⁷⁷ Morehead, p. 27.

⁵⁷⁸ "Texas Highway Commission Chief Says State Losing Road System," *Dallas Times Herald*, December 14, 1951, "Highways - Texas," Folder no. 4, *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁷⁹ James R. Akerman, "American Promotional Road Mapping in the Twentieth Century," *Cartography and Geographic Information Services* volume 29, no. 3 (2002): 187, available from Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin-Madison, <http://www.geography.wisc.edu/histcart/v6initiative/06akerman.pdf> (accessed April 10, 2013).

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ "AAA Club Lists Coastal Route for Motorists," *Dallas Times Herald*, April 27, 1952, "Clubs and Organizations – Dallas Automobile Club," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁸² The 1952 Federal Aid Secondary Program also funded \$22 million to work on state highways. Memorandum from D. C. Greer to The Commission, July 14, 1954, Box 65, Folder 44 – "Farm-to-Market Roads," Marshal Formby Collection, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

⁵⁸³ Allen, p. 3.

⁵⁸⁴ Allen, p. 7.

⁵⁸⁵ Shirley Ing, "Boom in Auto Travel Reflected in Dallas," *Dallas Times Herald*, August 7, 1955, section 8, page 6, "Clubs and Organizations – Dallas Automobile Club," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas.

⁵⁸⁶ "Growth of Travel Industry Shown by Dallas Auto Club," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 6, 1955, "Clubs and Organizations – Dallas Automobile Club," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁵⁸⁷ Ing, "Boom in Auto Travel."

⁵⁸⁸ Texas State Library and Archives Commission, "To Love the Beautiful: The Story of Texas State Parks," <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/parks/1950s/page1.html> (accessed March 20, 2014).

⁵⁸⁹ The publication was known as the "Yellow Book" due to the color of its cover. Weingroff, p. 9.

⁵⁹⁰ "United States and Texas Populations: 1850–2012," *Texas State Library and Archives Commission*, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/census.html> (accessed May 4, 2013).

⁵⁹¹ "Texas Almanac: City Population History from 1850 to 2000," <http://www.texasalmanac.com/sites/default/files/images/CityPopHist%20web.pdf> (accessed April 30, 2013).

⁵⁹² Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClellan, *Historic Residential Suburbs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002) <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/> (accessed May, 2013).

⁵⁹³ "Design for Traffic," 24.

⁵⁹⁴ Ames, et al.

⁵⁹⁵ "Highway Statistics Summary to 1995," *Federal Highway Administration*, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/summary95/section2.html> (accessed May 14, 2013).

⁵⁹⁶ Maverick, Maury, "Plans for super-highway and national airport system," *Architect and engineer* 158 (Aug 1944): pp. 25–27.

⁵⁹⁷ Box 2990-91 – Corresp. FAS (Federal Aid) TX, 1945, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁵⁹⁸ Maverick, pp. 25–27.

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⁵⁹⁹ Sutermeister, Oscar, "Comparison of Rail and Highway Freight Movements," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* (Spring 1951): 95.

⁶⁰⁰ Simonson, Wilbur H., "Post advanced designs for postwar highway needs," *Landscape architecture* 33 (Jul 1943): 130–131.

⁶⁰¹ Rhodes, Jack, "BUSING INDUSTRY," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/erb01> (accessed May 05, 2013), published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁶⁰² Cotton Seiler, "'So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By': African-American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism," *Hit the Road Jack: Essays on the Culture of the American Road*, edited by Gordon E. Slethaug and Stacilee Ford (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2012), 90.

⁶⁰³ *GO: Guide to Pleasant Motoring* (Washington, D.C.: Nationwide Hotel Association, Inc., 1955), 4.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁰⁵ *GO: Guide to Pleasant Motoring* (1957), 1.

⁶⁰⁶ *Travelguide* (1949), 78; 1952, 86.

⁶⁰⁷ *Green Book* (1949), 68, 69, 70; *Green Book* (1951), 66, 67.

⁶⁰⁸ Ames, et al.

⁶⁰⁹ Simonson, pp. 130–131.

⁶¹⁰ Photograph No. 51-4652, "Grade Separations, Texas, Tarrant County," December 26, 1951; Box 62, Prints: Highway Transport, 1900–1953, Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁶¹¹ "Design for Traffic," 24–27.

⁶¹² Box 2989-90 – Corresp. FAS (Federal Aid) TX, 1947 & 1948, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁶¹³ Jacobo, Joseph I., *Joseph I. Jacobo to President Harry S. Truman, December 8, 1946*, Letter, Box 2988-89 – Corresp. FAS (Federal Aid) TX, 1946 & 1947, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁶¹⁴ Hilts, H. E., *Letter from H.E. Hilts to the Honorable Thomas H. Macdonald, December 4, 1946*, Letter, Box 2988-89 – Corresp. FAS (Federal Aid) TX, 1946 & 1947, Record Group 30, Office of Public Roads. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁶¹⁵ Simonson, pp. 130–131.

⁶¹⁶ Granger, Susan, Scott Kelly, and Kay Grossman, *Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways*, prepared for the Minnesota Department of Transportation, 1998, p. 3.18.

⁶¹⁷ Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., *Preliminary Guidelines for Assessing NRHP Eligibility for Roadside Parks*, Submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation, Environmental Affairs Division, 2005.

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I.7. EFFECTS OF THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1957–1980

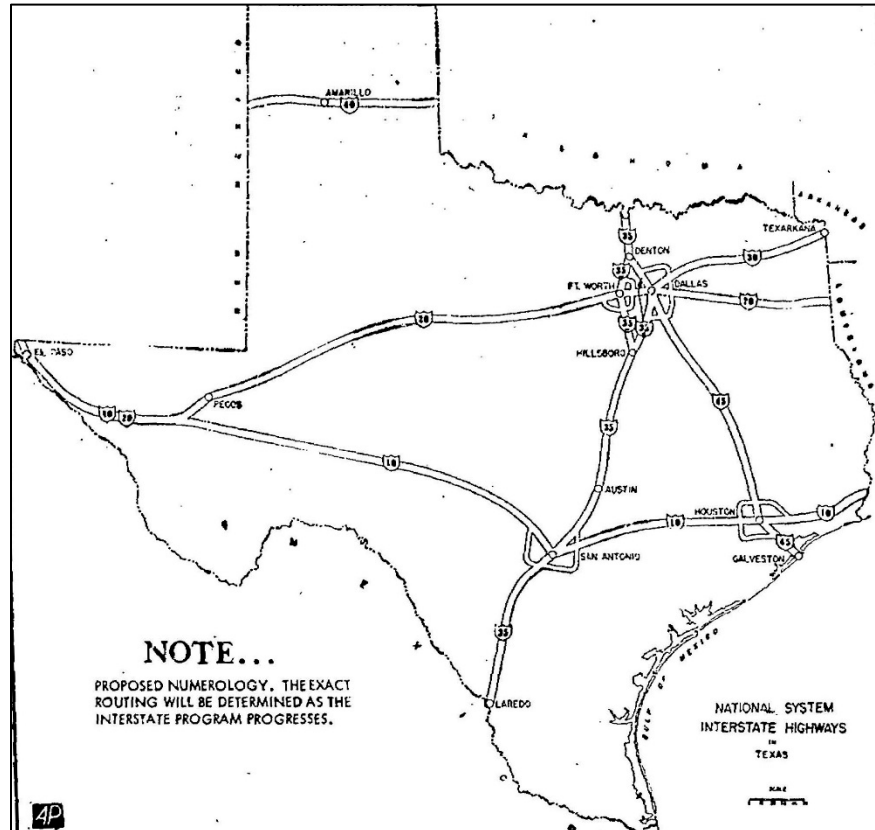
STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1950s, many of Texas' historic named highways continued to be developed into early freeways and expressways and ultimately were absorbed into or replaced by the new Interstate Highway System President Eisenhower established in 1956. The development of this program, however, initiated a conflict between the primary highway system and the precedence of the interstate system over the state's named highways. The 1950s saw significant changes to the state highway network and the effects of the interstate system to the character of the named highways. Within the span of the decade, routes such as US 80, US 81, and US 90 rapidly expanded along previously completed interregional highways segments to become extensive stretches of unimpeded and controlled-access interstate highways. While improvements in the highway system eased traffic congestion and helped to stimulate the economy of the nation, state, and local communities, these innovations came at a price. For example, the interstate highways diverted much traffic away from the historic roadways, which had a devastating effect on the owners of many small businesses on once-popular named highways. Many of the buildings that once housed businesses that catered to tourists and the traveling public began to be used for new commercial operations geared to locale clientele. In addition, the trend of interstate highways to draw people, business, and traffic out of urban areas led to increased suburban development, more decentralized shopping patterns, and urban sprawl. Interstate construction also often accompanied urban renewal efforts that razed and redeveloped "blighted" urban areas, amplifying the trend toward urban decentralization. This trend also spurred passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which encouraged preservation of historic properties and archeological sites and placed new regulations requiring the federal government and state highway departments to consider the effects of their projects. By 1970, statistics showed that while the Interstate Highway System comprised only slightly more than one percent of national road and street mileage, it carried more than 20 percent of all traffic.⁶¹⁸

