

## Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor



**Historic Designation Presentation**

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**Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance**

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the use of their photographs and text in their  
“*Secrets of Scenic Loop, A Project of Helotes Heritage Association*”.  
This book was our inspiration.

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were compiled and edited by Susan Beavin.

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## Aerial Photograph of the Current Corridor



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## Introduction to Our Readers

In 2009, the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor (SL-BS Corridor) was listed as one of Texas “Most Endangered Places” by Preservation Texas. Their 2009 Most Endangered Places Brochure states: “The history of the area spans several thousands of years. A drive along the route reveals evidence of prehistoric sites, nineteenth-century rock structures, historic ranches and farms, abundant wildlife habitat and the Old Spanish Trail. After nearly a century of sprawl, the remaining scenic and historic route is about a fifth of its original distance... about 10 miles.”

Over recent decades, various individuals and groups have worked with political and community entities in an attempt to preserve the integrity of the unique region surrounding the SL-BS Corridor. Numerous specialists, including geologists, hydro-geologists, archaeologists, botanists and historians, have continued extensive research in the area. Local and federal agencies, a few of which are the U.S. Department of the Interior’s U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Center for Plant Conservation, recognize the region’s significance and fragility.

Protection of the Corridor region has a broader, significant impact on regional municipalities of San Antonio, Helotes, Leon Springs and Boerne and the surrounding rural areas. In the 2003 USGS Vulnerability Study, several areas were noted as “highly vulnerable” to contamination of ground water and potential contamination of the Trinity and Edwards aquifers. The Edwards remains the sole-source water supply for the greater San Antonio Area. The area is rich with natural, cultural, scenic and historical resources, besides these environmental resources.

This booklet presents oral history, cited materials, photographs, and brief descriptions of local history and natural resources. It is by no means an academic piece; rather it is a collaborative effort to present to readers the vast array of wealth surrounding the Corridor, some of what you will see on its pages.

State Representative David Leibowitz is currently working on introducing a House Bill that would recognize SL-BS Corridor as an historic route. Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance is working closely with his office.

SL-BSA hopes that you, our readers, will enjoy this booklet. We also hope that you will find the material presented here to be informative, intriguing and perhaps inspiring to some of you to join the effort in preserving the scenic, historic and natural resources that are abundant along this Corridor.

August 2010

## A Brief, General History of the Corridor

*As a driving route in the 1920's, Scenic Loop was originally 46.3 miles roundtrip from downtown San Antonio. The remaining scenic and historic route is approximately 10 miles.*

Much documentation of the history of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor is found within archaeological records, Spanish Land Grants, civil war veteran land scrips, historic deeds, Stage Coach Schedules and various other writings, including oral histories.

From the south, at Hwy 16, Scenic Loop Road winds along creeks and springs, following resources that were first used by human inhabitants thousands of years ago. It follows the Helotes Creek, passing over the confluence of Helotes and Chiminea Creeks, into a valley that encompasses the City of Grey Forest. As it continues to meander up the hills, crossing the Kremkau Divide, Scenic Loop is framed by a canopy of oaks, elms, junipers, honey locust, black cherry, dogwood, often exposing open hill country vistas.

Evidence of several prehistoric archaeological sites along the corridor is filed with the Texas Archaeological Atlas, showing the early hunter-gatherers and later, historic tribes including Comanche and Lipan Apache inhabited the area. They created trails later used as horse and cart roads, from which stage coach routes developed. The significance of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor was validated later through advertisements for scenic motoring in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 1700s, Spanish Land Grants were given to various culture groups, including German, Mexican and Canary Islanders, and homesteads were established. Several 19<sup>th</sup> century homes along the road contain gun slits. A 1973 Bexar County Historic Survey was completed on the German-style Marnoch House, located in the southeastern section of Scenic Loop Road and it is thought to have been a stage coach inn. The survey notes describe Gabriel Marnoch as a renowned doctor and naturalist in the area who was the first to locate the Balcones Fault. A Bexar County Historic Marker is on the Menchaca House, (La Quinta de las Piedras). This 1850s stone structure with gun slits, was built over a spring near the Helotes Creek for access to water during battles with tribes inhabiting the area. Many descendants of original families - Cadena, Lazarin, Madla, Lee and Menchaca, to name a few - remain in the area, and continue passing on their oral histories. Several families have historic and contemporary cemeteries on their properties which affirm their genealogies.

Located at Scenic Loop and Boerne Stage, Gustave Duerler's Buena Vista Ranch was originally a late 1800s weekend retreat, later used as a homestead in the 1930s. Gustave Duerler, a Swiss candy-maker in Bexar County, is reported to have created the "ice cream soda". The Maverick Ranch, on Boerne Stage Road was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in the 1970s. On this ranch is the first schoolhouse built in the region. Also on the northern portion of the road, a two-story late 1800s homestead, built by Conrad Adam, is said to have been later used as a telephone exchange.

We know from Robert Thornhoff's study of stage coach lines, that Boerne Stage Road was used as a stage coach route from Leon Springs to Boerne. The Old Spanish Trail auto highway follows a portion of this route as shown on the 1920s and 1930s Texas Department of Transportation maps. Some of the earliest notations of Scenic Loop Road are found in the Goodrich Route Book of Texas (1915-16), Goodrich National Touring Bureau), a Works Progress Administration's Rider's Guide to San Antonio, and in the Pioneer Mills 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet.

Numerous San Antonio leaders, including Altgelt, Beckmann, Duerler, Hildebrand, Huntress, and Wagner lived, or had second residences, along Scenic Loop Road. The most significant homestead that survives today is Rancho Diana in the southern section, now owned and protected by the City of San Antonio.

E.N. Requa developed Scenic Loop Playground in 1928 as a retreat from urban life. The Playground incorporated as the City of Grey Forest in 1962 to avoid being annexed by the City of San Antonio. Today Grey Forest Historical Preservation Society (now Grey Forest Historical Society) is working to preserve the small city's quality of life and to archive its history. They are at this time completing the application for being listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the 1800s, a small active group worked with the City of San Antonio to avoid turning portions of Scenic Loop Road into a 5-lane highway. During this time, several letters of support for Scenic Loop to be designated as historic were written, including a resolution written by Bexar County Commissioner Andy Casias (copies enclosed).

*Today the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor consists of the following: the southern end of Scenic Loop Road begins at S.H. 16 in Helotes and heads north to Toutant-Beauregard/Boerne Stage Road. It's named Boerne Stage at this point and continues north to I-10 on the southwestern edge of Boerne, though it is named Scenic Loop Rd at the Kendall County Line.*

It states in the 1992 Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes, "Historic rural landscapes are vernacular landscapes that historically have been used by people, or shaped or modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possess a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of area land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features". The Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor fits this description completely. We appreciate any assistance in protecting what is left of the historic, scenic and natural integrity of the Corridor.

Elaine Daniel  
Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance  
2007

*Please find on the following pages some brief descriptions and photos of the historic, scenic and natural resources along the Corridor.*

## The Corridor's Natural Resources

A brief overview of the multiple natural resources in the region, this section gives a hint of the reason the area has been inhabited for millennia.

Multiple creeks - including Helotes, Chiminea, Lee, Leon Springs and Balcones - have created a rich environment for flora, fauna and humans. Fresh water springs were abundant until recent years with population increase and water usage. The springs that remain are intermittent at best.

The Helotes Creek Watershed was one of two prototypes presented to the City of San Antonio by their Open Space Advisory Board in the 1980s, the other being the Salado Creek Watershed.

Texas has more caves than any other state in the U.S., and many caves are found along the Corridor.

The creative use of native limestone is seen throughout the Corridor region.

## Caves

Karst is a type of terrain formed by calcium carbonate slowly dissolving from the limestone bedrock by mildly acidic rain and groundwater. The cracked, fractured and cavernous bedrock resembles a honeycomb. Rainwater quickly moves through the bedrock into the Edwards Aquifer. About 3,000 caves have been documented in Texas, known to have more caves than any other state. (Swanson: 135)

Beneath the valley are a series of caves, such as Helotes Hilltop Cave, Helotes Blowhole and Scorpion Cave. The famous Robber Baron Cave is close by on Babcock Rd near the Scenic Loop intersection. Many of the caves are believed to interconnect. Exploring the caves was a “coming of age” ritual for many local residents, who have stories of rescues and fatalities over the years. The caves and numerous karst formations feed the Trinity and Edwards Aquifers.

Helotes Hilltop Cave is on a 25-acre parcel of land protected by a U.S. District Court settlement meant to keep the endangered invertebrates from becoming extinct. The cave environment that supports these unique species is very delicate and can be destroyed by slight changes to the surrounding area. Specific threats to the cave species and their habitat include destruction and deterioration of habitat by construction, filling of caves and karst features, and loss of permeable cover. They are also threatened by contamination from effluent, sewer leaks, run-off, pesticides, vandalism and predation by and competition with non-native fire-ants and vandalism. Page 137 of Geo-Texas states, “Caves have wondrous ecosystems in which limited number of species share a rather restricted and resource-poor environment”.



S. Beavin

“Limestone caverns are special places of mystery, beauty and for the inexperienced, danger. They attract geologists to observe subterranean processes; the biologist for their special life forms, and the paleontologist, anthropologist and archaeologist for clues to the past.” (Swanson: 136)

## Creeks

In a private, park-like setting, where the Balcones Creek crosses Boerne Stage Road just across the Kendall County line, the western portion of the creek has been dammed and is full of water first picture below, leaving the eastern section almost dry.



Remnants of a prehistoric stream bed now run parallel to Boerne Stage Road, evidence of directional change in the creek.

Pictures - S. Beavin





S. Beavin

A natural pool on Helotes Creek off Scenic Loop Road



## Low Water Crossings and Culverts

The low water crossings along Scenic Loop and Boerne Stage Roads remained unchanged until the 1900's, when most of the crossings were raised in order to curtail severe flooding and aid evacuation during such events. Several are still intact, such as the one at Low Rd and the one pictured below at Bluehill Pass. Barely visible in the background is one of the original dams constructed for the Scenic Loop Playground, now the City of Grey Forest.



S. Beavin

## Limestone Cliffs



S. Beavin

Helotes Creek carved these distinctive cliffs at the corner of present-day Menchaca and Scenic Loop Roads over thousands of years. A home at the base of the cliff was moved to the top following an Indian raid in which a settler was scalped. The hilltop home was later purchased in the early 1900's by the Beckmanns who were looking for land that would remind Mrs. Beckmann of her native Swiss Alps.



David Carter ca 1920

## Use of Local Limestone

The abundance of local limestone rock in the Scenic Loop area provided early settlers with free building material. Whether Spanish lodges (Menchaca home), German fachwerks (Marnoch house), early farmsteads, or Grey Forest cottages, builders used this rock in a variety of architectural styles. Consistent along the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Rd corridor are the low rock walls with pillar entrances (many with planter tops), stiles in front of and behind these walls, and large gateways to specific destinations.

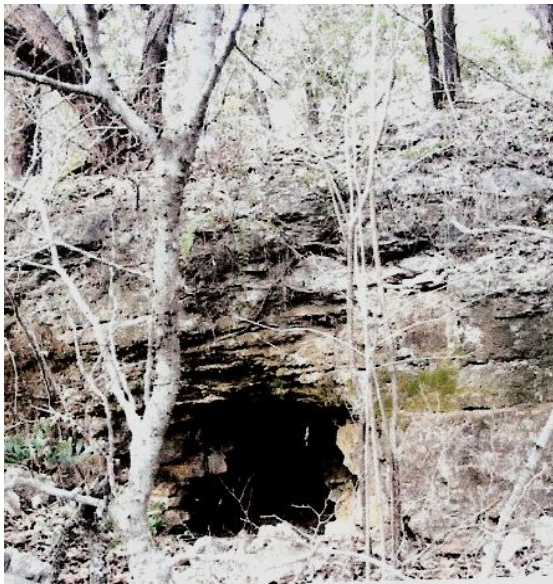


Pictures - S. Beavin



## Kilns

Three limestone kilns in the area, one along Scenic Loop and the other two in Grey Forest, date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were used to manufacture a simple mortar from local limestone, used to build area stone houses. A hole was hand-chiseled out of the limestone ledge, creating a simple chimney. This hole was used for loading and stoking, while the opening on the side of the kiln was used to clear ashes and remove the finished product. Chisel marks are seen on the inside of the kiln. (University of Texas San Antonio validated the Scenic Loop kiln, and the other two were validated by a member of Southern Texas Archaeological Association).



B. Colangelo



S. Beavin



S. Beavin

## Endangered and Threatened Species

As one of the few remaining areas of undisturbed Texas Hill Country land, Scenic Loop Valley provides habitat for two endangered bird species; the Black-capped Vireo and the Golden Cheek Warbler. Both have been observed in the area.

Golden Cheek Warbler



Black-capped Vireo



Both pictures courtesy & copyrighted by Jenny Blair [www.jennyblairphotography.com](http://www.jennyblairphotography.com)

The **Black-capped Vireo** migrates through Leon Creek Watershed, thanks to the abundant low cover and scattered hardwood. The **Golden Cheek Warbler** habitat requires old-growth cedar and live oak that thrive in the valley, having survived the urban sprawl plaguing the rest of Bexar County.

Endangered species unique to the Helotes area include a group of cave-dwelling insects. Helotes Hilltop Cave contains the endangered species *Rhadine exilis* and *Batrises venvivi* (Helotes mold beetle.) Other invertebrates for the area are *Cicurina madla* (Madla's cave spider), *Cicurina venii*, and others. Other surrounding caves are believed to shelter at least four types of endangered karst invertebrates.

***Physostegia correllii*** (False Dragonhead) : A water-loving perennial, listed by the Center for Plant Conservation in Missouri, as "in peril" with an extremely limited habitat (a few sites in Texas Louisiana, and Mexico). Helotes Creek is one of the few remaining habitats in Bexar County, Texas

## The Early Corridor

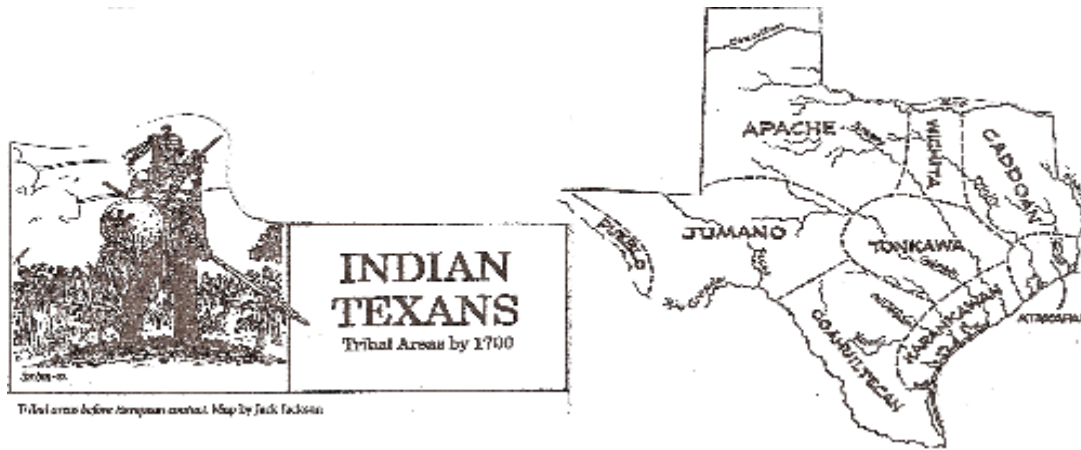
This section takes the reader on a brief tour from prehistoric evidence of stone tools and middens to historic native tribes to stage coach lines and early auto touring routes.

## Early Indian Inhabitants

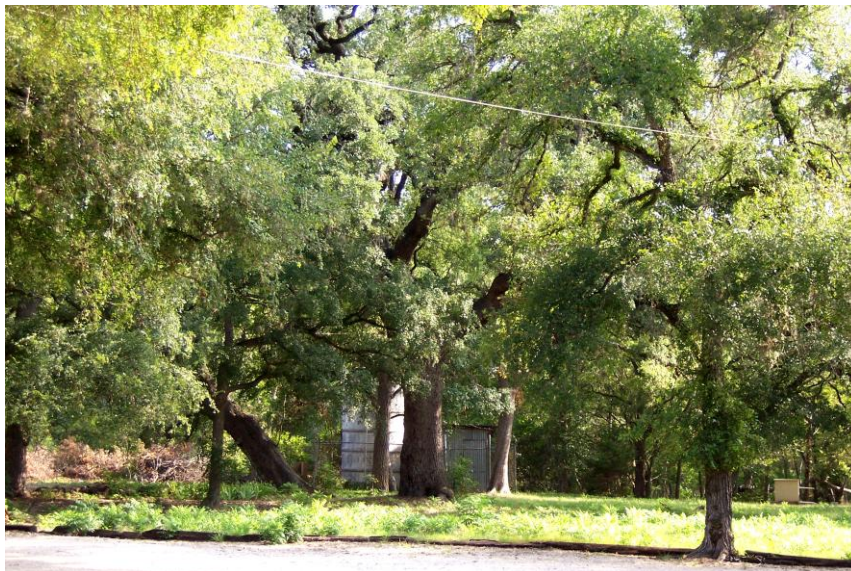
At many sites throughout the Scenic Loop Valley, evidence can still be found of the earliest Indian settlements known in North America. Stone artifacts such as tools, knives and dart points have been Carbon-dated to show that hunters and gatherers first came to the Helotes-Grey Forest area in the Paleo Period 11,000 years ago. Studies of artifacts and middens (a European word meaning “trash”) prove that a steady stream of peoples inhabited this area for thousands of years.

When the Spanish arrived, the major tribes living in and around the area were Jumano and Coahuiltecan Indians. Later there were Lipan Apache and Comanche present in the area.

Burned rock middens, such as those studied on the Muyres’ Scenic Loop property, can still be found on high places overlooking the waterways.



The Treaty Tree of oral history on Grey Moss Inn property is believed to be the location where several treaties between local settlers and Native Americans were signed.



S. Beavin

## Great Western Cattle Trail

“1874-1886: John T. Lytle, founder

“The Great Western Cattle Trail - also known as the Dodge City Trail and the Old Texas Trail - was utilized from 1874 for the movement of cattle to markets East. The trail began at Bandera, Texas and ended, most often, in [Dodge City](#), Kansas. The entire trail extended from southern Texas to the Canadian border. Between 10 and 12 million cattle were driven north from Texas into Dodge City. It was the western branch of the [Chisholm Trail](#).”

(from [www.kansashistoryus/westerntrail.html](http://www.kansashistoryus/westerntrail.html), 10 June 2010)



S. Beavin

Western Cattle Trail Marker at the Bexar/Kendall County Line on Balcones Creek



M. Fenstermaker

In the late 19th century, it was not uncommon for settlers in Boerne and Comfort to watch thousands of head of longhorn cattle move north through the area on a branch of the Great Western Trail on the way to railroads in Kansas and Nebraska for transport to markets on the East Coast. Few, if any, could have foreseen the historical significance of the trail in the 21st century.

On Sept. 2, 2007 members of the Boerne Sunrise and Vernon, Texas, Rotary clubs joined at the Agricultural Heritage Center and Museum in Boerne to dedicate the first of two markers in Boerne that commemorate the importance of the famous trail through Kendall County.

The dedication of the marker in Boerne, followed by the placement of a marker on Sept. 3 in San Antonio, brought the three-year project to a close in Texas. Markers have now been placed in all 20 counties that the trail and its arteries passed through in an effort to preserve its history for future generations.”

( Read the entire article from the Boerne Star News, Brian Cartwright, publisher/editor, 18 Sept 2007)

## The Corridor as a Stage Corridor

The most comprehensive body of knowledge comes from Robert H. Thornhoff's book, San Antonio Stage Lines 1847-1881. The original stage lines were designed to pick up and deliver mail. Carrying passengers was secondary to the mail. Each time a new postmaster was appointed, the route changed to the new postmaster's designated address, causing some confusion as to identifying some of the routes that were used in the area. Several facts are significant:

1. Thornhoff's notes indicate the Boerne Stage Line went west out of Leon Springs and north at the stop sign, onto Boerne.
2. The Old Spanish Trail included Leon Springs west to Boerne Stage Rd, turning north at the stop at Toutant-Beauregard and Scenic Loop Café, past the Maverick Ranch-Fromme Farm, past Boerne Stage Airport, over the Balcones Creek and on to Kendall County. Many old maps list the east/west section from Leon Springs to the stop sign, and the north/south section of the stop sign, the north/south section north of the stop sign, and the north/south section north of the Balcones Creek, sometimes as Scenic Loop Rd., sometimes as Boerne Stage Rd.
3. An Helotes Echo edition shows a 1920s photograph of the Galm Family. On September 12, 1873, the US Post Office officially established the Stagecoach Inn on Galm Rd (now FM1560) in Helotes as being the first stage stop west of San Antonio.

Other postmasters followed. On April 24, 1888, Arnold Gugger became postmaster and moved the post office to his residence in downtown Helotes, later the home of Marie Conley (historic marker received).

4. An article in the San Antonio Light dated July 16, 1939 (next page), states that lines emanating from San Antonio ran to Bandera via Helotes, and Fredericksburg through Leon Springs. "The last mentioned route seemed especially attractive to outlaws." Jim Pitts, Charles Yeager, and the Brennan brothers were suspects, and possibly made their hideout in Robber's Cave on Babcock Rd.

Oral history tells stories about the stage lines along Scenic Loop Rd. Betty Muires' oral history, related by her ancestors, tell of her property once being a stagecoach inn, and of bandits along the road at the same period of time. (See "Stage Coach Ruins and Indian Site" included in this documentation).



S.Beavin

**Many Holdups**

Lines emanating from San Antonio ran to Monterrey, Mexico, via Eagle Pass; Austin via New Braunfels and San Marcos; Indianola over the Old Indianola trail; Natchitoches and San Juan Baptista over the famed King's highway; Bandera via Helotes, and Fredericksburg through Leon Springs.

The last mentioned route seemed especially attractive to outlaws. Many holdups along this line were allegedly staged by Jim Pitts, the Brennan brothers and Charles Yaeger, who made their hideout the old Robber's cave, 14 miles northwest of San Antonio on the Babcock road.

On one occasion 16 unidentified bandits jumped a stage going to Helotes, killed all of the passengers and made away with \$50,000 in cash.

Other depredations were not uncommon along the other routes.

Most of the towns had "minute-men", which could be summoned at a minute's notice when the stage was not on schedule to ride back the trail to investigate the coach's tardiness.

Stage offices in San Antonio were located in the 200 block of North Alamo, at the corner of Soledad and Veramendi and at the corner of Laredo and West Commerce streets, the site of the old Washington theater.

In 1877 the first train, the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio entered San Antonio and its bell, reaching the ears of the stage exponents, tolled their demise.

The International and Great Northern railroad came here in 1880 and in 1885 and 1886 routes were opened to Corpus Christi and Kerrville, respectively.

In 1886, Pap Howard drove the last stage out of San Antonio, to San Angelo, and it was with tears in their eyes that many of the city's intrepid pioneers watched him disappear into the distance.

And with him, the unforgettable story of the stagecoach.

San Antonio Light 16 July 1939

## Touring the Scenic Loop

The era of the stage lines was all but over by 1882, replaced by rails and automobiles.

The route of "the scenic loop" was described in B.F. Goodrich Rubber Company's auto tour guide, "The Route Book of Texas" (1915-16). There were numerous detailed auto trips across the state, including trips from San Antonio to Leon Springs and back.

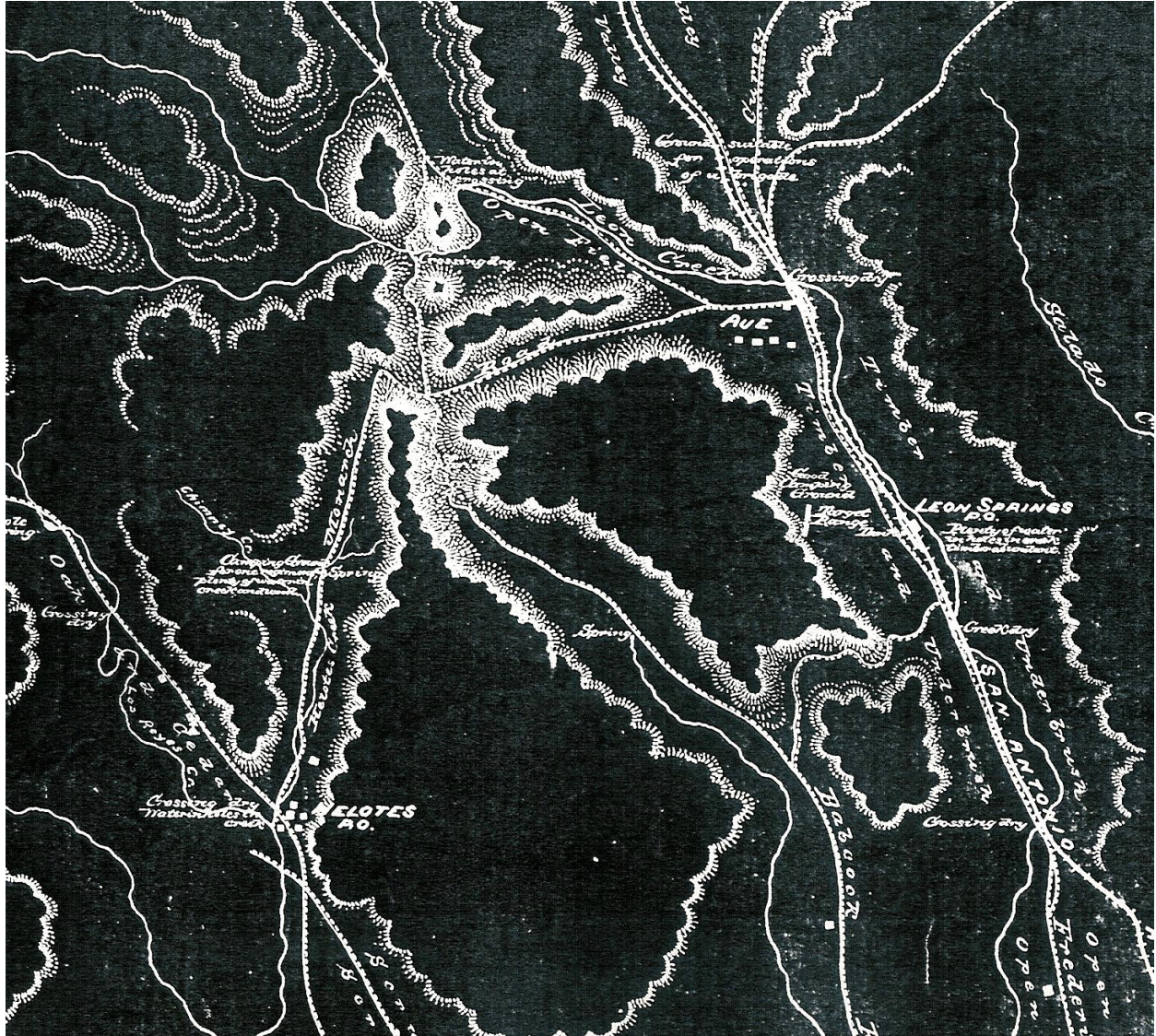
A map of the Scenic Loop was published in the San Antonio Express on July 20, 1930, announcing the paving of a new section of Babcock Rd to create two scenic loops (see next page). At the same time there appeared several announcements for the Scenic Loop Playground, developed by E.N. Requa, as being an easy ride out of the city by automobile. City residents were looking for summer retreats away from the city heat.

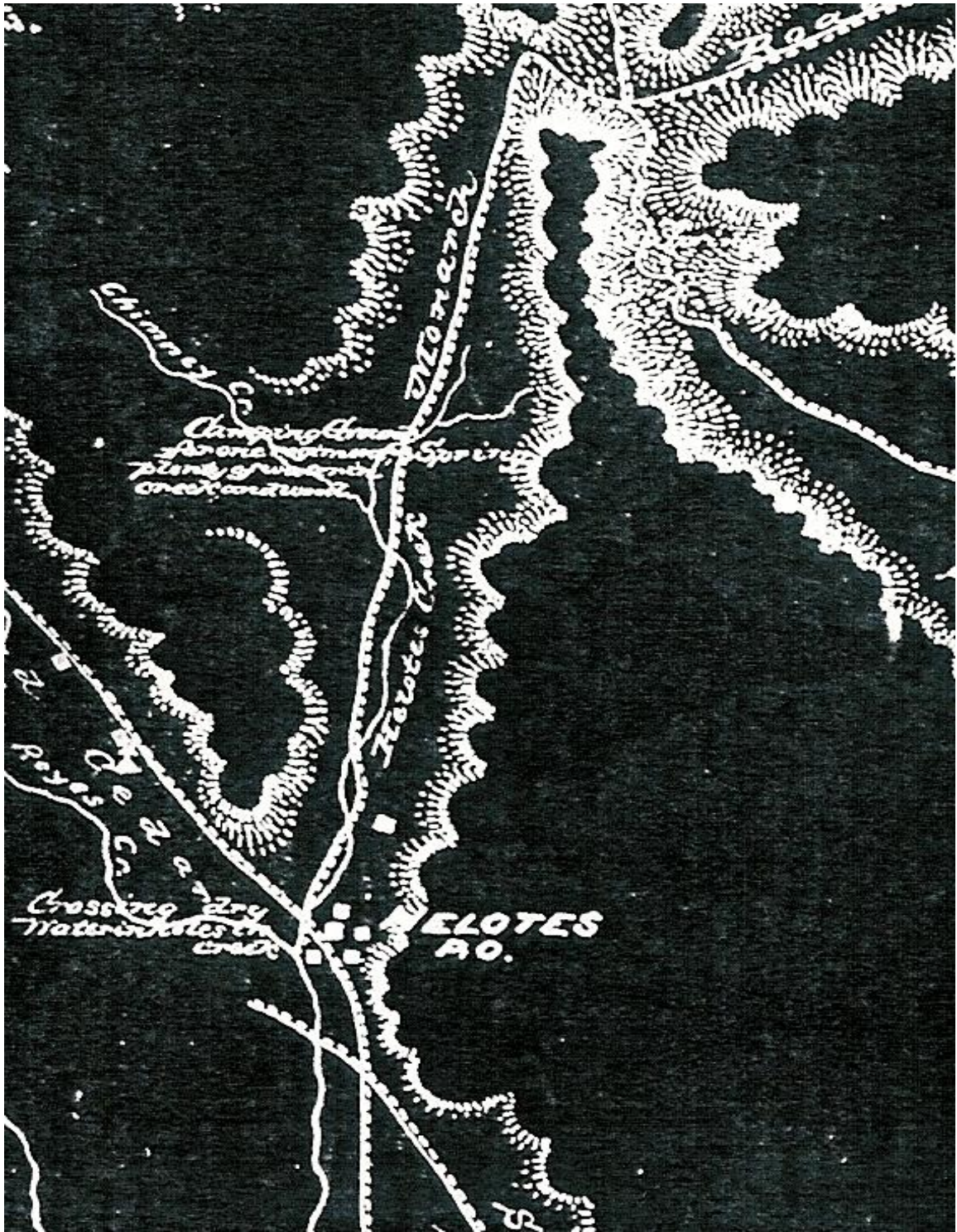
As auto ownership grew, so did the demand for good roads for touring the scenic rural landscape outside the cities. Auto clubs, such as the Good Roads Association, and other private organizations pressured for government support to create the Federal Aid to Highways Act of 1916, authorizing \$75 million dollars to be distributed to state highways over a five year time span. This led to the Texas Department of Highways (Texas Department of Transportation). By 1929 Bexar County had the largest miles of improved roads of any county in the country.

The 1920s-1930s Texas Department of Transportation maps show that the original Old Spanish Trail paved auto highway (early Texas Route 9) followed the stage line, mentioned previously.

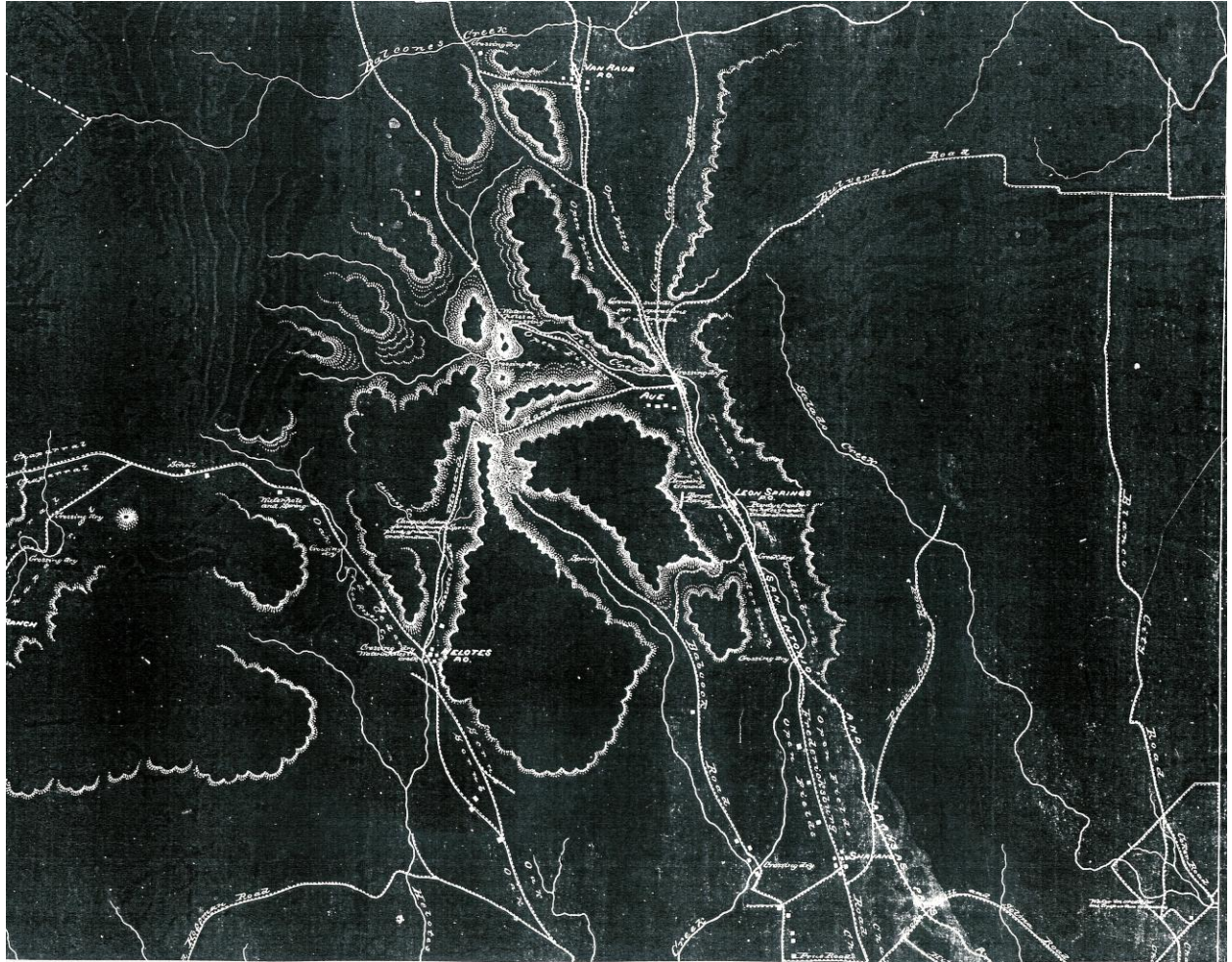
# 1894 Corridor Area Topographic Maps

Topographic Maps courtesy M. Richardson/San Antonio Conservation Society





Monarch Road is actually Marnoch Road



# Toutant - Beauregard Road Comparison 1975 & 2010



Toutant - Beauregard Road  
looking east

1975

Maverick Ranch on left / Terry Bank on right  
Road was gravel base road

photograph: B. Fenstermaker



Toutant - Beauregard looking east (same location as above)