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Figure 117. Proposed routes and numbers for the National System of Interstate Highways in Texas, 1957. This map confirms the continued influence of the named highways over time. Among the longest and most significant sections of the newly proposed interstate highways in Texas followed the alignments of the three highways (SH 1/Bankhead, SH 2/Meridian, and SH 3/Old Spanish Train/Southern National Highway) that the Texas Highway Department established in 1917. Back then, these were deemed to be the most important routes, and their continuing significance and relevance in the highway system was confirmed by the proposed new designations. Source: *Big Spring Herald*, September 17, 1957, <http://www.newspaperarchive.com>



1957–1960

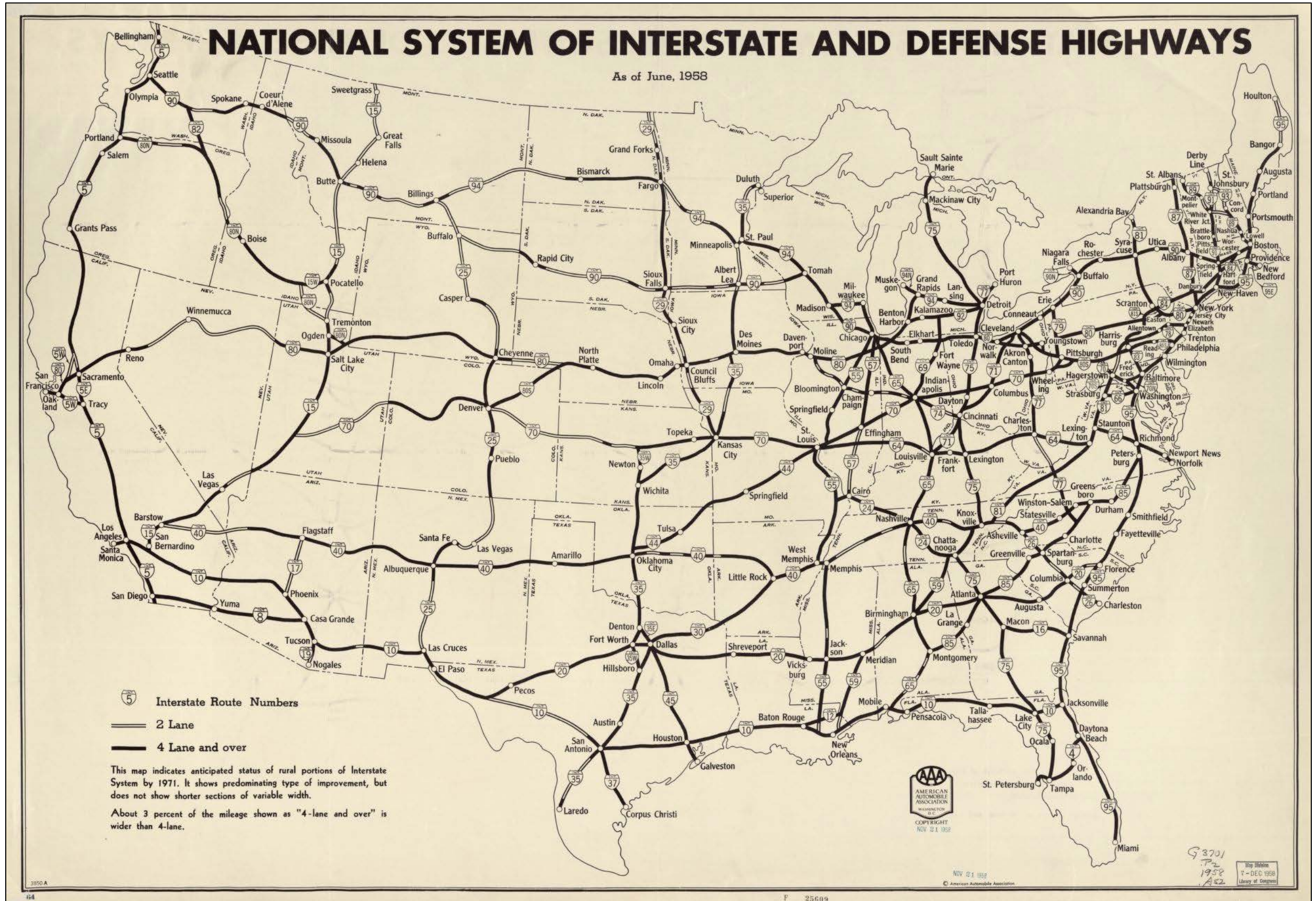
By 1957, segments of five of the proposed interstate highways through Texas were planned to parallel or follow exactly the historic alignments of several of the state’s named highways, including the following (see *Figure 117*):

- IH 10 – US 80 (Bankhead Highway) from El Paso to Reeves County; US 90 (Old Spanish Trail) from San Antonio to Houston and from Beaumont to Orange
- IH 20 – US 80 (Bankhead Highway) from El Paso to Dallas
- IH 30 – US 67 (Bankhead Highway) from Texarkana to Dallas
- IH 35 – US 81 (Meridian Highway) from Hillsboro to Laredo
- IH 35W – US 81 (Meridian Highway) from Hillsboro to Fort Worth⁶¹⁹

Other segments of the above-named interstates as well as IH 35E (King of Trails), IH 37 (Puget Sound to Gulf), IH 40 (Route 66), and IH 45 (Exall Highway) were to parallel or follow other major U.S. or state highways. (See *Figure 118*.) The old Bankhead and Meridian highways, the

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Figure 118. Map of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways as of June 1958, published by the American Automobile Association (AAA). Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, <http://www.loc.gov/item/2011593044/> (accessed March 27, 2014).



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Figure 119. Example of the new, uniform markers developed for the Interstate Highway System. The design of the new interstate highway sign introduced a new but soon-to-be familiar feature of the American roadside landscape. Unlike the U.S. highway signs that were black and white, new interstate signage used red, white, and blue. A white border outlined the distinctive shape and divided the top/crown from the main body. The crown had a red fill with the word “INTERSTATE” in white letters. The main body of the shield was blue and identified the state and interstate highway number, again in white. Although this image is from the Texas Department of Transportation, this highway designation was not adopted or used in Texas and is only an illustration of what was being considered during the initial development of the Interstate Highway System in Texas. Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

state’s primary east-west and north-south through highways, respectively, featured prominently in the interstate system. At the time, US 90 was the major route between El Paso and San Antonio; highway planners hoped that the more northerly IH 10 would divert the traffic from that route.⁶²⁰ Construction on and improvement of these routes commenced even though they had not yet been officially designated by the federal or state governments as interstate highways. No interstate highways, or portions of interstate highways, were routed along the other named highways (Del Rio–Canadian Highway, East Texas Highway, or North Texas Highway) that are featured in this study.

As many of Texas’ U.S. and state highways were gradually absorbed into the new Interstate Highway System, farm-to-market road development progressed at a more rapid pace. By July 1957, the farm-to-market road system contained 30,019.64 designated miles.⁶²¹ An editorial in the *Houston Chronicle* criticized the Texas Highway Department’s emphasis on farm-to-market road development that underscored the simmering and long-standing differences over the priorities of when and where to improve the state’s highways. The article argued that the primary road and urban road networks suffered and that the “amount spent on farm-to-market roads is ridiculously out of proportion...” and that “the imbalance [of vehicle use and monies spent] become preposterous.”⁶²² The article noted that in fiscal year 1955, the Texas Highway Department spent \$50 million constructing farm-to-market roads, keeping pace with a current rate of 2,000 new roads per year. The agency also spent \$12 million to repair those roads. On the other hand, the Department spent \$174 million on all highway construction and \$35 million on maintaining highways, hence the noted “imbalance.” Since funds appropriated through the Colson–Briscoe Act only covered farm-to-market road construction, the maintenance costs were covered by funds that, according to the editorial, would otherwise be spent on the primary highway system. The author expressed the frustration of many Texans over the agency’s trend to commence building urban expressways and allowing them to languish when funds for their construction could come from the amount of funds spent building and maintaining farm-to-market roads.

On August 15, 1957, the AASHO adopted official route numbering for the Interstate Highway System (*Figure 119*).⁶²³ As planning for the new interstate highways system continued, some of the previously funded controlled-access highways or expressways began to be completed and supplemented existing highways. For example, the new the Dallas–Fort Worth Turnpike opened to traffic on August 27, 1957, soon after passage of the “National System of Interstate Highways” bill and enactment of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. The turnpike provided an alternative to the heavily used and frequently congested US 80 between the two cities.⁶²⁴ Whereas other expressways in Texas were

built by the Texas Highway Department entirely with public monies, the turnpike was a private endeavor funded by the Texas Turnpike Authority. The Texas Legislature authorized the Authority's creation in 1953 to construct and oversee the project. The tollway served as the Dallas-to-Fort Worth segment of IH 20 until a more southerly route of that interstate highway opened in 1964.⁶²⁵ It subsequently was incorporated into IH 30 in 1977 and taken over by the state after the bonds sold to fund its construction were paid off, in compliance with the legislation that created the Turnpike Authority.⁶²⁶ Though this effort was indeed successful, it was not the model that the Texas Highway Department ultimately adopted for the subsequent planning, construction, and maintenance of the state's interstate highway program.