August 2010

S. Beavin

# Boerne Stage Road Comparison 1975 & 2010



Boerne Stage Road -  
Old San Antonio to Fredericksburg Road

1975

Looking South FROM NAVERICK RANCH GATE

photograph: D. Fensler/Map

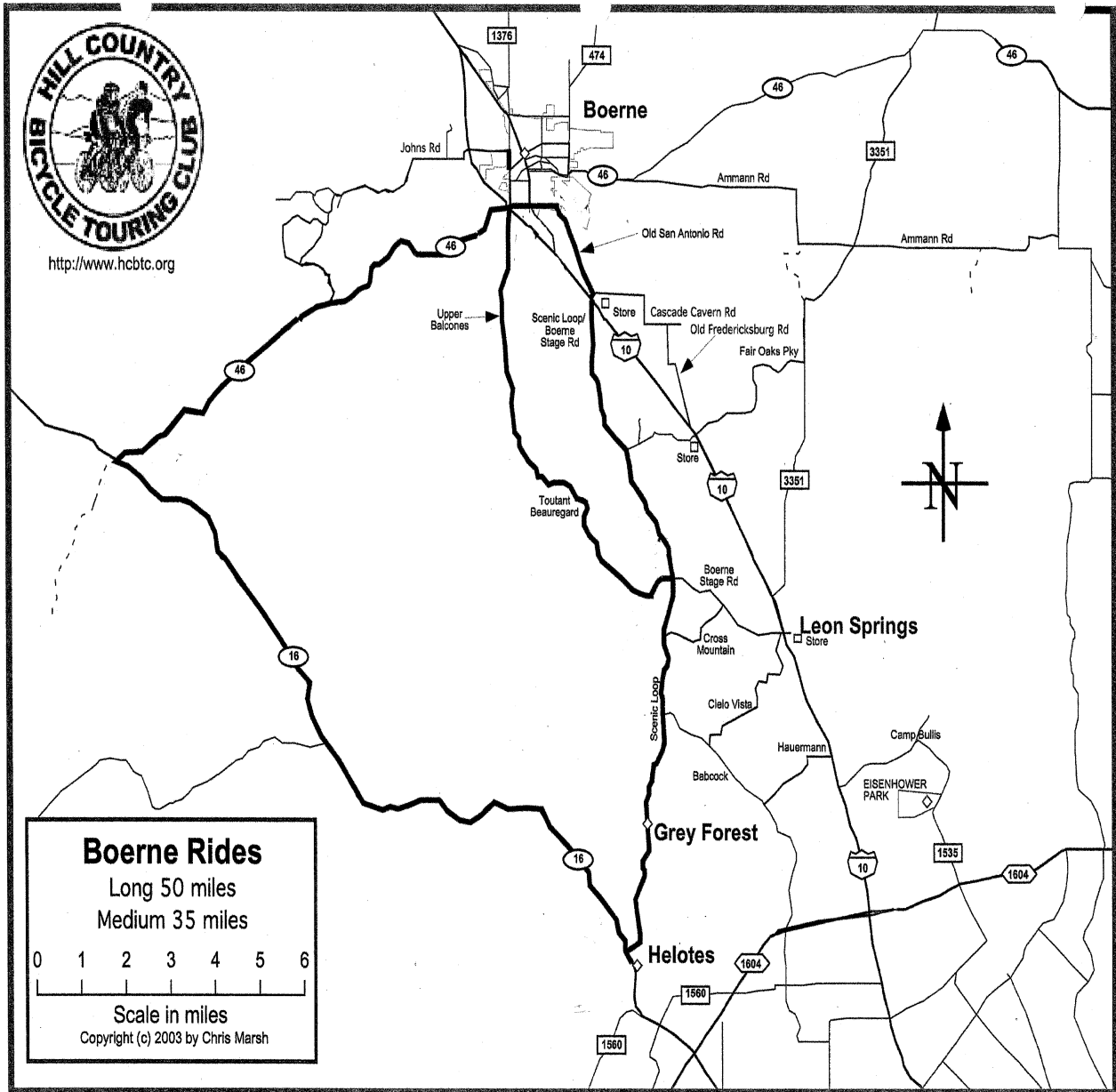


Boerne Stage Road (same location as above)

August 2010

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# Boerne Ride 2003 Bike Route Map



## Places of Interest

The Corridor has a variety of interesting places. From the mid-1880s to current day, we present on the following pages a 1904 schoolhouse, the first “green-belt” development, three current Natural Areas, two popular restaurants (one historic and one recent), and much more.

## Rancho Diana

“Rancho Diana, in the hills of Bexar County, Texas, combines the wild rugged beauty of untamed nature and the loveliness of landscaped terraces, gardens, streams and lake. In its background, too, are reflections from a picturesque era of Texas history.

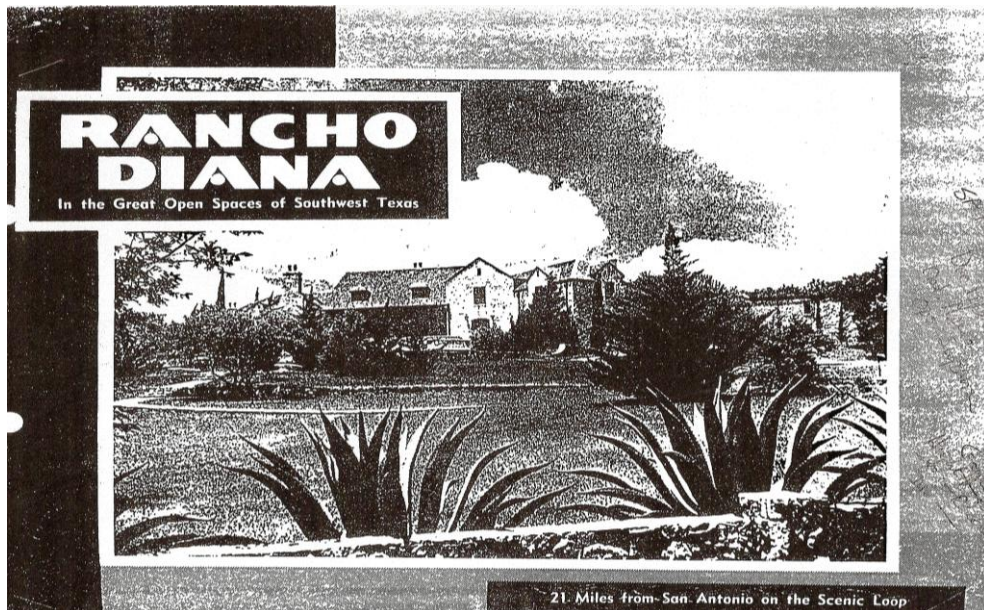
Long ago the 1,150 acres of Rancho Diana were embraced in vast woodland where the Comanche Indians camped, roved and hunted. Thereafter it was a part of a Spanish land grant to a pioneer Mexican settler. Legend has it that both Spanish soldiery and pirates from the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean buried loot thereabouts. The woods and hillsides of Rancho Diana abound in deer, wild turkeys, wild hogs, raccoons, foxes and other game.

The main residence is English style; the second residence is Spanish style. There is a playhouse constructed of solid stone. Among the improvements and adornments made were five wells, the lake, swimming pool, barbeque pit, and sunken gardens.” (Taken from the booklet below - unknown source and date.)

Rancho Diana was an extraordinary country residence, nestled in the Scenic Loop Valley. The property has changed hands numerous times. Frank G. Huntress, owner of the San Antonio Express News during the early 1900s, purchased the property from the San Antonio Loan & Trust in 1932. He named it after Diana, goddess of the hunt, and entertained San Antonio elite, European dignitaries, as well as Hollywood celebrities in lavish style. Known as a primary builder and real estate business supporter, Huntress was friends with E. N. Requa, developer of Scenic Loop Playground.

The Huntress family sold the property to John Wagner in 1951 and purchased property further north on Scenic Loop (Huntress Lane), Wagner sold it to Terry Thrift in 1969. There are many stories about the fire and demise of several structures from a fire during Thirft’s ownership.

Today, Rancho Diana is owned by the City of San Antonio Parks and Wildlife Service, acquired through Proposition monies. Not open to the public at this time, it is located at the end of Menchaca Road. Below is the front page from a brochure of unknown author and date.



## Frank L. Madla, Jr. Natural Area

In 2006 Helotes Mayor Jon Allen, with the help of Rep. David Leibowitz, secured a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to establish a park honoring the late Senator Frank L. Madla, Jr. A legislator for 33 years, Senator Madla was born and raised on the nearby Madla Ranch. He frequently used his position to benefit Helotes and other rural towns. Senator Madla died in a 2006 house fire in San Antonio. Helotes was under contract for a 33 acre parcel on Scenic Loop for this park, when a newly elected Mayor and City Council refused the grant money and chose to pursue a different direction.

“In July (2009) Grey Forest began pursuing the same Texas Parks and Wildlife Grant toward a Frank Madla park that Helotes had previously attempted. Though it was a tight deadline, with their application having to be in by the end of August, Grey Forest received the grant when they jumped at the challenge, working diligently not only to complete the application, but solicit in-kind donations and begin negotiations on purchasing a plot of land, the value of both which would be put toward the \$1.125 million available in matching funds”. San Antonio Express News by Meredith Canales 12/17/2009.

Helotes residents and the City of Grey Forest are working together to dedicate a trail within the park in honor of former Helotes Mayor, Jon Allan. The park is located at the corner of Scenic Loop and Menchaca Roads.



Beckmann family & friends 1906 D. & M. Langford  
The Beckmann family children 1906 D. & M. Langford



John Conrad Beckmann, one of the original owners of this property, purchased the land, cliffs and surrounding farmland for his wife, Regina, as it reminded her of native Switzerland. He built the Swiss chalet style cabin below in “Canyon de los Helotes” in 1852 as a weekend retreat and a reminder of her Swiss home.



Panoramic view from the top of the Madla Natural Area

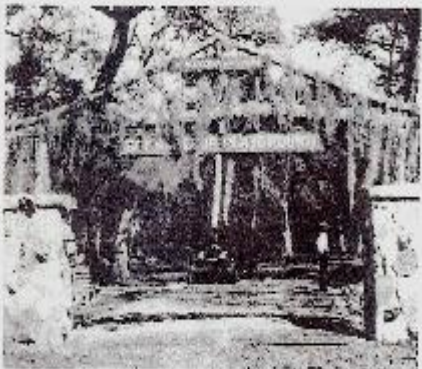
P. Barwick

## The Scenic Loop Playground

The Scenic Loop Playground was developed by E.N. Requa in 1928 on 320 acres as a rural recreational resort within easy commute of San Antonio. Intended as a family retreat, the Playground contained a variety of cottages and lodges built in keeping with the rustic surroundings and included boating, fishing and swimming facilities, and one of the first developments to have "open spaces" to allow a reconnection with the rapidly disappearing American wilderness. The brochure (ca 1935) below and on the next page, Unit 1 plat recorded in Bexar County, illustrate the plans and amenities.

SCENIC LOOP  
*Playground*

**A Place To PLAY ★ A Place To LIVE**



*Prices Never So Attractive*

E. N. REQUA  
OWNER-DEVELOPER

BRADY BUILDING GARFIELD 3151

*Nature's Gift To Texas*

**BEAUTIFUL**—Scenic Loop Playground — Thirty Miles from San Antonio—On Paved State Highway—Where Vacation And Pleasure Needs Are Fulfilled.

**COOL**—Among Old Buildings—500 To 1000 Feet Above San Antonio—Headroom Of Four Miles! That's Thrill To You.

**DELIGHTFUL**—Shady Glens—Giant Live Oaks—Draped With Spanish Moss—Four Miles Winding All Weather Roads—Spring Park—Rock Kibbles—Swimming—Swimming Pools—Fishing—Picnics—Excursion—Water Wells.

**MOUNTAIN**—Climbing—With Long Sweeping Slopes—Or Steep Craggy Cliffs—Challenges You—All Topped With New Inspiring Panoramic Views—To Thrill You.

**HEALTH**—Heaven Of Refreshment—Play—And Recreation—Where Hundreds Of Sick Have Been Improved By Oxygen—From Barbecue Pits—Fishes—Doubler And Springs—For Excursion—To Inspiring Rock Lodges—Obviously An Enticement.

**HOME**—In The Hills—Cool—Quiet—Rustic. Several Owners—Both Retired And Active San Antonio Business Men—Now Have Their Regular Homes In Scenic Loop Playground—A Place To Play—A Place To Live.

**EVERYBODY** Should See Scenic Loop Playground Now—Never More Beautiful—Prices Never So Attractive.

**DRIVE**—Our West Cincinnati, Woodlawn Or Donaldson Avenue To Bandera Road—On To Helene—Then Right On State Paved Highway—To Playground Main Entrance—About 20 Miles From San Antonio.

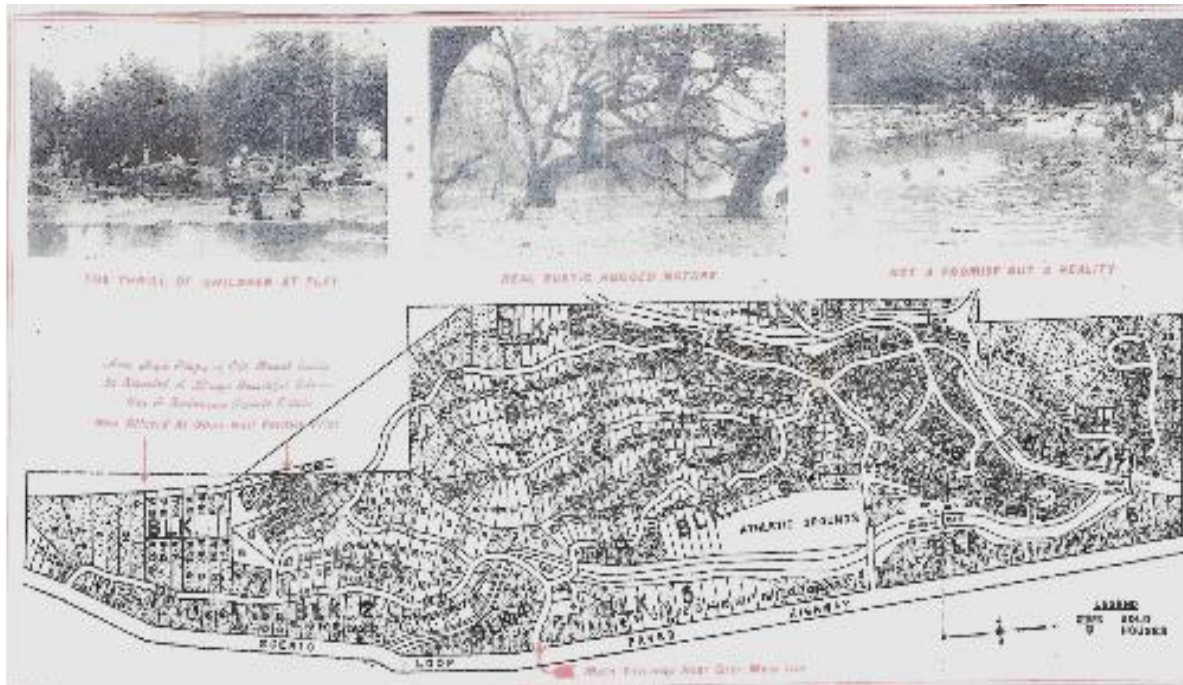
**CAREFUL**—Inspection Carefully Desired—Full Information With Careless Guide—Furnished At Main Entrance.

**ACREAGE**—Tracts 1.08 To 20 Acres—For Those Desiring Larger Vacation Or Permanent Home Sites—Swimming—Fishing And All Playground Privileges—Besting Prices And Terms.

**CHOICE**—Size And Attractive Lodges—Now Offered For Purchase—Prices And Terms Made Fully Suitable To Each Individual Need.

**E. N. REQUA**  
OWNER-DEVELOPER

BRADY BUILDING GARFIELD 3151



S. Beavin



B. Colangelo

This stone structure on Hilltop Drive in Grey Forest is a good example of the eclectic homes that were built by mostly San Antonio vacationers in the 1920s-30s.

## The Scenic Loop Playground Historical Marker



The marker is located across from Grey Forest City Hall

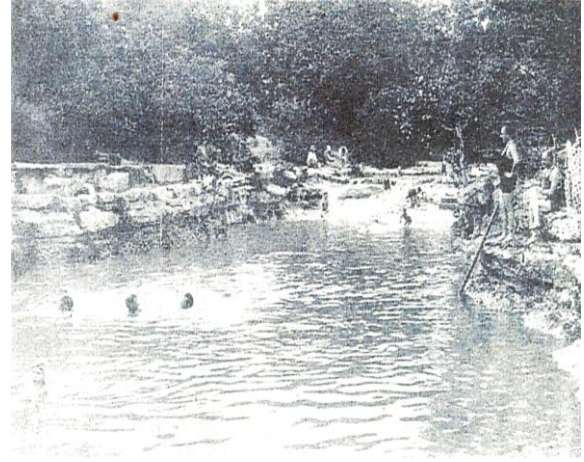
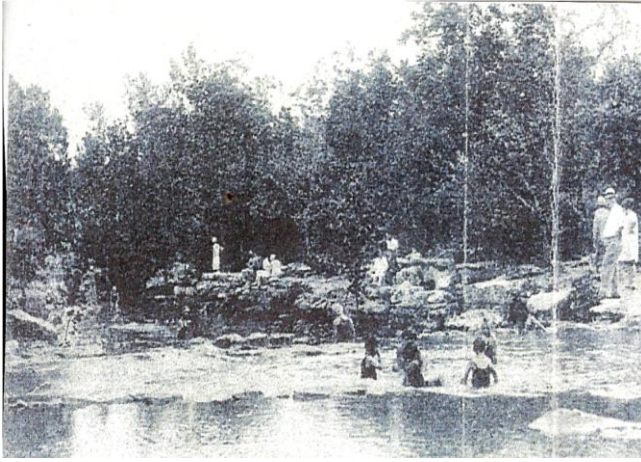
S. Beavin

Freda Hoffman, President of the Grey Forest Historical Society, was instrumental in securing this marker.



S. Beavin

## Scenic Loop Playground Swimming Hole



Above pictures from 1935 E. N. Requa Scenic Loop Playground Promotional Brochure



Ca. 2005 B. Colangelo



2010 S. Beavin

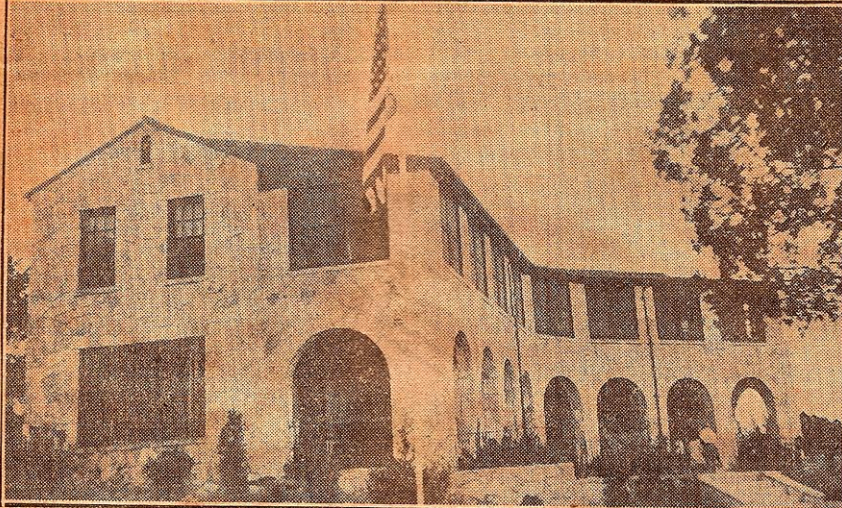
This swimming hole lured San Antonio residents in the 1920's to build summer cottages in the Scenic Loop Playground, now the City of Grey Forest. This natural "pool" is fed by local springs and Helotes Creek. The swimming hole and hiking trails along the Helotes and Lee Creeks are on Scenic Loop Playground Club land and *used by members only*.

# “La Lomita”

## The Huth/Sisters of Divine Providence Site

AUGUST 19, 1934 SAN ANTO

### *Catholic Women Plan Benefit Fete at “La Lomita”*



“La Lomita,” on the Scenic Loop Road, is the country home of Albert V. Huth, county assessor.

<p><b>E</b>XTENSIVE arrangements are being made for a supper and dance, sponsored by the local Council of Catholic Women, at La Lomita, country home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert V. Huth, Thursday from 6 to 11 p. m. The Huth estate is situated on the Scenic Loop road opposite the entrance of the Scenic Loop playground. Proceeds will be used for the benefit of Catholic charities.</p>	<p>Tickets may be procured at Casa Regina, the girls' home, 830 North St. Mary Street.</p> <p>Mrs. Joseph Kenny is general chairman. Mrs. Joseph Sievers, chairman of the ways and means committee, and Mrs. C. F. Sinclair, president of the council, are among others who are taking an active part in arrangements for the affair.</p> <p>This is one of a series of parties</p>	<p>which has been given for the benefit of the council's charitable enterprises. Thursday night's proceeds are to be devoted to the clinics which are maintained for the parochial schools. Last year 2,400 pupils had the attention of a doctor and a nurse. As many as seven clinics have been in operation at one time, but some of them are not being maintained now.</p>
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San Antonio Express News

“La Lomita” was originally purchased by Albert and Theresa Huth in 1933 from E. N. Requa, developer of Scenic Loop Playground. The property was part of the Unit 2 Section of what is now Grey Forest. It was later sold to the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence in the 1950’s. They sold the property in 2002.

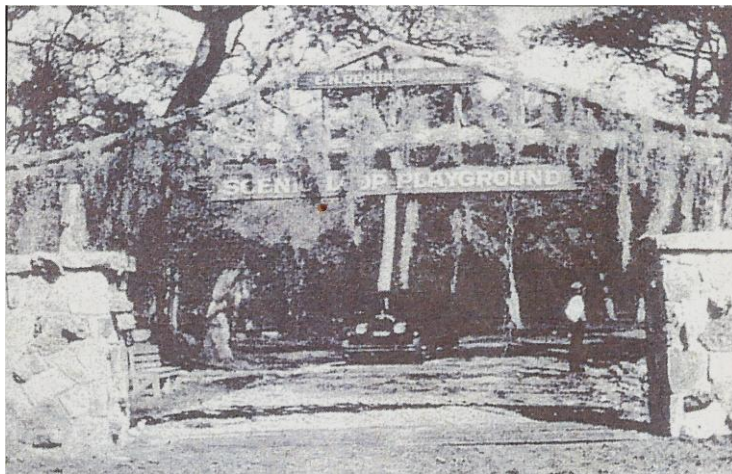
## Grey Moss Inn



2010 S. Beavin

Mary Howell opened the Grey Moss Inn in 1929. It is said to be the longest continuous running restaurant in Texas. The menu still follows Mary's recipes. [A Texas Guide to Haunted Restaurants and Taverns](#) and [When Darkness Falls](#) tell tales of Mary's ghost causing trouble in the kitchen, if things aren't done to her liking. (Residents of Mary's original Grey Forest home speak of strange occurrences there, as well.)

The quiet romantic atmosphere of the Grey Moss Inn is a popular attraction to Grey Forest and San Antonio residents in addition to its national reputation.



Original entry to Scenic Loop Playground - 1935 E.N. Requa Promotional Brochure  
Only the stone pillars are left. This is now the entrance to Grey Moss Inn

## Scenic Canyon

In the summer of 2007 Scenic Canyon was purchased with San Antonio Proposition 1 money and the help of the Nature Conservancy and is part of the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program. The 452.96 acres is located on the Scenic Loop Road across from the Grey Moss Inn in the City of Grey Forest and its Extra Territorial Jurisdiction. This park contains spectacular view sheds and is not open to the public at this time.



View from the top of Scenic Canyon



Location of Scenic Canyon - across from Grey Moss Inn, Grey Forest, TX SA City Map

## McNeel Park

According to the San Antonio Express-News, on June 1, 1930, bottom right, "J. S. McNeel announced the opening of his second group of building sites on the Scenic Loop in the newest hill country addition, Scenic Loop Estates. This section is rapidly building up with stone mansions. The Estates are opposite Scenic Loop Playground and 21 miles from City Hall.

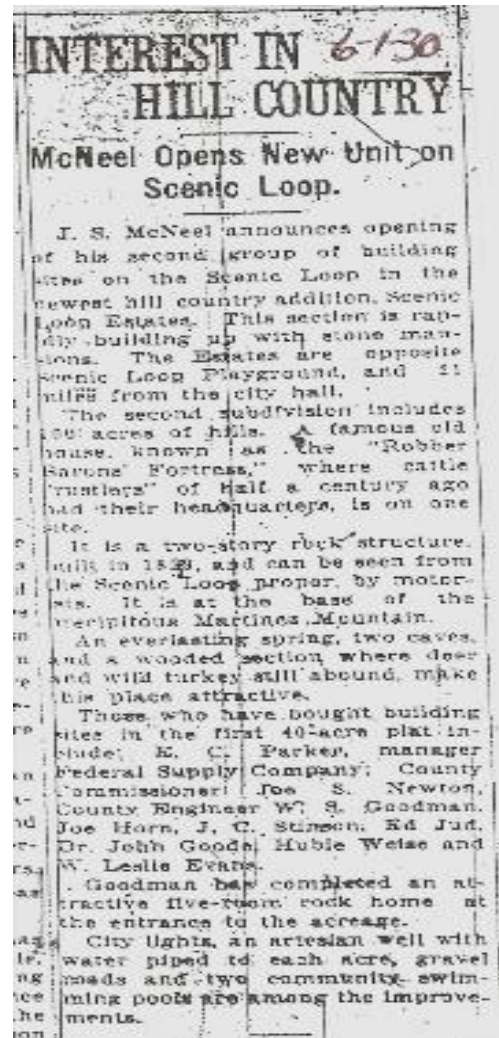
The second subdivision includes 100 acres of hills. A famous old house, known as the Robber Barons' Fortress", where cattle rustlers of half a century ago had their headquarters, is on one site.

City lights, an artesian well with water piped to each acre, and two community swimming pools are among the improvements."



J. Nottingham

Entry to McNeel Park off Bluehill Pass



## Krempkau Divide

The Krempkau family came to Texas from Ransbach, St. Armin, Alsace with the Castro Colonists in 1844. Attending school on the Military Plaza in San Antonio, William “Billy” Krempkau worked on the stage line from Castroville to Mexico at age 13; drove cattle to Kansas at 16; and by age 21 had saved enough money to purchase 800 acres on the west side of Scenic Loop Rd in northwest Bexar County.

In 1903-05 he became San Antonio’s Commissioner of Hides (the position eliminated in 2009), and was important enough to have a road named after him. He remained active in preserving the history of Texas Traildrivers.

His long-term existence in the Helotes area garnered the Scenic Loop, as it started to climb to the Babcock Road intersection, to be known as the “Krempkau Divide” with the Helotes Creek watershed flowing on the west and east sides, eventually merging with the Leon Creek.



Trail Drivers of Texas Vol I

## Guajolote Ranch



Both pictures by Marlene

Richardson



Guajolote Ranch was once part of the more than 2,000 acre Black Buck Ranch owned by E. S. Basse, Jr. and his wife, Anne Wright Basse. They sold half of the property to the Huntress family. Pictures above are the beautiful falls on the ranch.

## Scenic Loop Café

The very popular Scenic Loop Café at the intersection of Scenic Loop, Boerne Stage and Toutant-Beauregard Roads has been a chameleon with no trace of its past lives.

The structure is known to have been a residence, grocery store, and a service station. In the 1950's the Café was a hog farm, called "The Valley Ranch", a swine improvement project sponsored by A & M University and owned by Mary Perry Rogers Alexander whose husband was a polo player. The couple added polo pony stables and a practice field across from the hog farm.

The property was purchased in 1985 by Lillian Balma, a French chef and hotelier, who was determined to convert it into a haute cuisine restaurant. Following substantial remodeling, it was appropriately named "Stallion on the Roof", after the life-size silver stallion was placed on its roof.



Stallion on the Roof Restaurant M. Richardson

Hog Farm

M. Richardson



Scenic Loop Café 2009

S. Beavin

## Boerne Stage Road Mail Tree



M. Fenstermaker

Located on Boerne Stage Road, the Mail Tree was a well-known site in the early days of settlement in far NW Bexar County. A wooden box with cover was set into a fork of this beautiful live oak tree and mail for the neighboring homesteads placed in the box. Neighbors passing the tree looked inside for their mail. If there was mail for neighbors whose homestead they would be passing, they took the letters to them. The usual mail was destined for San Antonio via Leon Springs or on northward to Fredericksburg. The Boerne Stage Road was then the well-traveled San Antonio-Fredericksburg Road.

Rowena Green Fenstermaker, who grew up at the Maverick Ranch (1906-1989), always pointed the Mail Tree out to her daughters. The Mail Tree was still in use when she was a child. The Mail Tree is now on private property behind a no trespassing sign.

The Mail Tree is a very large, ancient Live Oak and deserves preservation.

## von Plehwe Complex

Sophie and George von Plehwe, accustomed to royal living in Prussia, moved to Leon Springs, TX in 1851, camping out the entire summer until their homestead was completed. They eventually purchased 1,000 acres in the area and built the first fence in this part of Texas. This section of Boerne Stage Road was a wagon trail leading from San Antonio's military depot to Fort Mason. The von Plehwees were known to supply changes of horses for the stagecoaches. For more fascinating stories of this early Leon Springs family, please see Marlene Richardson's History of Leon Springs: *From Prussia to Persia*.



1937 San Antonio Conservation Society

2009 M. Richardson



Kitchen House Krista Gebbia

# Old Spanish Trail Park

According to research done by the Old Spanish Trail Centennial Association, the Old Spanish Trail Park was created in 1926-27 by civic groups from San Antonio and Boerne working together to add beautiful rest stops to the 32 mile OST Headquarters (see “Beautification Department” article below). The park entrance and Kendall/Bexar County line marker, originally on both sides of the road, are located at the Balcones Creek crossing. These creative projects were funded by local, private and civic groups.

South Face

Page 1 of 1

**Beautification Department**

**NATIONAL BOARD OF MANAGERS**

Mrs. F. W. Scott, National Director  
 1212 E. Richards St., San Antonio, Texas  
 Mrs. Mrs. D. Adams, National National Director  
 Mrs. L. W. Evans, Secretary Mrs. J. A. Woods, Treasurer  
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**STATE INSPECTORS**

Mrs. D. H. Armstrong, Box 1022, St. Augustine, Florida.	Mrs. T. W. Lehigh, 1212 Richards St., St. Antonio, Texas.
Mrs. Esther Bowling, Salem, Alabama.	Mrs. Robert Lee, Los Olivos, N. H.
Mrs. E. Clinton Jones, 201 Westmore St., Houston, Texas.	

**Developing the Plans**

The beautification work along the Old Spanish Trail was organized by southern women at New Orleans in 1923, at the Old Spanish Trail convention. This was the first organized movement in a national way for roadside protection and beautification. At this gathering the women emphasized the principle that while the men would build the roads the women should lead in developing their beauties and attractions. Since then long trips over the Old Spanish Trail have been made by groups of these women. Individual members of the Board have made trips thru many states and thru Europe studying conditions in the interest of this work.

**The Headquarters Section**

Mrs. A. C. Sisson, Chairman.

One of the first practical steps was to adopt the 36-mi. road from San Antonio to Brown, Texas as a special Headquarters Section. The women recognized this would give them practical experience and qualify them better for beautifying the other localities. The Headquarters Section is essentially capable of beautiful development but it had the usual collection of advertising signs and crude roadside buildings; in places the road was too narrow, some curves were sharp and other conditions were unfavorable to nice development. The first necessary step was a wider right-of-way. All agreed one inherent fact was the sidewalk to be secured and experience sustains this conclusion.

Widening the right-of-way to 100 ft. has now been in progress for three years and has had the combined effect of the women and the San Antonio civic organizations. Plans are being put into and the State is following along with improvements. Property owners are also giving the needed right-of-way and this emphasizes the importance of getting a proper right-of-way before property improvements become the matter.

The Bexar-Kerrick county gateway, costing \$1000, has been constructed of native stone columns and lintresses according to an architect's design. The road clearance between the columns is 40 ft. Where possible the State Highway Department prefers 30 ft. to 40 ft. The other counties thru West Texas are planning similar stone gateways at their county lines.

A rugged shaded tract on the Balcones Creek was donated for a way-side park; this is being improved with

44

[www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.COM](http://www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.COM)



<http://www.oldspanishtrailcentennial.com/Gallery/Bexar%20County/South%20Face.htm>

12/1/2006

Kendall/Bexar County line marker

OST website



OST Park 2008 Charlotte Kahl

## Balcones Schoolhouse

The Balcones School House was built in 1904 and served the community as both school house and Grange. It is now owned by Kendall County and leased to both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Unity Church.

The Fenstermakers, descendants of Samuel Maverick provide the picture below left and the following stories.

The Throckmorton daughter of Tarry Bank rode to the Balcones School with Rena Maverick Green's children, grandchildren of George and Mary Vance Maverick of the Maverick Ranch. At that time the Boerne Stage Rd was known as the San Antonio to Fredericksburg Rd. The Green children waited for Miss Throckmorton on the back road which ran from the west, through the Maverick Ranch, and behind the headquarters. Miss Throckmorton rode a thoroughbred horse and used an English saddle.

Harold Davis is thought to have been the first teacher at the Balcones School House, originally one room. A few years later a second room was added. Neighborhood children walked, rode horses and donkeys, or drove buggies to attend. The students let their animals graze during the day, giving them water at lunchtime.

The first person to arrive at school during the wintertime was charged with lighting the woodstove. Mrs. Rena Green's children, George, Martha, Mary and Rowena all attended, beginning in 1907. Mary Vance Green and Rowena Green Fenstermaker remembered cold morning rides to school in the buggy, covered with blankets. In warmer months Rowena often rode a pink donkey which usually beat her home. Often Mrs. Bertha (Daniel) Fromme caught the donkey and held it until Rowena reached the Fromme Farm. All their lives the Green children remembered good school times and had lifelong friends made at the Balcones School.

Rena M. Green recognized Mr. Davis' excellent teaching and rapport with his students. Around 1911 Mr. Davis felt he must move to Boerne to earn a living wage. Mrs. Green supplemented his salary for several years with money from her own limited funds. Mr. Davis married a Perrin daughter. The Perrins ranched and farmed the area immediately surrounding the School House. Their descendants still live in Boerne.



B. Fenstermaker



S. Beavin

## Historic Cemeteries

Several 19<sup>th</sup> century gravesites are located in area cemeteries listed on the following pages. Some cemeteries are not accessible without permission of the property owners. Several owners have completed extensive genealogical research on family members interned in their cemeteries.