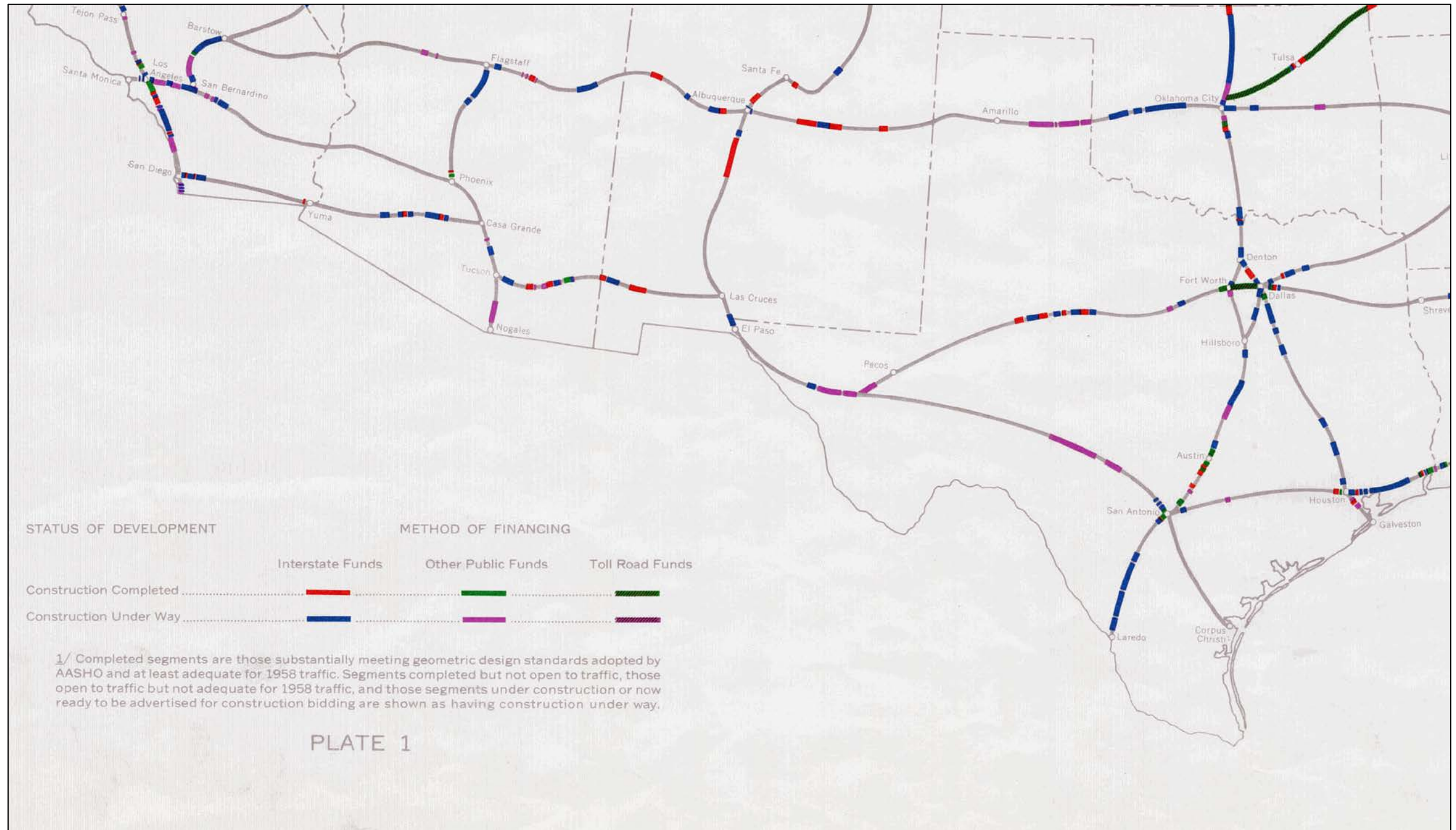
In October 1957, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce announced a "second helping" of 2,102 interstate miles to be distributed among the states. Of the 41,000 miles originally called for by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, 1,000 remained undesignated and 1,102 miles had become available when other routes were shortened. Texas received about seven percent of this additional mileage – 143 miles between Corpus Christi and San Antonio that became IH 37.⁶²⁷ (See *Figure 120*.) While the federal government did not give a specific reason for its choice of the Texas addition, the fact that military and naval bases were located in the two cities would have played a major role in the selection, since national defense needs were the federal government's top determining factor for interstate highway placement. These factors remained consistent with federal and state governments' highway selection and funding practices for defense needs that were implemented during the World War II era. This highway generally followed the alignment of the southeast terminus segment of the Puget Sound to Gulf Highway, yet another one of the early named highways dating to the creation of the Texas Highway Department in 1917.

In July 1958, one of the first sections of IH 20 was nearing completion, subsuming US 80 (Bankhead Highway/SH 1). The new interstate highway occupied a 17-mile stretch from Colorado City to the Mitchell–Howard county line. The progress on this portion of the highway was attributed to the hard work of Texas Highway Department District 8 Engineer Jake Roberts. The District—covering 13 counties—was to contain 158.9 miles of the new interstate to be built at a cost of \$44,644,000. The 1958 article of Texas Good Roads Association publication entitled *Texas Parade* that highlighted the District 8 interstate work described it as the "Broadway of West Texas," harkening back to the days when a large segment of US 80 was called the "Broadway of America." The article also noted that, two years into the interstate program, more than half of the interstate miles in the state of Texas were complete.⁶²⁸

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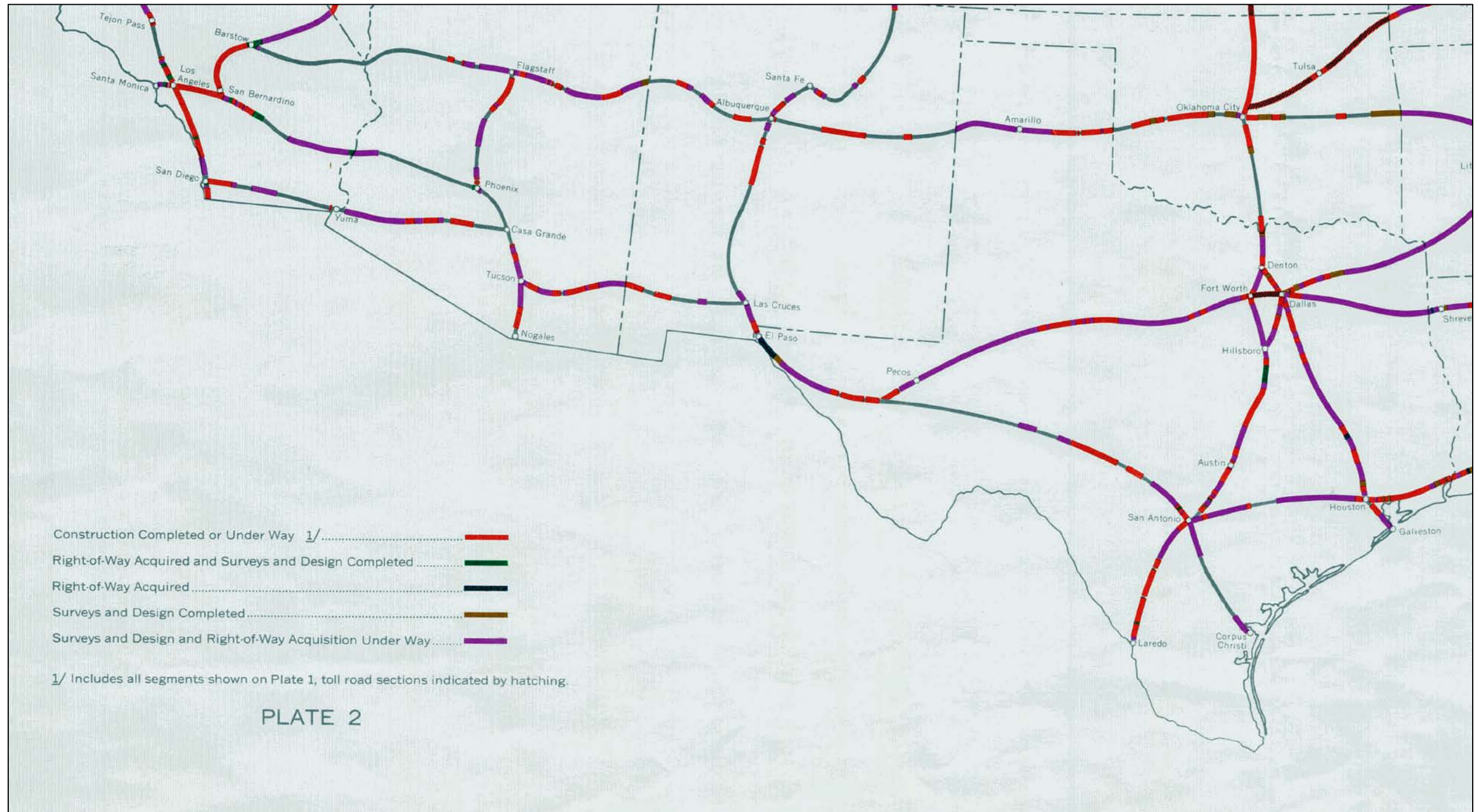
Figure 121. Detail of map entitled "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways: Segments of the System with Construction Completed or Under Way," December 31, 1958. Source: Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, Prints: Highway Transport, Box 366, NARA.