## Madla Cemetery



George Blucker

“The Madla Cemetery is located north of Helotes off Scenic Loop Rd on property owned by the Madla family. Permission to visit the cemetery must be obtained from a member of the family. At this time, the postal address is 17589 Scenic Loop Rd #2, Helotes, TX 78023.

The family cemetery was established by Mathias Madla and his wife, Constantina Kral Madla, according to research done by Juanita Madla, their great-granddaughter. The Madlas arrived in this country about January 1855, immigrants from the section of Prussia now located in Poland. They considered themselves Prussian-Poles and their native language was Polish, Ms. Madla said.

There are several legends about the land upon which the cemetery is located. Jesse Madla (1896-1871) believed the cemetery was once an Indian burial ground. According to another legend passed down to Frank Madla (1852-1922), Mexican soldiers hung three men – probably horse thieves – from a tree near the cemetery. It is believed that the three men are buried under a clump of trees located just outside the western boundary of the cemetery.

Most of the persons buried in the Madla Cemetery are descendants of Mathias and Constantina Madla and their spouses and their relatives, but a few were friends or neighbors or employees of family members.”

(Cemeteries of Bexar County, Texas, Volume 2)

## Menchaca Cemetery

“The Menchaca Cemetery is in west Bexar County, north of Helotes. To reach the cemetery, take Highway 16 (Bandera Road) to Scenic Loop. Turn right on Menchaca Road and proceed about 0.4 of a mile to the house identified as Menchaca Ranch. Just past Menchaca Ranch are a dirt lane and then a house. The cemetery is located behind the house. *Permission should be obtained from the occupants before entering the cemetery*, which was badly overgrown with weeds and brush, when it was visited in January 2000. Some of the grave markers had no information on them or the information that had been there was no longer identifiable.”

(Cemeteries of Bexar County, Texas, Volume 2)



Pictures - George Blucker

## Lee Cemetery



George Blucker

“Lee Cemetery is located on the Lee Ranch just east of Grey Forest. *Entrance to the cemetery is via a locked gate at the end of Park Drive.* To reach Park Drive, take Scenic Loop Road from Highway 16 (Bandera Road), go east on Sherwood Trail and take the first right fork from Sherwood trail. The oldest marked grave is dated 1884. Information from the gravestones was extracted in February 2000 by San Antonio Genealogical & Historical Society members Mitzi Jackson and Patricia McCrory.”  
(Cemeteries of Bexar County, Texas, Volume 2)

According to the Lee Ranch story in Helotes Happenings, the Lee Cemetery is the resting place of original settlers Shelly Augustus Lee, a San Antonio tinsmith and Helotes farmer, his wife, Maria de la Garza Lee, and several of their children. Shelley Lee died of pneumonia at age 56, just after the birth of their last child, and his wife died three years later.

## Beavin Property Cemetery



S. Beavin

The Beavin property cemetery is located along a Helotes Creek tributary under a massive ancient oak in Grey Forest on private property. Across the creek is the home of some of the area's original settlers. This cemetery was once part of that property. One of their descendants still residing in the area remembers playing in the cemetery as a child. She recounts that Tio Juan Barrera, his two year-old child, Josepha Martinez, and Maria Martinez who died from a gun shot to the head are a few of the people buried in this cemetery. There are no marked graves and only part of one marker remains.

## Menchaca - Robles Cemetery

“ The Menchaca - Robles Family Cemetery is located on the Robles Ranch. Entrance to the ranch is on the north side of Babcock Road, about 4.5 miles from Babcock’s intersection with Loop 1604 and about 0.35 miles from its intersection with Scenic loop Road. *Permission to visit the cemetery must be obtained from Roger Robles, 13114 Brook Garden Lane, San Antonio, Texas 78232.* The land the cemetery is located on was purchased by Clemencia Menchaca, wife of Miguel Menchaca, according to Roger Robles, their great-grandson. Miguel Menchaca descended from the Canary Islanders, according to Robles. A house built by Miguel Menchaca in 1850 in what is now Grey Forest has been awarded an historical marker, Robles said. The cemetery entrance is on the west, but all the gravestones face east. There are many unmarked graves. According to family stories, Robles said people buried in one group of unmarked graves were victims of the 1918/19 flu pandemic.” (Cemeteries of Bexar County, Texas, Volume 3)



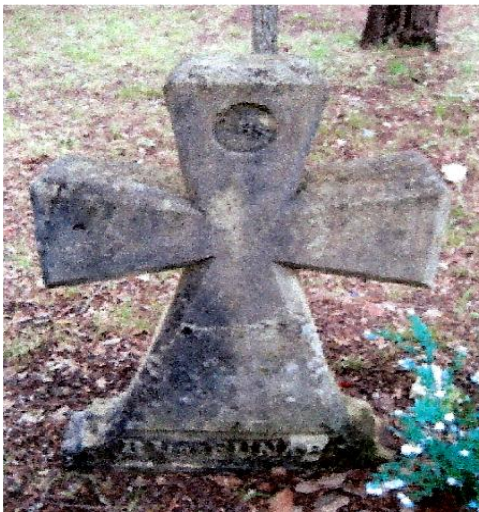
## Funari Cemetery

According to the Bexar County Land Records, this property was sold to Pietro (Petro/Pedro) Funari and his wife, Mary Lopez Funari, by William S. and Helen Alice Smith in 1904. Although resold to Richard L. Wheeler, after the couple's death, the land was subject to certain agreements between George Altgelt and Pietro Funari in 1905 for ingress and egress to that portion of the property used as the Funari family cemetery. This cemetery is now partially surrounded by Cross Mountain Ranch Subdivision and is located off Scenic Loop.

Pictured below are several of the headstones: Pietro Funari, Frank William Funari and his wife, Robbie Loree (RL) Funari (the cross).



Pictures - M. Richardson



## Heidemann Cemetery



S. Beavin

The cemetery on the Heidemann-Barrera Settlement & Cemetery Complex is the burial site for 7 Heidemann family members and spouses. Information on the family members buried here are available at and may not be used in this publication.

## Altgelt Cemetery



George Altgelt

The section below appears in this booklet in the **Historic Homes, Farms and Ranches**:

From **“The Handbook of Texas Online**:

**“MAVERICK RANCH** in Bexar County. The ranch was established in 1869 when Ernst Hermann and Emma (Murck) Altgelt.” “The ranch was their summer home, and Mrs. Altgelt named it Wassenberg, a name used by subsequent owners. Both Altgelts are buried on the ranch.”

## Historic Homes, Farms and Ranches

There are many privately owned historic homes and ranches along the Corridor, some as early as the mid-1800s. Prehistoric sites are features of several of these homesteads. We present here a few of the more prominent homesteads, farms and ranches as located on the Corridor from South to North.

## Marnoch House

This unique limestone house is a rare edifice in this part of Texas. Built in 1845 by George Marnoch, a Scottish immigrant, the home is influenced predominately by Mexican and German architectural styles, typical of structures in Fredericksburg and other German communities. The interior wood was hauled from the port of Indianola by ox cart. George's son, Gabriel, became a famous doctor, not as much for his physician's skills, but as that of a naturalist. He discovered the Balcones Fault and the "barking frog", a rare native to this area. Hoof prints on the staircase are said to be the results of bringing the horses upstairs during Comanche raids. A Palo Alto College student conducting a small town history, as well as the Helotes government website, provided some of this detail.

This property was later owned by Mrs. & Mrs. Charles Brown, Jr. and used to be the location of the Helotes Echo publication. Lucy Brown, a long-time resident of Helotes, related many stories of the town's early days to a fourth grade elementary class. These were later transcribed in "The Lucy Story", but copies are difficult to find.



B. Colangelo

## Madla Ranch Complex

In the 1850's Mathias Madla, his wife, Constantina (Kral), and their daughter, Anna, came from Prussia, now Poland aboard the *Hamburg* on 28 March 1855. They were the first Madlas to settle in this area. Constantina was pregnant with their second child, Frank E. Madla. They settled in the Helotes area in the 1860s-70s. Later Frank married Francisca Menchaca and acquired approximately 1,000 acres along the Chiminea Creek, later known as the Madla Ranch. He built a permanent home between the José Torres and Pedro Treviño Ranches. The home was completed in 1891 and the couple lived there with his parents.



Picture of the house before the fire destroyed the separate kitchen house (Left)

Courtesy J & F. Madla



Pictures

Aug 2010

S. Beavin



## The José Torres Ranch

According to family stories Anita Madla and José Torres (from Spain) met, fell in love and married on the ship, the *Hamburg*, sailing from Germany to America. José was a renowned violinist and Anita was only 12 years old. Upon arrival to America, Anita traveled to Texas with her parents, while José fulfilled his commitment with an orchestra in New York before joining her. Anita and José had 10 children that survived to adulthood. José farmed and raised livestock. They are both buried in the Madla Cemetery. This property is part of the Madla Ranch Complex.



José Torres House

S. Beavin

## Madla Ranch Campground

In 1924 E.N. Requa's nearby Scenic Loop Playground was being promoted, drawing many San Antonio residents to the area. Jesse Madla built a dam and cabin on the Chiminea Creek and opened up a campground to the public. In 1932 he married his wife, Aurora, and together they operated the campground until 1971.



Ca 1907

Courtesy M. & D. Langford

## Stage Coach Ruins and Indian Site

Betty Muyres is a descendant of six generations of settlers who live in the Scenic Loop Valley. She stands before the ruins of a stagecoach station on her family land. University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA) researchers determined that the building was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century.

A cellar in the building was used for food storage for more than a family. Its proximity to Helotes Creek provided ample drinking water, and the location on Scenic Loop Road made it a likely place for travelers to stop. Betty says that this was a stagecoach road to New Mexico.



B. Colangelo

The Muyre's property also has ancient resident Indian middens, some dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, as researched by a class from the Center for Archaeological Research - UTSA in 1978. A layering of civilizations is apparent, the area being popular because of the prevalence of game and water.

Betty relates stories told to her of the buffalo taking three days to migrate through the area on their way to the coastal plains. The area would rumble like an earthquake as the buffalo stormed through. Residence took shelter for that period of time. In earlier days Indians would herd the buffalo towards the local cliffs, forcing them over to their death.

## Menchaca House

The Miguel Menchaca House is known locally by many names. It received its historical marker under the name *La Quinta de las Piedras*. Most know the property as *The Herb Farm*, as a former couple ran an herb farm and tea room. Today's owner lovingly calls it *Casa Luna*, as she delights in watching the full moon rise over the hills.

The original stone structure was built in 1858 by Miguel Menchaca. Some say he lived there for eight years before selling it to the Lazarin - Martinez family who exercised "squatter's rights while he was away in Mexico. The thick walls have gun-slits, as evidenced in the 1912 photograph below. These were used for observation and defense. A natural spring under the main room supplied water for the residents and animals, brought in from their adjacent corral in times of siege.

In addition to the main dwelling and corral, there were stables, workmen's cottages and later a separate kitchen house (ca 1865). Skeletons were found behind the kitchen house and in the family cemetery across the creek. The first photo is of the Lazarin-Cadena family. The second shows renovations made by descendants in 1924.




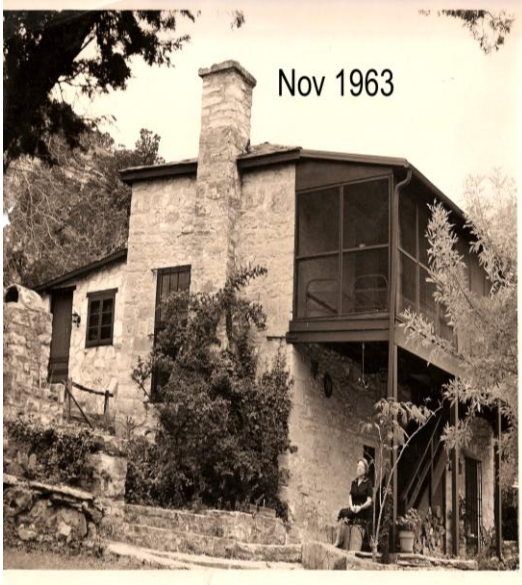
Cadena relative

C. Massey



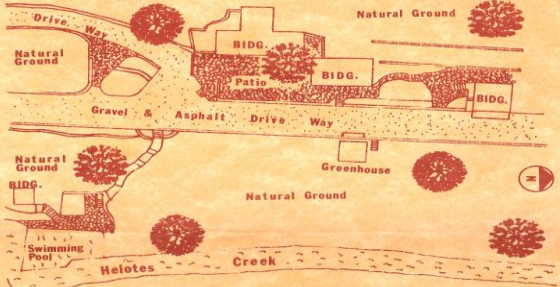
By the early 1950's a large concrete swimming pool was added, and a few interior upgrades were completed in the 1960's.

Mrs. Howard Pardue received an historical marker from the San Antonio Conservation Society in 1963. She is pictured below, seated on the edge of the patio. She sold the six acres across the creek to her daughter, Louise Purvis, and the main complex to the Holmgrens (see sales flyer). It has changed hands several times since then.



**LA QUINTA DE LAS PIEDRAS**  
HOME OF MIGUEL MENCHACA. DESCENDANT OF PROMINENT CANARY ISLANDERS WHO CAME TO TEXAS, 1731. STONE VILLA BUILT IN 1850s. IN ITS THICK ROCK WALLS ARE "GUN-SLITS" FOR OBSERVATION, DEFENSE. SPRING UNDER HOUSE SUPPLIED WATER IN TIMES OF SIEGE.  
RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1966

A rare opportunity for you to own a piece of Texas History located on Scenic Loop Drive in Grey Forrest is at hand. Combine history and imagination and the result is a truly unique experience.



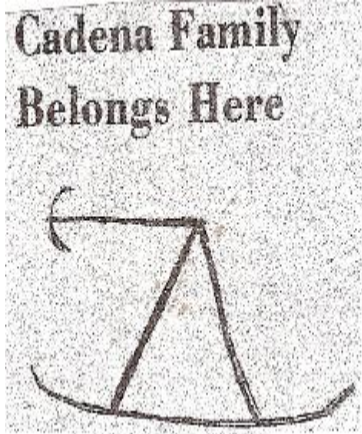
This declared historical landmark, serenely distant from the rigors of city life, is located on Scenic Loop Road. Four limestone buildings dating to the 1850s nestle into hand-stacked stone terracing, bordered by Helotes Creek. Situated on five acres, property includes a 75-foot pool fed by a natural spring well. A unique property we are proud to show.

For more information, please contact:



## Cadena French House

Some of the earliest settlers in the Helotes area have records dating back to the conquistadores, and among these are the descendants of the Cadena family. Maximo Cadena's brand (below) was registered in 1852 in Bexar County. It shows the hat of the conquistadores and a sword as part of the motif. Both sides of the Cadena family obtained original land grants.



This brand was registered by Don Maximo Cadena in Bexar County in 1852.

San Antonio Express News Ca 1964

The tiny house pictured below is currently owned by Ida Cadena, Betty Muiyre's aunt, and is located on Scenic Loop Road at the edge of Grey Forest. It was built in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and was owned by a French family during the Civil War. Several French families also made their homes on nearby Boerne Stage Road. The small community included several artists. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, artists again moved to the Grey Forest area which continues to have a large community of artists showing their work each October in their Open Studio Art Walk.



B. Colangelo

## Barrera House

Land records of Bexar County indicate that Juan Barrera purchased this property out of the J.M. Ross Survey #227 and sold it to his son, Ernest Barrera, Sr. and his wife, Sally M. Barrera on October 5, 1931. Bexar County Appraisal District lists the age of the house as 1932, although it is possibly older. The Barrera and Cadenas families are related and both families have been in the area since the 1850's.

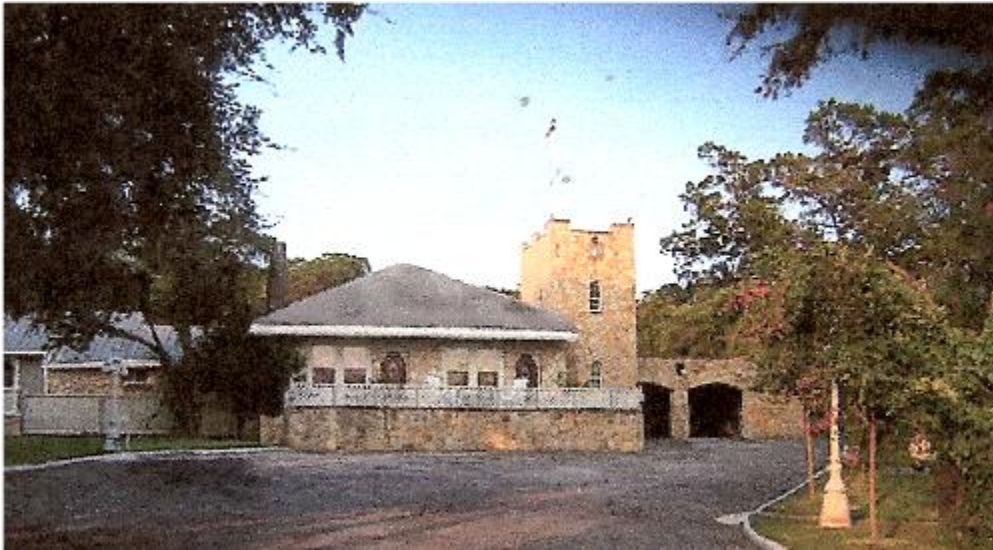
The current owner purchased the home from Ernest Barrera, Jr. and his wife, Esperanza Barrera, in 1990, later adding the "Alamo" top to the building.



S. Beavin

## Grey Stone Manor

Constructed of native limestone rock by some of the original Canary Islanders who settled the area, the home was owned by the original family until purchased by the current owners in 1994. Grey Stone Manor has been converted into a tranquil, secluded getaway for guests.



Main Building

picture from their website <http://greystonebnb.com/>



Entry

S. Beavin

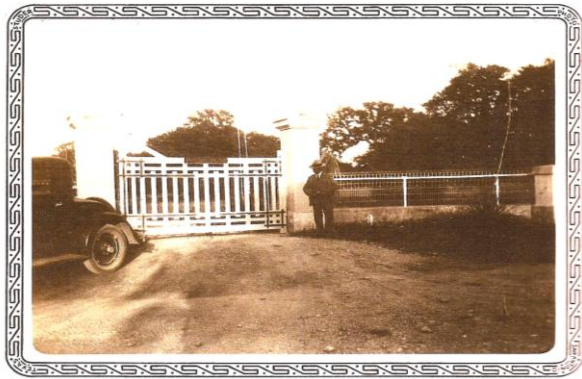
## Buena Vista - Duerler Ranch

Gustav Duerler was born in Germany and arrived in Texas at age eight. He became a printer, newspaperman and prominent San Antonio merchant. Duerler operated a store selling candy and ice cream soda called “Dolly Vardens”, after the fashionable dress, and Duerlerbrew. Having bartered with the Native Americans for pecans and hiring Mexicans to use railroad spikes to shell them, Duerler is also noted for shipping the first 50 barrels of shelled pecans to the East coast markets.

The Duerler Victorian summer home on Scenic Loop Road was built around 1886 and was constructed of cut limestone and wood frame with 18” thick walls. A gazebo was surrounded by a formal garden with a fountain imported from France. Horses and cattle roam the meadows dotted with large majestic oaks now as they did in the past.

Several generations of the Duerler family enjoyed this tranquil location. At one point this property was leased by the King Ranch. Later half of the property was sold and is now Stagecoach Hills Subdivision.

Below: 1937 picture of the gate (San Antonio Conservation Society) & a 2007 picture of the same view (J. Nottingham).



Below: the Duerlers relaxing at home; and a ca 1890 view of the home. (Both courtesy Marlene Richardson)



## Tarry Bank

In 1913 Florence Throckmorton, a Swift heiress from Chicago, and her husband, C. Wickliffe Throckmorton, purchased the northern acreage named Winslow Ranch at the time. Throckmorton had been stationed at Ft. Sam during his military duties, and fell in love with the hill country. He hired a Major who was the Club Officer at the Officers Club at Fort Sam Houston as the builder of the house. Using government equipment and personnel, he dynamited the hill for the swimming pool, leveled out the top of the hill for the playing field where the tennis court is now, built the retaining wall for a lawn, and built the house with quarters and garage. He not only used government equipment and personnel but also government funds that he stole from the Officer's Club. The builder was eventually apprehended and sent to jail. The Throckmortons moved to New York. In 1922, J.B. Smythe purchased the property and added the sleeping porch and back bathroom and laundry.

The property changed ownership several times before being purchased in 1934 by H.M. Crighton, the Pinsons' grandfather who in 1936 also purchased the southern acreage known then as Many Waters Ranch because of the many springs. Harry Crighton named his family home Tarry Bank after the original Crighton home in Scotland.

An architect friend of the family believes that the structure of the house is typical of Russian summer houses of the Georgian area around the Black Sea with the long narrow hallway for tea trolleys connecting the bedrooms and the public rooms, and the wide porches to catch breezes. The house is not typical of those being built in Texas at that time which normally featured limestone exteriors and tin roofs. The house's sunken bathtubs were also not usual for that time.

Visitors to the courtyard have noticed strong similarities in the original elements to the work of Ellen Biddle Shipman, a notable and prolific landscape designer from New York whose work spanned the years from 1914 to 1946 and included numerous commissions in Texas and Louisiana. Future research will determine whether Shipman was more than an influence on the design of the rectangular fish pond, attenuated stone path on the central axis, bench, and arbor with gabled roof.

According to the family, the furniture of primary interest is the dining room suite, commissioned by the Crightons. The pieces were constructed by a local German craftsman using wood from the local cedar trees. He had planned to simply lay the boards parallel and cut them in a circle, but then learned that the Crightons actually wanted small, pie-shaped pieces cut and fit together to make a sunburst design. This construction, of course, took months instead of weeks. When the dining room table was finally completed and ready to be put into place, it was too large to fit through the doorway. The door frame and transom had to be removed to allow it to be moved into the house! The table and Welsh dresser remain more or less intact 70 years later, but only two of the original set of matching chairs remain.

The yellow house on the property was a 1900 Victorian moved from Main Street in Boerne in 1980. The lot where it stood across the street from the bakery is still empty. There were three little cottages in a row all probably built at the same time. Hallie Crighton Pinson Guthrie completely changed its interior to create three bedrooms and small baths and she enlarged - almost doubled - the porch at the back at that time.

Tarry Bank



Pictures - Mary Fenstermaker

## **Barrera Ranch-Heidemann Farm Complex**

The Barrera Ranch-Heidemann Family Settlement and Cemetery contains excellent examples of log and stone buildings dating back to the 1860s. These Texas vernacular structures are typically associated with traditional Texas Hill Country ranches of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The three pen log house, barn, well, smokehouse, along with other outbuildings, are located on the original tract of land originally sold to William Heidemann and William Hausmann in 1856.

William Heidemann was born in Hanover, Prussia in 1825. He was one of the new wave of immigrants to arrive at the Port of Galveston on July 1, 1852. Heidemann renounced his allegiance to the King of Prussia and was granted citizenship in the U.S. in 1867 after the Civil War.

Shortly after arriving in Bexar County, William Heidemann joined with William Hausmann to purchase 320 acres of land on Leon Springs Creek from Benjamin R. Sappington, assignee of Mateo Casillas. Heidemann and Hausmann formed a ranching and farming partnership in which they shared land, farm implements, livestock and crop production. The partnership was dissolved in 1873 and the land was divided through a lawsuit and court order. The property boundaries were further clarified in 1896 when a dispute over the permanent water hole was settled.

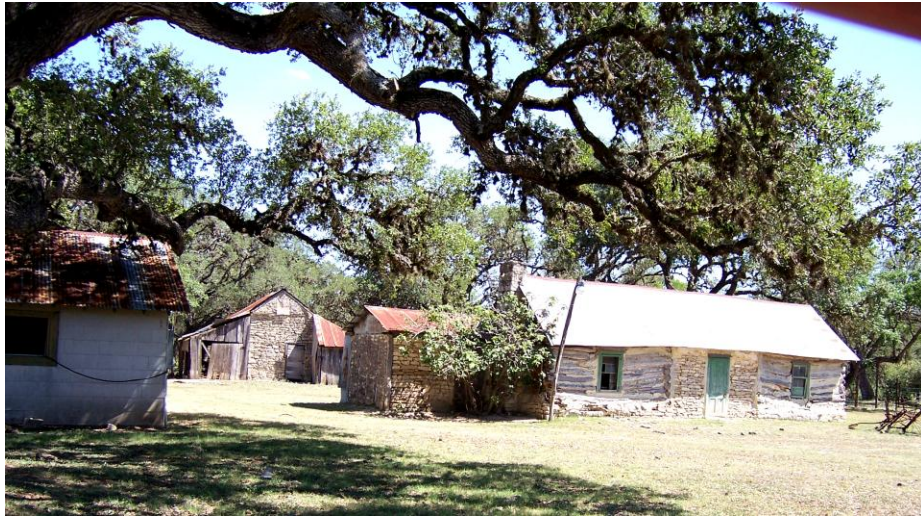
William Heidemann married Lizzy Obert in 1862. They had five sons, two of whom married into the nearby Emilienberg family. Other families associated with the Heidemann's were Liebe, Mockert and Pfeiffer.

The current property, which is comprised of 175.51 acres of the original 320 acres, was in the Heidemann family for 137 years. They lived on the land and engaged in farming and ranching. In 1993, Mrs. Jewel Heidemann, a retired school teacher and widow of Emil Heidemann, sold the land to Roy Barrera, Sr., although Mrs. Heidemann retained a life estate on the property until her death in 1999. The cemetery on the property is the burial site for 7 Heidemann family members and spouses.

Pat Ezell, Historical Researcher  
Historic Farm and Ranch Committee  
San Antonio Conservation Society

Note: In 2007, the State Board of Review of the Texas Historical Commission approved the nomination of this property to be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places

## Barrera - Heidemann Farm Complex



Pictures -S. Beavin



## Old Hermes Place

Located near Dos Cerros (Two Hills) and the Boerne Stage Airport is a complex of buildings along the Old Spanish Trail, midway between Leon Springs and Boerne, Texas. Some of the oldest of these buildings have square cut limestone. The one pictured below has gun slits instead of windows. These openings look similar to the longbow openings in European castles.



Charlotte Kahl

## Maverick Ranch - Fromme Farm

The history of the Maverick Ranch - Fromme Farm is well known. The complex has appropriately been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. A brief summary of its history can be read below in the Handbook of Texas Online.



Pictures S. Beavin

From "The Handbook of Texas Online:

**"MAVERICK RANCH.** The Maverick Ranch, in Bexar County twenty-five miles northwest of San Antonio on the old San Antonio-Fredericksburg Road, comprises approximately 850 acres of Hill Country covered with native oaks, grasses, shrubs and madrone trees. A walled spring on the site feeds a tributary of Leon Creek. A written account reports an Indian raid in 1870 or 1871, and several early Indian campsites on the location have been documented. The ranch was established in 1869 when Ernst Hermann and Emma (Murck) Altgelt built the main house of Fachwerk and limestone (see German Vernacular Architecture), a portion of which burned in 1916, and a separate kitchen with bedrooms, limestone schoolhouse, and log blacksmith cabin. The ranch was their summer home, and Mrs. Altgelt named it Wassenberg, a name used by subsequent owners. Both Altgelts are buried on the ranch. Another site on the ranch includes the stone foundation of a house and high stone pens of George and Maria Obert's homestead. In the late 1860s cattle driven north were penned here overnight, and Maria Obert served meals to the drivers. The Obert land was sold to Emma Altgelt in 1883, and later the whole ranch was sold to Gustav Schmeltzer.

In January 1907 George Madison and Mary Vance Maverick bought the ranch for a summer home to escape the heat of San Antonio, Maverick added several barns and a cottage and planned pens for efficient handling of livestock. He stocked the ranch with angora goats and a few cattle, and Mary designed the ranch brand. James Vance, Mary's brother, served as ranch manager for years; later Maverick's grandson, George Maverick Green, was manager. In 1985 the ranch raised longhorn cattle and continued to be run by the family. In the 1870s the ranch's stone schoolhouse provided the first school in the area for students who walked from neighboring farms and ranches. For several years in the 1970s it held a Saturday-morning country school for San Antonio children. The ranch has served as a regional center for cultural development, and its land and buildings have often inspired visitors. Members of each Maverick generation have been writers, historians, educators or artists. Their works are found throughout the houses, and a wall of the kitchen house is devoted to ranch scenes. Visitors to the ranch have included artist Julian Onderdonk, historians Frederick C. Chabot and Charles W. Ramsdell, and the Yanaguana Society. Mary Rowena Maverick Green made the ranch her home for several years. As president of the Texas chapter of the National Women's party, she met with other members at the ranch to work for ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. In 1979 the ranch was placed on the National register of Historic Places, along with a neighboring farm belonging to the family. The large area is designated as the Maverick-Altgelt Ranch and Fenstermaker-Fromme Farm Historical Archaeological District.

<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/MM/apin7.html>

10/18/2006

George Altgelt



B. Fenstermaker



## The Conrad Adam House

Of Prussian descent, Conrad Adam, born in 1828, came to Kendall County, Texas with his brother, Carl, in 1854. Conrad purchased the title to this land in 1874, part of Genubath Winn & R. S. Simmons estate, originally granted to Antonio Cruz by the Mexican Government. Mr. Adams bought 116 acres for \$425.00.

With his wife, Adelbertha, and their six children, Conrad farmed, helped Carl with his meat business and raised as many as 120 horses. The horses were sold to build this two story rock house. Mr. Schoenert, the contractor, completed the house in one year.

Originally there was a widow's walk used to watch the stagecoaches until the 1930's, when it burned. The double porch was replaced with a single porch after WWII. An outside wooden staircase, ripped off by a severe storm, left two daughters trapped upstairs, so indoor stairs were built. There was a small cellar near the front part of the house.

The house was inherited by Conrad's son, Julius, and his wife, Ida, who they lived until 1959. The house sold several times and was remolded with each sale. After an extended period of vacancy, the Mujlchers completed a "drastic renovation". Once donning an historic marker, now removed, the building in the current site of a local business. Adam's descendants live next door.



**ADAM (CONRAD), HOUSE**  
**Scenic Loop Road, Boerne**  
**Library File #300.001**



S. Beavin

## Eco-tourism

There are two properties along the Corridor that offer wildlife viewing and historical information, one of which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Scenic Springs

“Scenic Springs is nestled in historic Grey Forest, Texas, just past the Grey Moss Inn (from Scenic Springs website) is the approximate location of the 1930’s Wildlife Lodge. Currently Scenic Springs is host to weddings and health spa.



Beavin

The Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Corridor is fortunate to list two properties, one on each leg of the road, that exhibit what the Texas Hill Country has to offer.

The Heart of Texas Wildlife Trails – East (HOTE) states that Texas was the first state in the nation to build wildlife viewing driving trails that provide economic incentives to landowners and communities to conserve habitats while providing recreational opportunities for the traveling public. These trails provide wildlife viewers as invitation to experience for themselves the abundant natural resources of Texas. The description below lists a plethora of experiences for the visitor.

### **82 HOTE 082 Scenic Springs Wildlife Lodge**

**Suggested Seasons to visit: All Seasons**  
**Site access restricted. Call ahead. Fee charged.**

From I-10 in Leon Springs, go west on Boerne Stage Rd. for 3.0 miles to stop sign. Turn left on Scenic Loop Rd. and follow 4.3 miles to gate on right.

This beautiful Hill Country property offers a rustic lodge with a natural rock spring-fed swimming pool. Habitats include juniper/oak woodlands and riparian hardwoods along Helotes Creek. White-tailed Deer are commonly seen, as are an assortment of frogs, bats, lizards, and snakes. Birds to look for include Red-shouldered Hawk, Scrub Jay, Bewick’s Wren, Inca Dove, Western Kingbird, and House Finch. Butterflies and dragonflies can be seen along the creek and in the fields of wildflowers. The owners have extensive knowledge of the natural history and rich cultural heritage of this site and the surrounding area.

Phone: 210-695-2533/8008.

## Maverick Ranch - Fromme Farm



J. Nottingham

In addition to its rich cultural heritage, this working ranch currently serves as a prominent site along the Heart of Texas Wildlife Trail - East. (Below)

### **81 HOTE 081 Maverick Ranch-Fromme Farm** **Suggested Seasons to visit: All Seasons**

**Site access restricted. Call ahead. Fee charged.**

70

From prehistory to early German immigrants, Longhorn cattle drives, and mavericks, this working ranch has provided habitat for native Texas wildlife. The vegetation is diverse and includes juniper oak woodlands, mixed brush, and wildflower meadows. The owners maintain an extensive plant list of almost 250 species. The ranch provides nesting habitat for Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-capped Vireo, Painted Bunting, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Greater Roadrunner, Golden-fronted and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Bushtit, and White-eyed Vireo. Winter residents include Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Brown Creeper. Reptiles include Bullsnake, Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, and Texas Rat Snake. White-tailed Deer, Armadillos, Coyotes, Skunks, Opossums, Jackrabbits, Rock Squirrels, and Cottontails are abundant.

Phone: 830-981-4477/4202. Call for Directions.

## **Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance**

# Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance

## Who We Are

### **Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to preserve the original nature of Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor, rich with legend, history and a fragile environment subject to an immediate danger of losing its unique character and tranquility.

### **Our Primary Goals Are to:**

- Encourage legislation to declare the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor an historic route
- Encourage responsible development along the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor
- Encourage landowners to seek conservation easements
- Encourage landowners to consider environmental uses of their land
- Limit traffic and protect the scenic ambiance of the roadway
- Protect the water quality and quantity
- Protect the endangered and threatened species and their habitats
- Protect the Corridor's rural and historic heritage
- Protect heritage ranches and majestic trees
- Create a buffer zone from encroaching development
- Join with other organizations, local cities and citizens to purchase select parcels of properties for recreational and educational purposes

**The Scenic Loop- Boerne Stage Corridor** has documented archaeological sites, numerous historic homes and cemeteries, a unique, fragile ecosystem with endangered species above and below ground, aquifers critical to our area and San Antonio, an original Stage Line and part of the Old Spanish Trail. The Corridor includes: the upper and lower portions of Scenic Loop Road; Boerne Stage Road to the Kendall County Line and Boerne Stage Road to Leon Springs; Toutant-Beauregard Road from the Scenic Loop intersection to the Kendall County Line; and the upper section of Babcock Road, north of Loop 1605. It is worthy of all attempts at preservation and historic designation.

The Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance is a group of local citizens who completed research for the historic designation of the Scenic Loop Playground and Grey Forest in 2007. They felt the significance of the corridor from Bandera Rd (Hwy 16) to the Kendall County line at the Balcones Creek should also receive such a designation.

### **History of Saving Scenic Loop**

In 1985 the "Save Scenic Loop" group emerged in an effort to protect Scenic Loop from being widened. They began the process, but the creation and protection of what is now Government Canyon diverted their progress. Although they were successful in stopping the road expansion, and to have Camp Bullis removed from becoming a thoroughfare into Scenic Loop, the Helotes vs Wal-Mart battle made clear the necessity of protecting the road. Sharon and Bill Colangelo produced a booklet, Secrets of Scenic Loop, for a walking tour to raise money for the Helotes Heritage Association. We have expanded this booklet to include the Boerne Stage Road. on-going process, as we continue to research and assimilate material.

The Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance effort to educate local citizens and garner letters of support



S. Beavin



The Scenic Loop Corridor was used as a local fundraiser in 2008.



**The Helotes History Fundraiser**

**Help support Helotes City Council members**

**Guillerma Contreras  
Alina Matutes-Eckhardt  
J.B. Richeson**

Professional tour guide Betty Muyres will lead an exploration of Helotes' most historic sites.