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Figure 122. Detail of map entitled "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways: Segments of the System with Construction Completed or Under Way and Status of Preparation for Future Construction and Other Segments," December 31, 1958. Source: Record Group 30, Bureau of Public Roads, Prints: Highway Transport, Box 366, NARA.



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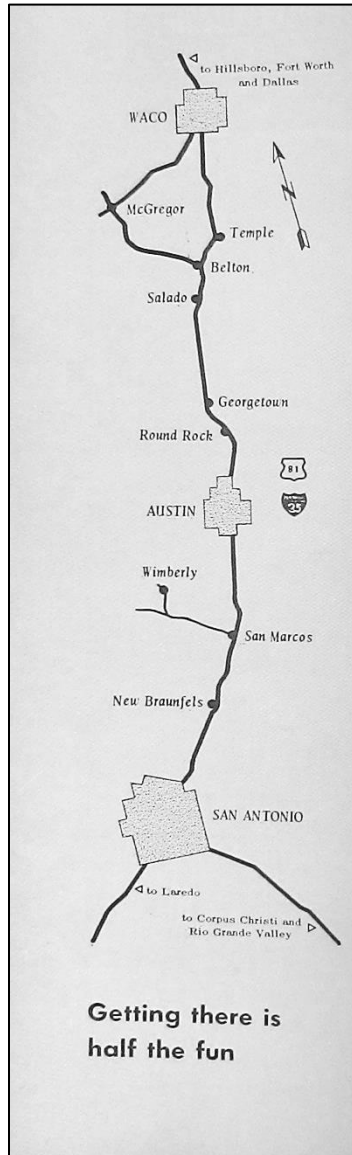


Figure 123. Map advertising the newly completed portion of IH 35 between Waco and San Antonio, featured in *Texas Parade*, vol. 19, no. 12 (May 1959). Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Communications Division, Media Production, Photo Library, Austin, Texas.

Maps dated to December 1958 depict the construction status of the Interstate Highway System and elucidate the manner in which the federal and state governments prioritized, funded, and built those early segments of the system. (See afore mentioned *Figures 121 and 122.*) Much of the interstate mileage on three of the oldest and most important named highways (Bankhead, Meridian, and Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway) was completed, under construction, or was being surveyed, designed, and acquired. Segments either completed or under construction included IH 10 between Beaumont and Orange, the aforementioned section of IH 20 from Colorado City to the Mitchell–Howard county line, and IH 20 from Toyah to Van Horn. Most of IH 35 from Hillsboro to Laredo was complete or in progress because of previous efforts under the interregional highway system. The Waco–San Antonio stretch of the new interstate—dubbed a “major funnel between North and South Texas”—was featured in the May 1959 issue of *Texas Parade* (*Figure 123*).⁶²⁹ IH 35 through San Antonio was called the Pan-American Expressway because it lay along the United States’ unofficial route of the Pan-American Highway. The improvement of the various segments of named highways into interstate highways was funded through a combination of federal and state interstate funds and other public monies, and toll road funds.⁶³⁰

The Texas Good Roads Association continued its mission to promote the state’s highways and keep the public informed about its status and importance. In 1959, the group published the *Texas Highway Fact Book*. The volume noted that, at that time, Texas contained 59,711.92 miles of roads (27,958.42 on state and U.S. highways, 31,753.50 on farm-to-market roads).⁶³¹ The book also outlined the Texas Highway Department’s goals to continue to overcome the deficit in road construction from the World War II years and to provide high-volume facilities for heavily concentrated traffic.⁶³² The Association also provided the source and breakdown for every dollar received for highway funding – gasoline tax (37.15¢), federal aid (35.46¢), auto license fees (20.95¢), county aid (0.20¢), and miscellaneous (6.24¢). In addition, the group analyzed every dollar spent on Texas highways – construction (76.77¢), maintenance (15.60¢), miscellaneous (6.58¢), and administration (0.78¢).⁶³³

The Bureau of Public Roads, the federal agency still in charge of highways (until the passage of the Transportation Act of 1966 created the Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]), officially approved Texas’ interstate mileage on October 1, 1959. The Texas Highway Commission acknowledged the approval with designation of the routes in an administrative circular two weeks later.⁶³⁴ In addition to the nine primary interstate routes previously proposed, the federal and state governments also approved four interstate loops (410, 610, 635, and 820) and two interstate spurs (110 and 345).⁶³⁵

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Figure 124. Photograph of a new tourism bureau along the Interstate Highway System, no location, published in the National Highway Week in Texas Publicity Portfolio, May 21–27, 1961. Source: Box 11, Folder 9, Texas Good Road Association Papers, Cushing Library, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.



1961–1965

In August 1961, the Bureau of Public Roads reported that over two-thirds of the 10,800-mile Interstate Highway System was completed or under construction, an impressive achievement given the scale and relatively short period of time.⁶³⁶ Of the 3,023 miles within the system at that time, 905.9 miles (almost 30 percent) were located in Texas – more mileage than any other state. Of the interstate mileage in Texas, 292.9 miles were under construction with 1,110.9 miles under right-of-way negotiations. The federal agency also projected that the planned interstate system of 41,000 miles would be completed by 1972.⁶³⁷

State Highway Engineer Dewitt C. Greer believed that the state's highways were for the benefit of local Texans in addition to out-of-state travelers and commercial drivers. As such, he ensured that Texas' interstates had more points of access than any other state. (Refer to *Figure 118* earlier in this section.) Tourism bureaus were constructed at the state line, providing information about Texas' historic and scenic landmarks, as well as advertisements for roadside businesses (*Figure 124*).

Despite improving safety and traffic flow and spurring commercial development along highway right-of-ways, the interstate system also hurt some communities and small businesses throughout the state. The routes of interstate highways often bypassed the central business districts of small towns, drawing away roadside commerce. In Gainesville, for example, the development of IH 35 bypassed several local businesses. Without direct access, they suffered financial losses

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Figure 125. View of businesses closed on former US 80 as result of interstate bypass. This exemplifies a common trend that affected the owners of many small businesses in Texas and the rest of the nation whose establishments were bypassed by the new interstate highway construction. This resulted in new types of business that operated from the former tourist-related buildings. Adaptive use of these kinds of buildings signaled the new role that property fronting on the historic named highways played during the interstate highway era. Typically, these businesses catered to local residents and had less to do with tourism and out-of-state travelers. Source: Texas Highway Department Records, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives, Austin, Texas.



and were forced to close (*Figure 125*). After a delegation from Cooke County presented an appeal to the Texas Highway Commission in 1961, Texas Highway Department engineers made modifications to the location of the access ramp. The Bureau of Public Roads initially refused to accept the changes, but was convinced otherwise with intervention from Texas Governor Price Daniel and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson.⁶³⁸ In his opinion on the issue, Highway Commissioner Herbert C. Petry, Jr. noted, "I recognize that oftentimes these new highways affect some economic development on the old road which has been there for a long time. There are several ways of looking at it. But, on a situation where ramps alone can save a business, it seems to me that they can be so designed as not to damage someone's investment, as long as you keep in mind the safety of the traveling public."⁶³⁹ On the other side of the argument, proponents of tourism pointed out that better highways brought more tourism, and more tourism benefitted the economy overall. (See *Figure 126*.)

In 1962, the *Abilene News-Reporter* highlighted the one-third point in the 15-year interstate highway road building program.⁶⁴⁰ The article noted that slightly over 33 percent of Texas' allotted mileage was complete, under construction, or "adequate for present needs." Of the \$1.75 billion apportionment for the state, \$546 million had been expended (at the standard 90:10 ratio between federal and state funding). At that time, the Interstate Highway System was slated for completion in 1972, with Texas containing 3,023 miles of the entire 41,000-mile system. Of this completed mileage were two major segments of IH 35 (US 81/Meridian Highway). On March 29, 1962, the

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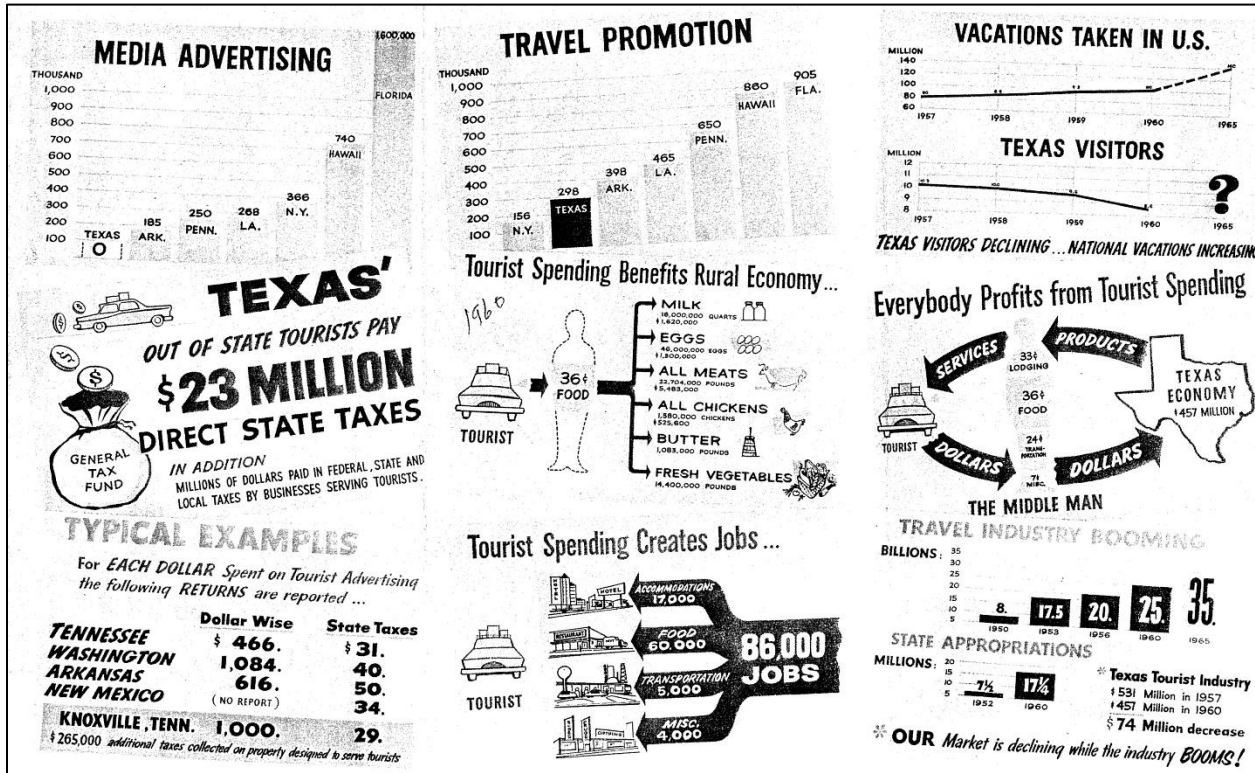


Figure 126. Graphic presentation of statistics arguing for the benefits of a tourist advertising program, included in the brochure "Texans for Tourists," published by the Texas Tourist Council, 1962. Source: Box 11, West Texas Chamber of Commerce Records, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

"Interregional Highway," as IH 35 has been called through Austin because of its association with the immediate postwar highway construction program that constructed discrete segments of controlled-access highways along major routes, was dedicated. (See Figure 127.) IH 35 in Bexar County, along much of the existing alignment of US 81, became Texas' first interstate route to open from county line to county line through a large metropolitan area; the roadway was officially opened on May 3, 1962.⁶⁴¹

By 1964, the Texas Highway Department was spending more than \$460 million on the construction, maintenance, and operation of the state's entire highway system, including interstate and U.S./state-numbered highways.⁶⁴² By January 1966, the Texas highway system included approximately 67,000 miles, including an estimated 3,000 miles of interstate and about 26,000 miles of primary (U.S./state-numbered) highways.⁶⁴³ The farm-to-market road system, provided with construction funds but no maintenance monies, was given \$23 million for road construction and \$18 million for maintenance in new legislation in 1966.⁶⁴⁴ In January 1966, the state had approximately 38,000 miles of farm-to-market roads with about 1,000 miles added annually toward to the ultimate goal of 50,000 miles.⁶⁴⁵ The state's extensive farm-to-market road system exceeded farm-to-market road mileage in all but three states.⁶⁴⁶

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Figure 127. Photograph of the
"Austin Expressway" (IH 35).
Source: Photograph 58-174, Box
318, Record Group 30,
Photograph Collection, National
Archives, College Park,
Maryland.



Increasing automobile tourism encouraged the renewal and expansion of highway infrastructure throughout the nation.⁶⁴⁷ The state of Texas was no exception. The incorporation of the state's highways into the interstate system spurred developments in road beautification and tourism just as the improvement to and expansion of Texas' named and other highways did in previous decades. In 1959, the Legislature delegated responsibility of advertising and promoting travel to and within Texas to the Texas Highway Department via Senate Bill 152.⁶⁴⁸ The law allowed funds from the State Highway Fund to be used for most tourism promotion with the exception of media advertising.⁶⁴⁹ From 1959 to 1962, the state experienced a decline in income from tourism. The Texas Tourist Council was instrumental in the Texas Legislature's establishment of the Texas Tourist Development Agency. The Council also supported the "See Texas First" campaign.⁶⁵⁰ The group's promotion of tourist travel along the state's major highways continued through the late 1950s and 1960s via that campaign. In the early 1960s, various entities called for the General Fund to support media advertising in an effort to increase the declining tourism industry in the state.⁶⁵¹ In 1963, the West Texas Chamber of Commerce initiated a "See West Texas, Too!" program in connection with the Department's primary ad campaign.⁶⁵² In 1965, the Department introduced the first travel promotion films produced entirely by a Texas state agency.⁶⁵³ With increased in- and out-of-state inquiries about overnight camping facilities, the Travel and Information Division of the Department planned to compile a camping directory covering the entire state.⁶⁵⁴ Texas Highway Commission Chair Petry noted that 12 million of the 14 million tourists that came to Texas in 1965 did so by automobile. While

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Figure 128. Photograph of the dedication of IH 35 in 1966, near Waxahachie, Ellis County. Source: Texas State Library and Archives Commission, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/highways/gratage/page3.html> (accessed March 27, 2014).



tourism was the third-ranked industry in the nation, tourism ranked only 13th in Texas. As such, the Department's travel and information division teamed up with the Texas Tourist Development Agency and the Texas Tourist Council to encourage visitorship to the "far reaches of Texas." Petry noted that adequate highway transportation provides access to all parts of the state and are a key to industrial development.⁶⁵⁵ The Texas Tourist Development Agency concurred that Texas' "standing as [a] foremost highway state" was appealing to travelers, especially family groups, whose primary choice of vacation travel was via automobile.⁶⁵⁶

1966–1980

As of March 1966, Texas had a total of 66,500 state-maintained highways. Included in this count were 25,362 miles of in-service U.S. and state highways; 2,303 miles of in-service interstate highways; and 35,568 miles of in-service farm-to-market roads (*Figure 128*).⁶⁵⁷ Despite the many improvements to state highways and the establishment of the Interstate Highway System, however, the Texas Highway Department argued that postwar highway development did not keep up with the state's population growth, in-migration, and suburban development.⁶⁵⁸ In a report on the present and future needs of the highway system, the Department noted, "Highways in Texas and throughout the nation in a sense were casualties of World War II. Development was pinched off during the wartime years and the roads in place then were considered expendable to the total war effort. Now more than two decades after V-J Day, wartime losses in highway development have barely been

overcome.”⁶⁵⁹ In order to support ongoing and future work to the state highway system, the Department promoted keeping intact the financing that was currently in place.⁶⁶⁰

In 1967, the Texas Highway Department celebrated the 50th anniversary of its establishment. At that time, the Department had jurisdiction over 28,000 miles of farm-to-market roads, and Texas had completed 60 percent of its allocated interstate mileage, making it the state with the second most interstate mileage in service after California.⁶⁶¹ Various publications and newspaper articles highlighting the Department’s anniversary also noted the interstate system that had absorbed or superseded the state’s named highways.

Just as the newer interstate system overshadowed historic named highways and bypassed small towns and metropolitan cores, it also unintentionally circumvented the state’s historic sites and attractions. In 1966, a total of 19.2 million out-of-state visitors came to Texas, but they only stayed an average of 5.8 days as opposed to 6.1 days in 1965.⁶⁶² Starting in 1967, Governor John Connally “felt that Texas, a land of great contrast, would be more attractive to visitors if they knew what to expect to see in the various areas of the state.”⁶⁶³ Connally appointed the Texas Travel Trails Committee, comprised of five individuals from various state agencies, which solicited information on sites that should be included on the trails from Texas residents and community officials, including county judges.⁶⁶⁴ The committee specifically sought information on sites of unusual scenic, geological, and geographic interest; recreational sites; and cultural attractions.⁶⁶⁵ In January 1968, Governor Connally designated 10 “Texas Travel Trails,” which he announced at the annual Governor’s Tourist Development Conference that month.⁶⁶⁶ One newspaper covering the establishment of the program noted, “Governor Connally has expressed hope that the Travel Trails program will induce tourists to remain in the state longer by opening up tours through the countryside and smaller communities which have been bypassed by super highways.”⁶⁶⁷ As the purpose of the trails was to get tourists off the beaten path, with few exceptions, their routes rarely included major highways or interstates. These Travel Trails were heavily advertised editions of the *Texas Almanac* from the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁶⁶⁸ The Travel Trails followed lesser traveled highways though; not the major named highways like the Bankhead, Meridian, and Old Spanish Trail, which had largely been incorporated into interstates by the late 1960s and early 1970s. Segments of named highways included in the trails program included:

- Texas Forts Trail –Bankhead Highway on US 180, SH 16, and IH 20 between Mineral Wells and Ranger as well as Del Rio–Canadian Highway from Nolan–Runnels County Line to Bronte and from San Angelo to El Dorado

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- Texas Hill Country Trail – Old Spanish Trail on US 90 between Castroville and Hondo and between Knippa and Uvalde
- Texas Independence Trail – on Old Spanish Trail on US 90 from southwest Houston to Rosenberg
- Texas Mountain Trail 669 – Old Spanish Trail on US 90 from Marfa to Van Horn; Bankhead on IH 10 from Kent to El Paso
- Texas Pecos Trail – Old Spanish Trail on US 90 from Bracketville to Sanderson; Bankhead on IH 20 from Pecos to Midland
- Texas Plains Trail – North Texas Highway on SH 354 from Channing to US 287

The Texas Travel Trails program was complimented by the efforts of private organizations, like the Texas Travel Council and the West Texas Chamber of Commerce, to promote travel and tourism in Texas. These efforts were fruitful; between 1962 and 1969, the number of annual out-of-state visitors to Texas increased from 9.6 million to 22.3 million, and the size of the state’s tourism economy increased from \$471 million to \$1.57 billion.⁶⁷⁰

Texas’ named highways continued to play an increasingly important role in the tourism industry into the next decade for out-of-state visitors as well as Texas residents. In 1972, the Discover Texas Association (formed in 1969 to “promote the state within its boundaries”⁶⁷¹) utilized Texas Highway Department publications to promote “mini-vacations,” which were loop route descriptions for close-to-home, three-day trips from major Texas cities.⁶⁷² The first “mini-vacation” that the group developed was called “Dallas South” and took visitors to various attractions in Dallas, Fort Worth, Weatherford, Glen Rose, Hillsboro, Corsicana, Athens, and Canton in time for the Memorial Day weekend.