Sunday, March 9, 2008  
2 - 4 pm

Meet at Scenic Loop Playground at 1:45 pm

18249 Sherwood Trail  
Grey Forest, Texas

Participants will travel between sites in their own vehicles.  
A reception to follow at the final site with light refreshments served.

**Tour Itinerary**  
*Don't miss this rare opportunity to see some of the most significant and historic sites in Helotes:*

- Scenic Loop Playground
- The Menchaca house, cemetery, and limestone kiln
- The Helotes stagecoach stop on Scenic Loop
- The Marnoch House on Scenic Loop
- The Gugger house in Old Town Helotes

**Adults: \$25**

**Children \$5**

**Please make your check payable to one of your council members and mail to:**

**Alina Matutes-Eckhardt  
10747 Bar X Trail  
Helotes, TX 78023**

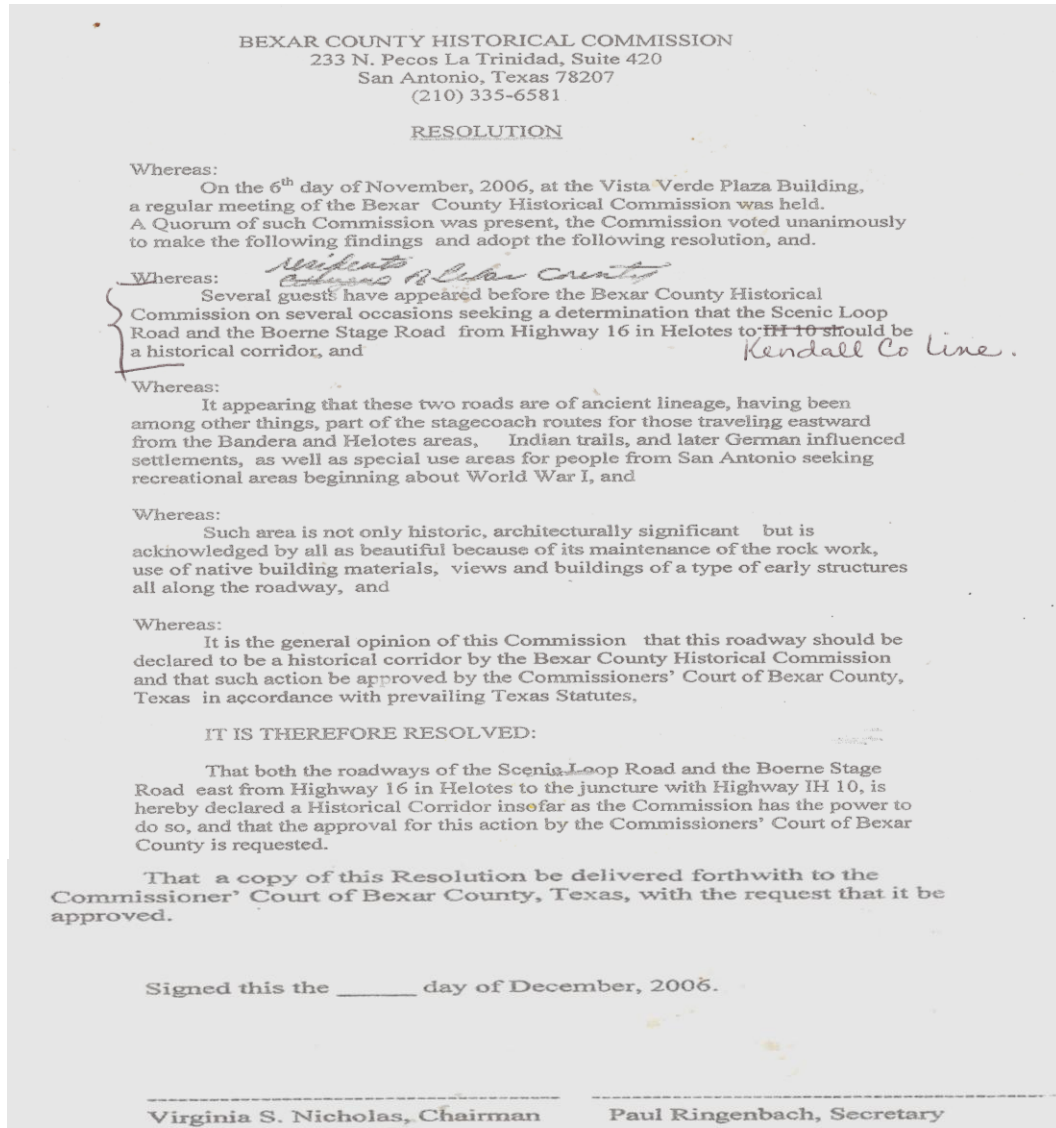
**For questions please call 771.5319**

**Thank you!**

# Successes and On-going Efforts

## Bexar County Historical Commission and Commissioners Court

In 2007, our original edition of the Booklet was presented to the Bexar County Historical Commission, who agreed it was time to make an historic designation of the Corridor official. They wrote a resolution and sent it to the Bexar County Commissioners Court. The Court presented the Alliance with a 5-signature Proclamation for this designation, but the San Antonio City attorney's office and Bexar County Environmental Engineer found that the county was no longer able to make such designations.



February 9, 2007

The Honorable Nelson Wolff  
Bexar County Judge  
Bexar County Court House  
100 Dolorosa  
San Antonio, TX 78205

Dear Judge Wolff:

The preservation of history is important to the overall character of northwest Bexar County and the northern portion of House District 117. I am very pleased to support the efforts of the community to establish this portion of Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor as a historical trail.

At a time when demand for transportation infrastructure is being altered to meet the demands of new development of the area, I welcome the efforts made to preserve the history of the area between Helotes and Grey Forest so that we as a society do not lose track of the importance of our history and beauty of our environment.

I gladly support and endorse the proposal to designate Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor as a historical trail as submitted by the citizens of Bexar County to the Bexar County Historical Commission.

Please feel free to contact me if there is anything I can do to assist in this effort. My staff or I can be reached at (210) 327-0759.

Sincerely,

David McQuade Leibowitz  
State Representative, District 117

DML:msh



**BEXAR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**

BEXAR COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
100 DOLOROSA, STE. 1.20  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78205-3038  
(210) 335-2555 Telephone • (210) 335-2926 Fax • www.bexar.org

NELSON W. WOLFF  
COUNTY JUDGE

SERGIO "CHICO" RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 1

PAUL ELIZONDO  
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 2

LYLE LARSON  
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 3

TOMMY ADKISSON  
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 4

March 12, 2007

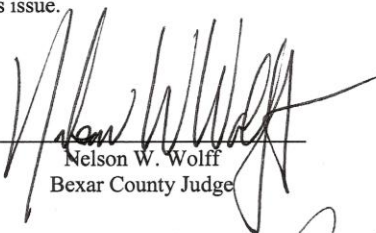
The Honorable David McQuade Leibowitz  
Texas House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768-2910


Dear Representative Leibowitz:


The Bexar County Commissioners Court appreciates and supports your efforts to secure expanded authority for certain counties to protect the natural and historic resources that make us unique. Within the area known as the Texas Hill Country, not only our environment but also our economy depends on the continued availability of clean drinking water, open space, and treasured historic and cultural sites.


For these reasons we support your bill **HB 3328, Relating to land development in certain counties**. It is appropriate that citizens, who frequently communicate their concerns about the negative impacts of development in the unincorporated area, should have an opportunity to grant us authority commensurate with the responsibility we already feel to protect our constituents' way of life.

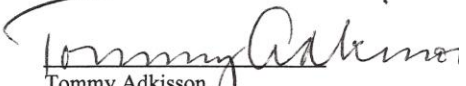
Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

  
Nelson W. Wolff  
Bexar County Judge

  
Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez  
Commissioner, Precinct 1

  
Lyle Larson  
Commissioner, Precinct 3

  
Paul Elizondo  
Commissioner, Precinct 2

  
Tommy Adkisson  
Commissioner, Precinct 4

## Preservation Texas Most Endangered Listing

The Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor was recently listed on the prestigious Preservation Texas "Most Endangered Places 2009".

Preservation Texas Most Endangered Sites 2009 Press Conference, The Capitol, Austin, TX



C. Kahl



S. Beavin

S. Beavin



Local Press Conference at Scenic Loop Playground Club, Grey Forest, TX



February 11, 2009

RELEASE ON RECEIPT

For more information, contact: Krista Schreiner Gebbia, 512-472-0102 (O)/703-254-3474 (cell)  
Krista@preservationtexas.org  
Shirley Wills, 210-822-2378 (O)/210-365-4488 (cell)  
[shirleywills@stic.net](mailto:shirleywills@stic.net) Photos available on request.  
Local Spokesperson: Jennifer Nottingham,  
[jennottingham@satx.rr.com](mailto:jennottingham@satx.rr.com)

**PRESERVATION TEXAS NAMES SCENIC LOOP-BOERNE STAGE CORRIDOR  
IN BEXAR COUNTY TO ITS SIXTH ANNUAL LIST OF  
TEXAS' MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES**

*Sites in Austin, El Paso, Fort Worth, Galveston, Houston, San Antonio,  
Central Texas, and East Texas Included on 2009 List*

AUSTIN, TEXAS...Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor, from Helotes to Boerne in Bexar County, is among the 11 sites that Preservation Texas, Inc. has named to its sixth annual list of *Texas' Most Endangered Historic Places*.

Preservation Texas officials announced the selections on the steps of the Texas State Capitol on February 11, Preservation Day 2009.

Created as a driving route in the 1920s, the Scenic Loop was originally 46.3 miles roundtrip from downtown San Antonio, located at the base of the Hill Country. Scenic Loop Road is a winding road that follows the Helotes Creek in a valley that encompasses the city of Grey Forest and connects with Boerne Stage Road. The history of the area spans several thousands of years. Along the route is evidence of prehistoric archaeological sites, 19th-century rock structures, the Old Spanish Trail, hill country vistas, historic farms and ranch lands including the Maverick Ranch, and natural resources.

The remaining scenic and historic route is approximately 10 miles. From the south at Highway 16, Scenic Loop Road winds along creeks and springs and continues up the hills to connect with the Boerne Stage Road. At that point, the road turns north and continues as Boerne Stage Road to the Balcones Creek at the Kendall County line.

"Like the other places on our 2009 endangered list, the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor reflects the increasing awareness across our state of the importance of preserving sites that have played important roles in the physical and natural history of our state," said Libby Buuck, president of Preservation Texas, Inc., a statewide partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "From churches and schools to parks and private residences, the sites represent places that are as important to our history and way of life as longhorn cattle and 10-gallon hats. Many have been such an important part of our heritage that it is easy to take them for granted. By calling attention to them now, we want to encourage residents to act while there's still time."

Buuck added that each individual listing is threatened by possible destruction, adverse development or neglect, and each has a compelling reason for being saved. "These sites represent the most eminent needs and highest probability for positive action," she said.

Preservation Texas, Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization that advocates for preserving the historic resources in Texas.

SL-BSA 2009 Open House



Pictures by S. Beavin

## Legislation

In the last few years, Bexar County has actively pursued acquiring county power in San Antonio's ETJ without any success. Several State Representatives have made the same attempts and one has attempted to have the "grandfathering" of property repealed, again without any success.

In 2009 Representative Leibowitz agreed to introduce a bill, HB 2501 (see below) requesting designation of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor as an historic route. Members of the SL-BS Alliance visited all the legislators representing the area, and spoke before the Transportation Committee in Austin supporting our bill and giving each member a copy of our Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Booklet. Questions regarding road markers required and paid for by Texas Department of Transportation and requirements for the Texas Historical Commission to publish this designation in their publications concerned several Transportation Committee members. With the additional time constraints, this bill "died in committee". (see bill next page)

This 2010/11 legislative session, Representative Leibowitz will again introduce a similar bill, and once again we are hopeful. We recognize that the passage of such a bill will not have any "teeth" as far as regulations or restrictions, however, that such a designation is another layer to make others aware of the significance of such an historic route. We also hope to have at least one story board on the Corridor to help educate the public. So many of the residents in Northwest Bexar County are new to the area and are not aware of its history. We are very grateful for Representative David Leibowitz's continued support.

By: Leibowitz

H.B. No. 2501

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to the creation of the Scenic Loop--Boerne Stage Road  
3 Driving Trail.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 442, Government Code, is  
6 amended by adding Section 442.024 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 442.024. SCENIC LOOP--BOERNE STAGE ROAD DRIVING TRAIL.

8 (a) The commission shall create a scenic driving trail that follows  
9 part of the Old Spanish Trail automobile highway in Bexar and  
10 Kendall Counties and consists of four legs. The first leg begins at  
11 State Highway 16 in Helotes and continues north on the Scenic Loop  
12 Road to the intersection of the Boerne Stage Road and the Toutant  
13 Beauregard Road. The second leg begins at the Boerne Stage Road in  
14 Leon Springs and continues west to the intersection of the Scenic  
15 Loop Road and the Toutant Beauregard Road. The third leg begins at  
16 the intersection of the Scenic Loop Road, the Boerne Stage Road, and  
17 the Toutant Beauregard Road and continues west on the Toutant  
18 Beauregard Road to the Kendall County line. The fourth leg begins  
19 at the intersection of the Scenic Loop Road, the Boerne Stage Road,  
20 and the Toutant Beauregard Road and continues north on the Boerne  
21 Stage Road to the Kendall County line then continues on the Scenic  
22 Loop Road to Boerne in Kendall County.

23 (b) The scenic driving trail created by the commission shall  
24 be known as the Scenic Loop--Boerne Stage Road Driving Trail. The

1 Texas Department of Transportation shall erect a marker identifying  
2 the Scenic Loop--Boerne Stage Road Driving Trail at appropriate  
3 intermediate sites and at each end of each of the four legs of the  
4 Scenic Loop--Boerne Stage Road Driving Trail.

5 (c) The commission shall promote the scenic driving trail in  
6 the materials and travel brochures promoting the Texas Heritage  
7 Trails Regions.

8 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.

## The Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan

The creation of SEPHCP is a three year process involving US Fish and Wildlife, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, landowners, and representatives from the environmental, real estate, developer, and engineering communities, as well as governmental representatives from Bexar and several surrounding counties. We look forward to the success of this mitigation plan. <http://sephcp.com/>



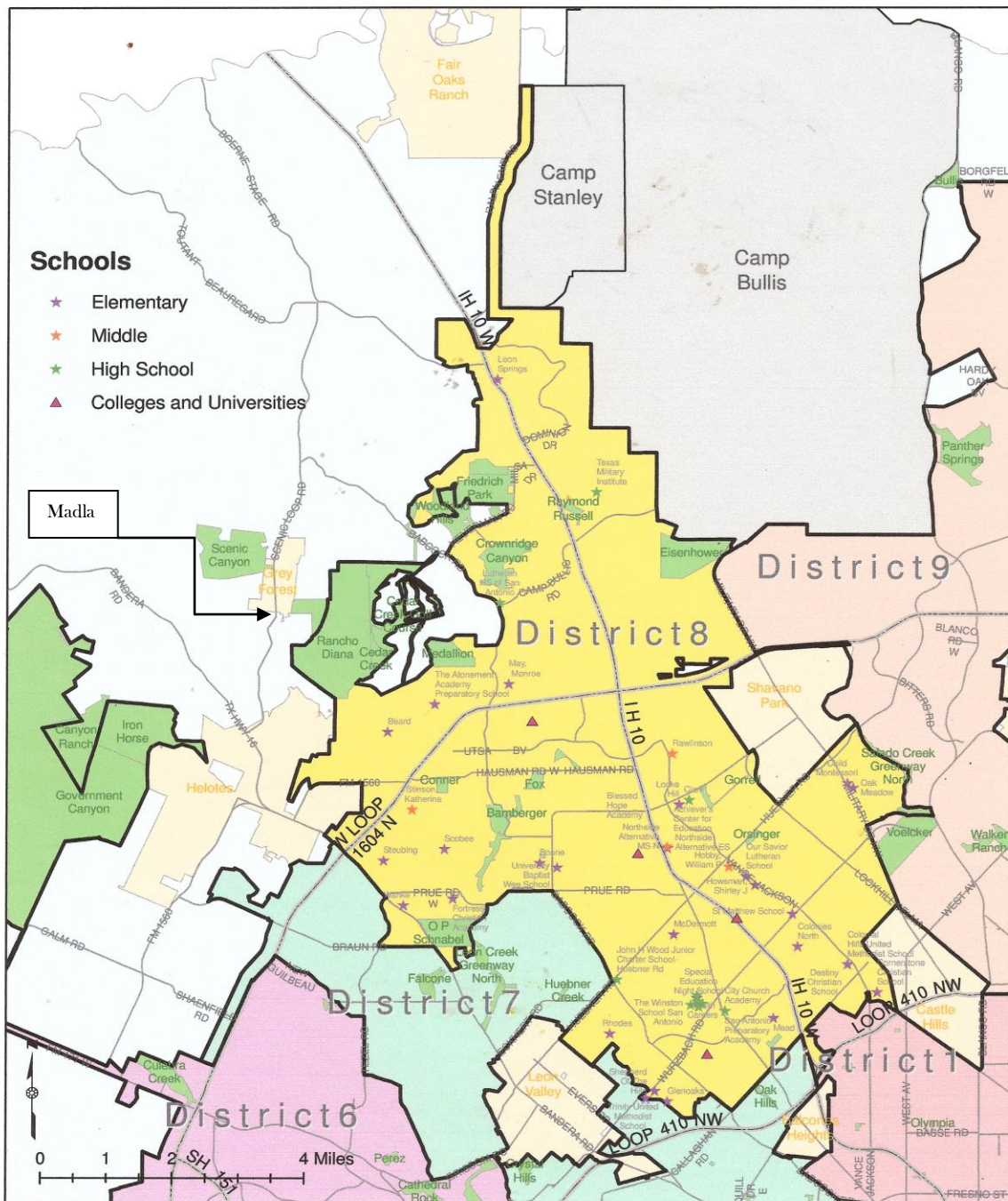
Andy Winter explaining the SEPHCP to the Hill Country Planning Assoc.  
Nov 2008 S. Beavin

## San Antonio City Properties Purchased with Proposition Money

The San Antonio District 8 Map also shows properties in Northwest Bexar County that have been purchased for aquifer protection and designated as “natural areas. Scenic Canyon, Rancho Diana, Friedrich Park and Crown Ridge are either on the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor or within a few miles. The newest of these, Senator Frank L. Madla Natural Area, purchased by the City of Grey Forest with grant money from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and a conservation easement from San Antonio, has yet to be added to this map. Members of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance wish to assist the purchase of more such land.