Meanwhile, with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Environmental Protection Act of 1970, highway planners began to consider an array of competing priorities. Issues of traffic congestion and tourism promotion had to be considered in concert with historic preservation, environmental protection, and social justice issues. Another significant piece of legislation passed about the same time was the Transportation Act of 1966, which created the Department of Transportation, as well as the Federal Highway Administration as the federal agency in charge of overseeing the planning, funding, construction, and maintenance of highways. The elevation of a program that began as a tertiary function within the Department of Agriculture to cabinet-level agency symbolized (belatedly) the prominent role transportation had to the country’s economic foundation and national security.

By the early 1970s, the Interstate Highway System in Texas was largely complete. Moving forward, though, the state committed itself to complying with these new federal programs. As part of that effort, in

March 1972, the U.S. Department of Transportation gave the Texas Highway Department tentative approval of a proposed highway beautification bill that would allow Texas to comply with the Federal Highway Beautification Act by removing billboards within 660 feet of right-of-way on highways funded with federal monies, and relocating junkyards or screening them from view.⁶⁷³ Otherwise, if the state did not comply with the act, it would lose 10 percent of its Federal Aid highway money.

Also in 1972, Texas roadways were improved with international traffic signs. The new signs were adopted by a revision of the “Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways” and incorporated universal symbols, shapes, and colors in lieu of words.⁶⁷⁴ Remaining in compliance with laws that affected highway funding was important for continued highway development. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1976 provided funds for resurfacing, restoring, and rehabilitating lanes on the interstate system that had been in use for more than five years.⁶⁷⁵ This allocation would have provided funds, if needed, for improvements on older sections of the interstate system that had been completed on named highways.

While named highways such as the Bankhead and Meridian highways and the Old Spanish Trail largely were absorbed into the interstate system and retained some prominence, others were largely forgotten despite attempts to incorporate segments into tourist routes. The Texas Highway Commission continued to recognize segments of some named highways, however, when it designated nine additional stretches of Texas roads as Blue Star Memorial Highways between 1971 and 1988.⁶⁷⁶ Among them was US 59 from Houston to Texarkana, which included a segment of the old East Texas Highway.⁶⁷⁷

The era of the interstate highway construction between 1957 and 1980 dramatically changed the character and quality of highway transportation in Texas and the rest of the nation. Although early attempts to improve highway safety and traffic flow with superhighways date to the late 1930s, the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided the necessary funding and institutional structure to support full-scale implementation of the Interstate Highway System envisioned by President Eisenhower. The construction of strategically placed and interconnecting superhighways that crossed the nation had a profound effect on the nature of highway planning and construction, and dramatically changed patterns of development in urban, suburban and rural settings. Vast stretches of the most important named highways in Texas including the Bankhead, Meridian, and Old Spanish Trail/Southern National Highway were literally absorbed into and became part of the Interstate Highway System. These roadways were enlarged and improved and generally followed the exact road alignments that had been in place for decades. The construction of the

interstate highways spurred a construction boom on adjoining land that catered to a new generation of tourists. In other locations, especially in urban areas, sections of the old named highways extended through cities that were too densely developed to justify new right-of-way acquisition. The state highway department subsequently re-designated these sections as less significant roadways within the state's highway system. Interstate traffic largely bypassed these segments, and they assumed a new, more locally oriented role within their respective communities. Many of the buildings and businesses that had once been so vital to travelers and tourists were abandoned or closed. In some cases, they were repurposed, but, in other cases, they were demolished or left to decay as a symbol of their past significance within the history of highway transportation in the state.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS ALONG HIGHWAYS

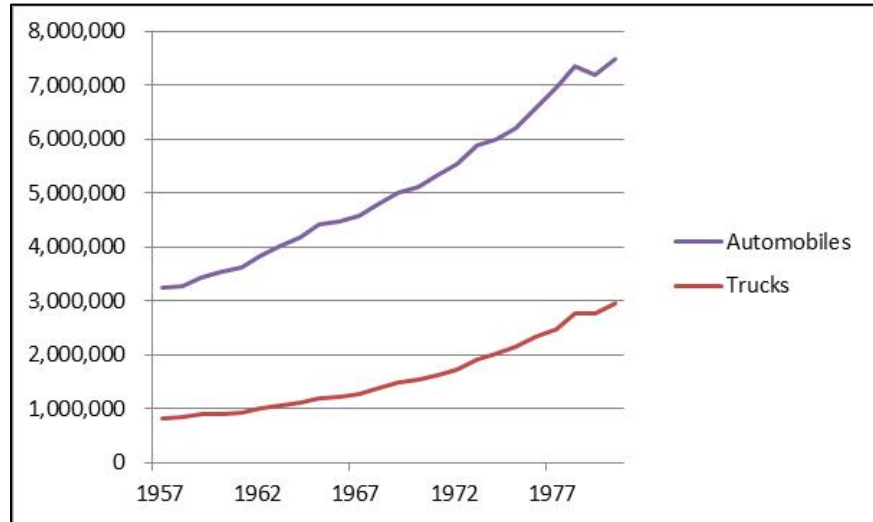
Response to Demographic Patterns

The new expressways and interstate highways constructed from 1956 through 1980 facilitated the development of the sprawling urban areas, with suburban growth blurring the boundaries between cities. During this time span, the total population of Texas grew by more than 60 percent, from 8,830,000 to 14,229,191.⁶⁷⁸ By 1960, 75 percent of the state's population lived in urban or suburban areas, and by 1970 that number had increased to nearly 80 percent.⁶⁷⁹ Between 1970 and 1980, this percentage remained relatively constant. Metropolitan areas with connections to the Interstate Highway System experienced the most rapid development, while growth stagnated in rural areas bypassed by interstate highways. The population of Houston, for example, grew from 596,163 in 1950 to 1,594,086 in 1980. Within the Dallas–Fort Worth metropolitan area, the population of Arlington grew from 7,962 in 1950 to 160,123 in 1980 – a 20-fold increase.⁶⁸⁰ In rural areas, though, many young adults moved to urban areas seeking new employment opportunities, as agricultural jobs became scarcer because of mechanization and as oil production in rural settings began to decline after its peak in 1972.⁶⁸¹

The postwar baby boom contributed to population growth, but so did the influx of people who moved to Texas from elsewhere in the United States, primarily to take advantage of the booming economy. Immigration played a relatively minor role in population growth during this period, which was consistent with the decline in the number of foreign-born persons in the United States that lasted from 1930 until 1970. In 1960, only 3.1 percent of the population of Texas reported in the U.S. census was foreign-born; however, that number began to grow after 1970 due to increasing immigration from Mexico and Latin

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Figure 129. Graph showing the increase in vehicles registered in Texas between 1957 and 1977. Source: Federal Highway Administration, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/summary95/section2.html> (accessed May 14, 2013).



A
merica. By 1980, only six percent of the population was foreign-born.⁶⁸²

Transportation of People and Goods

While the automobile had served as the primary mode of personal transportation in Texas since the 1930s, the railroad had continued to play an important part in the shipping of agricultural and commercial goods. The trucking industry made significant gains, however, and it became indispensable for commerce between 1956 and 1980. During this period, the number of motor vehicles registered in Texas exploded from 3,938,402 to 10,474,816 (*Figure 129*). Trucking increased as well, with trucks composing 28.24 percent of all motor vehicles by 1980.⁶⁸³ The construction of the Interstate Highway System aided the rise in commercial trucking by allowing rapid speeds with few stops. In 1957, only about one percent of motor vehicle traffic traveled on interstate highways, but, by 1980, that number had increased to almost 20 percent.⁶⁸⁴ The introduction of containerization in the late 1950s further maximized the efficiency of truck transportation.⁶⁸⁵ Trucking on the older highway routes declined, though, as the Interstate Highway System created a faster and more efficient way of transporting goods by avoiding traffic signals, railroad crossings, slower speeds, and other impediments that hampered the traffic flow in the more congested areas along the older highways.

In turn, beginning in the 1950s, new industrial developments were located along interstate highways rather than just rail yards, like the Great Southwest Industrial District in Arlington.⁶⁸⁶ When it opened adjacent to US 80 in 1956, the Great Southwest Industrial District was the largest planned industrial development in the nation. Similarly, although the Industrial District along the Trinity River in Dallas was

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Figure 130. Photograph of the newly completed IH 35E, known locally as the Stemmons Freeway, originally published in the Dallas Morning News, October 2, 1960. The completion of this highway next to a large area of reclaimed land along the Trinity River encouraged the growth and expansion of the Trinity Industrial District (the area to the right of the highway). The proximity of the interstate highway facilitated the shipment of goods to and from Dallas. Many ambitious entrepreneurs, such as Trammel Crow, got their start in this part of Dallas. Source: Photography Blog, Dallas Morning News, <http://photographyblog.dallasnews.com/author/jsims/page/19/> (accessed March 27, 2014).



initially designed with rail access, it was largely rebuilt to accommodate trucking after the Stemmons Freeway (later part of IH 35) was completed in 1959 (*Figure 130*). The redeveloped Industrial District featured one-story warehouses with large overhead doors and loading docks to facilitate trucking.⁶⁸⁷

Tourism and Tourist Attractions

In the late 1950s, the rise in automobile ownership combined with increased leisure time and the rise of the paid vacation caused an upswing in tourism nationwide.⁶⁸⁸ In 1958, Americans spent approximately \$30 million on travel annually. In Texas, however, tourism was on the decline in the late 1950s. Attempting to draw tourists back to the state, in 1960 the Texas Legislature changed an outdated clause in the state constitution that intended to discourage carpetbaggers by prohibiting the state from spending tax dollars to attract tourists.⁶⁸⁹ With this change, the Texas State Tourist Development Agency was founded in 1963 to publish promotional materials, organize exhibits, and advertise the state's tourist attractions.⁶⁹⁰ (Refer to the statewide context above for details regarding tourism promotion in the 1960s.)

To compete for tourism, the state government began upgrading tourist facilities in state parks, constructing more permanent cabins and clubhouses, and adding running water.⁶⁹¹ At the same time, cities across the state began to invest in constructing convention centers, coliseums, sports arenas, amusement parks, and museums – all with easy access to highways.⁶⁹² For example, Six Flags over Texas was constructed in

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Figure 131. Aerial view of HemisFair '68, Photograph, 1968. The construction of this world's fair took place near the convergence of three interstate highways. Such a strategic location gave tourists easy vehicular access to the celebration. Source: <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph66170/> (accessed May 14, 2013), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.



Arlington on the Dallas–Fort Worth Turnpike (IH 30) in 1961, the Astrodome opened in Houston on Loop 610 in 1965, and the Amon Carter and Kimbell museums opened in Fort Worth on the Bankhead Highway and near IH 35W in 1961 and 1974, respectively. The pinnacle of this trend was marked by HemisFair in San Antonio in 1968 near the convergence of IH 10, IH 35 and IH 37 (*Figure 131*). The City of San Antonio devoted \$75 million to the construction of the fairgrounds, including the iconic Tower of the Americas.⁶⁹³ Promotional materials were distributed nationwide by the Texas State Tourist Development Agency, bringing record attendance to the fair.⁶⁹⁴

Increased tourist traffic coincided with the postwar realignment of highways and construction of expressways. Most new tourist-oriented development occurred along the new interstate highways rather than on the old U.S. highway alignments that followed the named highways more closely. Tourist amenities like gas stations, restaurants, and lodging along the old highway alignments were hard hit by the loss of traffic. In many instances, these businesses were forced to close their doors. In order to survive, many businesses adapted to serve local customers rather than tourists. For instance, many gas stations were reused as floral shops or cafés. Other gas stations were remodeled to have a more residential appearance in an attempt to reach out to neighborhood customers. Along the interstate highways, new building forms emerged. Unlike the older highways, the new expressways had limited access to roadside commerce. New gas stations, restaurants, and lodging were clustered at entrance and exit ramps of controlled-access highways rather than strung out along the roadway as had been common prior to World War II.⁶⁹⁵ Corporate chains began to dominate roadside commerce as well. While gas stations used a corporate franchise business structure and standard architectural plans as early as the 1920s, most motels and dining establishments remained



Figure 132. Photograph of the La Luz Motel at 8064 Alameda Avenue, El Paso, Texas. Source: History Program Division, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.

independent until the 1960s. (Refer to forthcoming Section III.2.1 for detailed descriptions of roadside commercial property types.)

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s helped to slowly end wholesale racial segregation against African-Americans. In anticipation and as a result of legal measures improving racial equality, later editions of the *Green Book* began providing black tourists with information on individual states' anti-discrimination laws. (Refer to the sidebar in previous Section I.5 for a detailed history of the *Green Book* and other race-related travel guides.) In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown vs. The Board of Education* overturned *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, making segregation in public establishments illegal across the United States. The 1962 *Go: Guide* noted that it was "A Directory of Accommodations for All Travelers" and included letters of welcome from city and state officials. The Texas section features a letter from Governor Price Daniels who was known for ignoring laws that the state legislature passed in opposition to federally-ordered school integration.⁶⁹⁶ Daniels exhorted, "Texas takes its name from the Indian word meaning 'friendly,' and I am sure you will find a friendly welcome here."⁶⁹⁷ Among other major forms of discrimination, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas made racial segregation in public accommodations illegal. As integration became a fact in institutions across the country, the need to race-specific travel guides ceased.

These race-specific accommodations also were able resist the trend toward corporatization. Many new motels and hotels made their appearance in the guides from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, undoubtedly due to the decrease in segregation and prejudice in travel. One such establishment was the La Luz Motel in El Paso (Figure 132). The hotel complex, consisting of a main office with an adjoining café, swimming pool (now infilled), and two linear blocks of motel rooms survives on Alameda Avenue/SH 20, the original alignment of the Bankhead Highway through the city. Other newly listed establishments likely were older motels seeking to expand their clientele after business shifted toward the newer corporate chains along the interstate.

Despite efforts to promote tourism in the 1960s, by the late 1970s, travel and tourism decreased due to gas shortages and rising gas prices. Long-distance, inter-city trips experienced the sharpest decline.⁶⁹⁸ In 1977, the Federal Highway Administration conducted a survey to determine trends in household travel across the United States. (These surveys continued in 1983 and 2009.) Short trips (less than five miles) accounted for the majority of personal travel, and most of those trips were to work and back. Even for vacations, the average trip was only 95.4 miles.⁶⁹⁹ Tourism in remote, rural areas was hit hardest, and the National Park Service reported falling visitor volumes in remote parks

like Big Bend.⁷⁰⁰ As a result, few roadside visitor amenities were constructed during this period.

Land Development along Roads and Railroads

The construction of limited-access interstate highways drastically changed roadside development patterns. With fewer entrance and exit ramps, gas stations and other auto-oriented businesses, like fast food restaurants, drive-in banks, and motels, developed in clusters, rather than being strung out along an extended segment of the roadway.⁷⁰¹ New residential suburbs also had fewer entrance points, and the road network within residential suburbs seldom was linked to the adjacent commercial development. With these changes in traffic patterns, many of the gas stations and auto repair shops along the old highway alignments went out of business. (Refer to *Figure 125* earlier in this section.) Where the surrounding neighborhood remained vital, the buildings often were adaptively reused as restaurants or for other neighborhood commercial activities. In communities where neighborhoods along the old alignment were depopulated, often these older gas stations were left vacant.⁷⁰² Lodgings along the old routes were able to stay in business in some locations where parks or scenic amenities drew tourists off the interstate, but new motels and hotels along the interstate captured the bulk of tourist business. In urban areas that had growing populations and housing shortages, tourist courts and motels were converted to longer-term housing, renting rooms by the week or by the month.

In cities, the Texas Highway Department typically tried to route interstate highways along the edge of the downtown rather than bypassing the downtown completely. This policy was motivated by statistics showing that up to 90 percent of highway traffic was local.⁷⁰³ Obtaining right-of-way adjacent to an urban area often entailed demolishing existing buildings, although the Department attempted to limit demolition to “blighted” or flood-prone areas whenever possible. Yet interstate highways had limited access through downtowns, with few points of entrance and exit. As a result, existing downtowns adjacent to the new interstate highways survived with relatively little re-development stemming from transportation-related activities.

Urban Planning in the Automobile Era

As late as 1956, urban planners frequently discussed planned decentralization to relieve overcrowding in cities. By the 1960s and 1970s, though, the combined forces of suburban growth and interstate highway construction wrought massive changes in the traditional urban core.⁷⁰⁴ Many municipalities suffered drastic losses of property tax dollars as residents moved out of the inner core of most cities into the nearby suburbs. Meanwhile, downtown businesses declined, not only

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Figure 133. Photograph of the Ector County Courthouse in downtown Odessa, located on the old alignment of the Bankhead Highway. The courthouse was radically remodeled in 1964, after the downtown was bypassed by IH 20, in an attempt to stimulate downtown revitalization. Source: Courthouse History, <http://courthousehistory.com/gallery/states/texas/counties/ector> or (accessed March 27, 2014).



because their neighborhood clientele was moving to the suburbs, but also because interstate highways provided limited access to downtown streets. Even urban industrial districts were becoming obsolete, as increased research and development hastened product obsolescence. The new emphasis on research and development favored large companies over small ones and necessitated decentralized clusters of labs and factories, prioritizing proximity to universities and highly skilled staff above proximity to railroad connections.⁷⁰⁵

Urban planners referred to the resulting depopulation and economic decline as “urban blight.” Planning recommendations seeking to revitalize the urban core ranged from discouraging auto-oriented developments that created pedestrian “dead-zones,” to encouraging high-rise housing developments that would create density, to integrating highway systems into urban mass transit systems, and even demolishing “blighted” areas for the construction of new highways.⁷⁰⁶ In some smaller cities that had been bypassed by the interstate, local government officials tried to revitalize the downtown by demolishing and reconstructing public buildings like courthouses, city halls, schools, and libraries (*Figure 133*).

Simultaneously, recognizing that suburban growth was a reality, planners sought to regulate the aesthetic qualities of suburbs and highway roadsides. Because highway-oriented suburban developments typically extended beyond the boundaries of the central city, cooperative regional planning authorities were established.⁷⁰⁷ Zoning codes that prescribed the appearance of gas stations and other auto-oriented developments were considered especially important when they were adjacent to suburban developments and might threaten to have a negative economic impact on adjacent homeowners.⁷⁰⁸ (See *Figure 134*.) With the Federal Highway Beautification Act of 1965, states were required to implement legislation controlling billboards and junk

Figure 134. Rendering of the new “Matawan” design for Texaco gas stations, intended to be more compatible with surrounding residential suburbs. Source: Pleasant Family Shopping, http://pleasantfamilyshopping.blogspot.com/2011_03_01_archive.html (accessed March 27, 2014).



yards along federal highways. In turn, the federal government allocated funds for obtaining wider rights-of-way, which the Texas Highway Department could landscape according to state standards.⁷⁰⁹

CONCLUSION

The story of historic named highways in Texas was influenced by many factors that began with the development of a numbered state highway system, continued with the implementation of U.S. highway numbering, and peaked with the completion of the Interstate Highway System. Named highways that generally followed paths from Texas’ days as a colony as well as those from the auto trails period of the 1910s and 1920s laid the foundation for the state and federal systems that survive. Whether Texas-based roadways such as the North Texas and East Texas highways, or multi-state, cross-country roadways like the Bankhead, Meridian, and Del Rio–Canadian or Old Spanish Trail, named highways were important routes transporting people and goods, supporting the national Interstate Highway System, and aiding the tourism industry. The trend for naming highways in Texas has been a cyclical one. Before 1917, road names were often associated with colonial names or with the geographic or locational routes that they followed. Auto organizations and named highway organizations used nostalgia and memory and even strategic military significance to promote these roads

and to secure funding for their construction, expansion, and eventual absorption into the Texas highway system as major routes. Local governments, as well as the Texas Highway Department, exhibited a tendency to name early freeways and expressways (many already aligned with historic named roads or state and U.S. highways) before they were incorporated into the Interstate Highway System. The standardization that occurred with the creation of a highway department and development of state and U.S. highway systems essentially erased the practice of providing highways with non-numeric names.

To date, the Texas highway system contains only one officially designated named highway—State Highway Old San Antonio Road (SH OSR)—which was designated in 1942.⁷¹⁰ In 1995, the Texas Transportation Code prohibited the naming of any part of the highway system with any other designation than a regular highway number unless otherwise provided by a statute.⁷¹¹ The code provides for memorial or historical designations under special circumstances with limited signage that does not overshadow or confuse the official numbered highway name. In 2009, however, the State of Texas created a Historical Roads and Highways Program administered by the Texas Historical Commission and Texas Department of Transportation (House Bill 2642, signed June 19, 2009) to “identify, designate, interpret, and market historic roads and highways in Texas.”⁷¹² On June 19, 2009, the Texas segment of the Bankhead Highway became the first roadway designated as a Texas Historic Highway.⁷¹³ The program and designation is another step toward recognizing the value that historic named highways have within the state highway systems.

⁶¹⁸ Charles P. Zlatkovich, “The Interstate Highway System in Texas,” *Texas Business Review*, volume 44, no. 1 (January 1970): 1, “Highways” Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

⁶¹⁹ Zlatkovich, p. 3.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶²¹ Administrative Order No. 17–57, Dewitt C. Greer to District Engineers, July 19, 1957, Box 65, Folder 44 – “Farm-to-Market Roads,” Marshal Formby Collection, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

⁶²² “Farm-to-Market Roads Get Too Big a Share of Highway Funds,” *The Houston Chronicle*, November 3, 1957, *Good Roads Association Papers*, Box 13, Folder 8, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.

⁶²³ *Official Route Numbering for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways*, 1957, <http://www.ajfroggie.com/roads/yellowbook/numbering-1957.jpg> (accessed June 10, 2013).

⁶²⁴ Texas State Library and Archives Commission, “From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: the Texas Highway Department Blazes Trails, 1917–1968,” <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/highways/greatage/page2.html> (accessed June 14, 2013).

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⁶²⁵ BPA Letter, dated October 1, 1964; Adm.Cir. 136-64, dated December 1, 1964. The turnpike then became part of Interstate 30 in 1971. Minute Order 065684, December 2, 1971; Adm Cir 125-1971.

⁶²⁶ Slotboom, Oscar. "The Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike: August 27, 1957 – December 31, 1977." *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways: Texas Size Ambition*. Book, 2014, http://oscarmail.net/dfwfreeways-book/pdf/09_Excerpt_DFW_Turnpike_20120914.pdf (accessed March 28, 2014).

⁶²⁷ "New Mileage, New Markers for Texas Interstate Routes," *Texas Parade*, volume 18, no. 6 (November 1957): 12.

⁶²⁸ Lewis Nordyke, "West Texas Broadway," *Texas Parade*, volume 19, no. 2 (July 1958): 9.

⁶²⁹ "Travel Texas Leisurely," *Texas Parade*, volume 19, no. 12 (May 1959): 10.

⁶³⁰ The only toll road in Texas was the Dallas–Fort Worth Turnpike between those two cities. At that time, it was not under Texas Highway Department jurisdiction.

⁶³¹ Texas Good Roads Association, *Texas Highways Fact Book* (Austin: Texas Good Roads Association, 1959), p. 1.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶³⁴ The interstate system in Texas was approved by the Bureau of Public Roads on October 1, 1959, and via Texas Highway Department Administrative Circular No. 180-1959 on October 16, 1959. Transportation Planning and Programming Division, Texas Department of Transportation, TxDOT Highway Designation Files.

⁶³⁵ Zlatkovich, p. 3.

⁶³⁶ "Texas in Lead on Road Building," publication unknown, August 13, 1961, "Highways – Highway History," *Vertical File Collection*, Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.

⁶³⁷ "Texas in Lead on Road Building."

⁶³⁸ Cooke County Delegation, Hearing Before Texas Highway Commission, October 16, 1961, Cooke County project files, Texas Highway Department Records, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives, Austin, TX; Texas State Library and Archives Commission, "From Pioneer Paths to Superhighways: the Texas Highway Department Blazes Trails, 1917–1968," <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/highways/greatage/page2.html> (accessed June 14, 2013).

⁶³⁹ Cooke County Delegation.

⁶⁴⁰ "Road Program One-Third Done," *Abilene News-Reporter*, April 24, 1962: 4–B, <http://www.newspaperarchive.com> (accessed January 17, 2013).

⁶⁴¹ "San Antonio Scores Many Highway 'Firsts,'" *The San Antonio Light*, January 18, 1966, 6–A, "Highways" Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, TX.

⁶⁴² Dewitt C. Greer, *History of the Texas Highway Department* (Austin: Travel and Information Division, Texas Highway Department, 1965), n.p.

⁶⁴³ Texas Highway Department, "Texas Highway Facts," revised January 1996, "Highways" Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, TX.

⁶⁴⁴ "Texas Leads Nation in Highways," *The San Antonio Light*, January 18, 1966, 2–A, "Highways" Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas; "Farm Roads U.S. Finest," *San Antonio Light*, January 18, 1966, 5–A, "Highways" Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, TX.

⁶⁴⁵ These states were North Carolina, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. "Farm Roads U.S. Finest" *The San Antonio Light*, January 18, 1966, 5–A, "Highways" Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, TX.

⁶⁴⁶ "Texas Farm Roads Among Nation's Best," *The San Antonio Light*, January 18, 1966, 12–A, "Highways" Texas Archival File, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, TX.

⁶⁴⁷ James R. Akerman, "American Promotional Road Mapping in the Twentieth Century," p. 188, <http://www.geography.wisc.edu/histcart/v6initiative/06akerman.pdf> (accessed April 10, 2013).

⁶⁴⁸ "The Case for Tourist Advertising," n.d., Folder 15 – "Tourists and Travel, 1964," Box 11, West Texas Chamber of Commerce Records, 1918–1968, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX; "Texans for Tourists," n.d., Folder 15 – "Tourists and Travel, 1964," Box 11, West Texas Chamber of Commerce Records, 1918–1968, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

⁶⁴⁹ "The Case for Tourist Advertising."

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⁶⁵⁰ Texas Tourist Council, "What is the Texas Tourist Council," n.d., Folder 3 – "Tourist Committee, 4x5 Sign Project, undated," Box 30, West Texas Chamber of Commerce Records, 1935–1972, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*; "Texans for Tourists," 1960, Folder 15 – "Tourists and Travel, 1964," Box 11, West Texas Chamber of Commerce Records, 1918–1968, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX; The Texas Tourist Council, "What is the Texas Tourist Council?," 1963, Folder 15 – "Tourists and Travel, 1964," Box 11, West Texas Chamber of Commerce Records, 1918–1968, Southwest Collection, Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

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