This map also shows the locations of San Antonio Natural Areas in Northwest Bexar County. Senator Frank L. Madla Natural Area has been drawn in at the intersection of Scenic Loop & Menchaca Roads.

### San Antonio City Council District 8



## 2005 Wal-Mart Defeat

The HHA informational pamphlet, below, highlights all the issues involved in Wal-Mart wishing to build at the corner of Scenic loop and Hwy 16 (Bandera Road).



*Helotes Area Heritage Association  
P.O. Box 1324  
Helotes, TX 78023  
Email: [info@helotes-heritage.org](mailto:info@helotes-heritage.org)  
210-757-0209*

### **SAVE SCENIC LOOP – STOP WAL-MART**

### **SAVE GREY FOREST – STOP WAL-MART**

### **SAVE HELOTES – STOP WAL-MART**

The **Helotes Area Heritage Association (HAHA)**, [www.helotes-heritage.org](http://www.helotes-heritage.org), is a grass roots organization comprised of concerned area residents whose mission is to preserve the cultural, environmental and historic heritage of Helotes, Grey Forest, and their surroundings. Our current efforts focus on preventing the construction of Wal-Mart, or any other big-box retail development, at Scenic Loop and Bandera Road. We are for environmentally responsible development that will leave a positive legacy for our children, their children, and for generations to come.

### **HELOTES DOES NOT NEED WAL-MART**

The Helotes City Council and Mayor have been negotiating with Wal-Mart regarding this site and Wal-Mart is completing their feasibility study before closing on this property. Unfortunately, this site is primarily located within the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of Helotes and as such does not fall within our zoning ordinances. While our city council believes that good faith efforts might result in Wal-Mart asking to be annexed into the city thus providing a windfall in tax revenues for the city, we believe that this is shortsighted. First, Wal-Mart is a global corporation whose history has shown that corporate decisions are based solely on their bottom-line. More likely, Wal-Mart will remain in the ETJ while the city ends up footing the bill for fire and police protection, and huge costs for road maintenance on Scenic Loop Road. Not to mention the increased traffic – it will be a nightmare! If Wal-Mart goes ahead with construction of a super center, it will forever spoil the scenic beauty of our small community and may result in further development of like-minded businesses near this location.

We believe that this kind of development is unnecessary and mounting a large effort to oppose this construction is in the best interests of our community. The city council says there's nothing we can do. We think we can stop Wal-Mart but we want our city council on the citizen's side. Our position is that we want our city council to represent its citizens and urge Wal-Mart to seek another site for construction. The Bexar County Commissioners understand the negative impact a super center will have on the area residents and have written a letter to Wal-Mart to persuade them to go elsewhere just as the Grey Forest city council has passed a resolution urging the preservation of this area.

### **WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?**

Urban sprawl, increased traffic, increased crime, falling property values. Do you want a Wal-Mart super center, perhaps 250,000 square feet in size, with a 15 acre paved parking lot, located in our midst? On land that drains into Helotes Creek? On the Trinity Aquifer, our water supply? On the contributing zone to the Edwards Aquifer? Adjacent to land already set aside by court order as protected habitat for endangered species? I didn't think so.

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP**

First, go to [www.helotes-heritage.org](http://www.helotes-heritage.org) and click on "JOIN THE PETITION DRIVE". Fill out the form and click the "submit" button to make your voice heard. We will carry these to the Helotes City Council meetings.

5A  
EXPRESS  
12-16-05

# Wal-Mart confirms Helotes off table

Retailer says it won't push a costly court fight to build a store in that area.

BY LETY LAUREL  
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

Wal-Mart confirmed Monday that it won't build in the Helotes area — for now.

The retail giant announced that it is dropping plans for a store on 32 acres at Texas 16 and Scenic Loop Road because it's unwilling to battle the city in court.

In a written statement addressed to Helotes residents, Wal-Mart officials said they worked diligently to meet or exceed all the development and environmental requirements of the city, county and state, but ultimately decided to abandon their plans for the site.

"Though vocal opposition was present, many in the community expressed support for the project," the statement read.

"However, recent actions indicated that achieving a cooperative project was no longer possible. Although Wal-Mart is confident that these actions could have been remedied in court, Wal-Mart is unwilling to force the city of Helotes into expensive litigation relative to this site."

The statement did not explain what the "recent actions" were.

In September, the City Council accepted a petition to annex 55.7 acres, including the proposed Wal-Mart site. If the 13 parcels involved are annexed, the area automatically would be zoned residential, which would have forced the retailer to seek a zoning change. The council is scheduled to vote on the annexation Thursday.

Balous Miller, who owns the site, filed a lawsuit against the city last month, alleging that he and Wal-Mart have vested rights that would allow the construction of the store.

Miller's attorney, Barry McClenahan, said they're moving forward with the lawsuit.

"Wal-Mart was the current purchaser, but the rights are vested in the owner of the property, and we're the owner of the property," he said.

Mayor Jon Allan said the city was willing to do whatever it took to keep the store outside its city limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction. He said a conference call with Wal-Mart officials Monday revealed that the retailer has no plans to build anywhere

See WAL-MART/SB

## Wal-Mart confirms Helotes is out

CONTINUED FROM 1B

else in Helotes, Allan said.

"There is some relief now at this site," said Allan, who ran for mayor in May on an anti-Wal-Mart platform. "There's always a caveat that they could decide to build a quarter-mile down the road, but it doesn't sound like it at this time."

"All in all, this is good news."

But Councilman Charles James, who repeatedly has spoken in favor of the city working with the retailer, said it's a sad day for a city that needs additional sales tax revenue.

"Two or three years from now, I think the majority of the city will realize that running Wal-Mart out of the city was a

bad idea," James said.

"I've been dealing with the finances of the city long enough to realize in a short period of time, we will be in a position that we will have to take back services or raise taxes. We can't go on in this way."

Wal-Mart's statement is vague about future plans to develop in the area, but James said he suspects Helotes residents someday will see a Wal-Mart down the road.

"To turn around at this point and walk away means, I think, that there's another shoe to fall," he said. "I don't think this is the whole story. I think we will find out in the next few weeks that they purchased another piece of property just

down the road."

Nu Wexler, press secretary for Wal-Mart Watch, a watchdog group based in Washington, D.C., that tracks Wal-Mart business practices, said his organization is familiar with how the retailer approaches cities it's interested in moving into.

He cautioned that Wal-Mart officials have been known to tell a community they are withdrawing plans, only to return when opposition has withered.

"Wal-Mart does not hesitate to employ heavy-handed and sometimes scorched-earth tactics to bully itself into communities that don't welcome it."

llaurel@express-news.net

### 1985 Effort

In 1985 the original Save Scenic Loop Group garnered many letters of support to fight the widening of Scenic Loop Road. They were successful in this effort. Another goal was to have Scenic Loop declared an historic route, using a section of the Vernon Civil Statutes. It was at this time that the area known as Government Canyon was under threat of development. The group changed their focus to preserve this large parcel, and again was successful. However, the historic designation effort fell by the wayside, and the Civil Statutes were changed the following year, preventing such designation. Many in the organization didn't realize the designation wasn't fulfilled.

# County of Bexar

COURTHOUSE  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78205  
(512) 220-2612



ANDY CASIAS  
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 2

HENRIETTA RAMIREZ  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

October 16, 1985

Bexar County Historical Commission  
Henry A. Guerra, Jr., Chairman  
200 Main Plaza, Suite 200  
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Dear Mr. Guerra,

I would like to attend the next Bexar County Historical Commission meeting scheduled for October 18, 1985, to present a proposal for consideration regarding the Scenic Loop Road area. I think that we should explore the possibilities of designating the area as a historic landmark.

I am sending you a statement on my position regarding the Scenic Loop area along with a letter that was addressed to me, a copy of a map of the designated area and a preliminary report from the "Save The Scenic Loop Committee". Also, please find an environmental development plan that was prepared by Ms. Dixie Watkins.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

*Andy Casias*  
Andy Casias  
County Commissioner  
Precinct 2

AC/hr

RECEIVED

OCT 16 1985

BEAR COUNTY  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION

# Casias wants landmark status for Scenic Loop

By **WILFREDO RAMIREZ**  
Express-News Staff Writer

County Commissioner Andy Casias says he will ask the Bexar County Historical Commission on Thursday to make Scenic Loop a historic landmark.

The designation if granted, Casias said, would in effect kill current plans to expand the lush, tree-lined, winding road into a five-lane thoroughfare. The road first was an Indian trail, later became a stagecoach road and boasts, says a supporter of the historical designation, many 19th century buildings.

Officials last week decided to halt expansion after the road's improvement plan sparked an uproar among residents of Helotes, Grey Forest and other Northwest Bexar County locales.

Casias also said on Monday that he will ask the city's planning commission to stop any new subdivision developed in Northwest Bexar County from releasing traffic onto the scenic road.

Under the metropolitan area's major thoroughfare plan, the old, narrow road could receive traffic from new subdivisions. That traffic, according to current planning, would be routed south onto Highway 16, bet-



**ANDY CASIAS**

**... opposes thoroughfare**

ter known as Bandera Road, and north onto Interstate 10.

Casias said the thoroughfare plan includes three alternative routes that could be developed as major thoroughfares linking Bandera Road and I-10 and avoiding the expansion of Scenic Loop.

He said three alternative routes

linking Bandera Road and I-10 are about the same length and two of them, both west of Scenic Loop, extend all the way to Culebra Road, which Scenic Loop does not.

Although those alternative roads have not been built, they appear in the map as the targets of development to solve the area's traffic problems to the year 2000.

The loop deserves historical designation because it has kept its basic configuration since it was developed first as an Indian trail and later as a stagecoach trail, said Mark Pritchett, who has developed a brochure documenting the road's history.

He said along the road there are many pioneer houses whose walls still contain gun slots through which settlers fired at raiding Comanches.

University of Texas at San Antonio archaeologists have explored many digs along the route, Pritchett said.

Last month, because Scenic Loop is on the map as a major thoroughfare, crews began to survey the road to prepare for improvements that would correct low water crossings, sharp curves and narrow stretches of road.

Residents of the area did not learn about the expansion plans until they saw the survey crews, some residents said.

I  
A  
w  
y  
ff

## Issues and Threats

### Development

Massive developments along Scenic Loop, Babcock, Boerne Stage and Toutant-Beauregard Roads are significantly impacting regional heritage and environment. Three nearby hills have literally been blasted away with dynamite exposing bare rock. Many creeks along the Corridor are inundated with sediment and road base. This adds to the problem of flooding. The nature of these hills and creeks in the region create the floodplains. However, new subdivisions are being given floodplain variances, tax dollars are used to raise the roads and the integrity of the area's natural resources, habitat, history and scenic value is destroyed. Dams and power lines have been installed, across heritages ranches – both by eminent domain.



Pictures by M. Michalec



## Destruction of Historic Properties

William Hausmann purchased property on Toutant-Beauregard in the 1850's. Following the death of the second William Hausmann, his wife, Margaret, requested that the hunting property be kept in a trust fund and not sold, so that her son, William, III could have it for use in his adult years. Unfortunately, she gave her sister, her executor, the right to sell the property, which she sold in 1980.

In 2007 the developers of this property, now called Sundance Ranch Subdivision, demolished the 1865 original stone structure (photo not available) and the bridge (below left) on the property. Another house, below right, had fallen into disrepair. As the property is in San Antonio's ETJ, the developers have the legal right to tear down any structure they wish.



## Road Destruction and Extensions

Destruction of the historic road continues with efforts by Bexar County, SAWS and CPS to install water, sewer and power lines, as well as widen and raise the roads. Many heritage oaks have been destroyed.

Although the San Antonio Planning Department has agreed to “take the Babcock extension” west of Scenic Loop “off the table”, the City of San Antonio continues to include it in their Master Plan.



S. Beavin



S. Beavin

## Water

The Texas Water Development Board was mandated by the State of Texas to declare a groundwater drawdown number by December 2010 that will take population and development growth until 2060 into consideration. This July 2010 the Groundwater Management Area 9, which includes the Edwards Aquifer Authority and the Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District, voted on a 30' groundwater drawdown. There are many who feel that this number is not conservative enough and doesn't take potential global warming and our repetitive droughts into consideration.

## Camp Bullis

Camp Bullis, just northwest of San Antonio, named after Brigadier General John L. Bullis, was established in 1917 as a training site for troops to be sent to Europe. The 27,900 acre reservation is currently used primarily as maneuvering grounds for the US Army, Air Force and Marine combat units, and as a field training site for the various units stationed at Brooke Army Medical Center in nearby Ft. Sam Houston.

Bullis is under grave threat from the ever-expanding developments which severely jeopardize its mission. It also is one of the largest habitats for the endangered Golden Cheek Warbler and Black-capped Vireo. More development means more birds are forced onto the rich habitat at Bullis and the less area they can use for their maneuvers.

The North Sector Plan (<http://www.northsectorplan.com/>) sponsored by Camp Bullis and part of the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) (<http://www.campbullisjlus.com/>) is currently being drafted and will be presented to the San Antonio City Council and Bexar County Commissioners Court this summer (2010). Many northwest Bexar County residents have attended these meetings and requested habitat preservation and true planning for the area. Below is an attachment sent to the City of San Antonio by Ft. Sam Houston:

### **Attachment 1**

#### **Recommendations and Strategies for Supporting the Preservation of Camp Bullis and its Mission**

1. Establish a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) Implementation Board or Committee:
2. Ensure Consideration of Private Property Rights:
3. Develop a Military Influence Overlay District (MIOD):
4. Develop a Communication and Notification Process between Government Entities and Agencies and Camp Bullis/Ft Sam Houston:
5. Control the Impact of both Point Source Light and Ambient Light on Camp Bullis Training Activities:
6. Establish Joint Zoning Boards or Regional Commission
7. Strengthen County and Municipal Codes, Ordinances, and Planning Tools to Better Manage the Area Around Camp Bullis:
8. Update Comprehensive Plans, Capital Improvement Plans, Land Use Maps, Transportation Plans, and other Area and Community Plans:
9. Establish Necessary Regulations to Ensure both Safety and Quality of Life in Regard to Aviation Activities in the MIOD:
10. Develop Plans and Programs, Individually, or Partner with other Jurisdictions and Agencies, whereby Certain Parcels of Land within the MIOD are Acquired or Reserved
11. Develop Habitat Conservation Tools:
12. Require Real Estate Disclosures within Certain Military Influence Areas:
13. Incorporate as many Recommendations as Practical to Preserve the Mission of Camp Bullis and the Viability of Ft Sam Houston
14. Develop Implementation Plans that Provide an Adequate Balance Between Preserving the Camp Bullis Mission and Economic Development in the Areas Surrounding Camp Bullis

## Articles

### GROUP FIGHTS ON TO SAVE LOCAL TREASURE

#### Meet the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance

July 19, 2007

The Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance is a group of local citizens who recently completed research for the historic designation of the Scenic Loop Playground and Grey Forest. They felt the significance of the corridor, from Bandera Rd (Hwy 16) to the Kendall County line at Balcones Creek, should also receive such a designation.

In 1985, the "Save Scenic Loop" group emerged in an effort to protect Scenic Loop from being widened. They began the process, but the creation and protection of what is now Government Canyon diverted their progress. Although they were successful in stopping the road expansion and having Camp Bullis Road removed from becoming a thoroughfare onto Scenic Loop, the Helotes versus Wal-Mart battle made clear the necessity of protecting the road.

Sharon and Bill Colangelo produced a booklet, *Secrets of Scenic Loop*, for a walking tour to raise money for the Helotes Heritage Association. We have expanded this to include the Boerne Stage Road as well. It is an on-going process, as we continue to gather and research material. This was presented to the Bexar County Historical Commission who wrote a resolution supporting an historic designation to be sent to the Bexar County Commissioners Court.

According to Susan Beavin, an active member of the group, unexpected hurdles have arisen "we found that the county was no longer able to make such designations". Legislative attempts to reinstate this capacity and give counties more power to control their ETJs was supported by the Bexar County Commissioners Court with a five-signature letter of support, but the bills presented to the 80th legislature by Leibowitz and Rose failed to make it out of committee.

The Texas Historic Commission has been contacted several times in regard to the SL-BSA effort, "but we have yet to hear from them" says Beavin. Another avenue, a grant from Tourism Cares, is currently being pursued.

The massive development along Boerne Stage and Toutant-Beauregard Roads has significantly increased traffic, particularly the large gravel trucks that make numerous trips each day. No one drives the speed limit. The San Antonio Planning Department is attempting to expand Babcock Road to meet Highway 16. There really is no planning and the long-time residents are finding that they have little or no representation.

Observers recommend, "follow the money", and that is an informative effort. Through the use of eminent domain, dams are being planned and power lines have been installed across heritage ranches and environmentally sensitive areas. An 1865 house was demolished by a developer before the final plat was approved. Two nearby hills have literally been blasted bare.

The history of this area is being rapidly destroyed. The Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor has documented archaeological sites, numerous historic homes and cemeteries, a fragile ecosystem with endangered species above and below ground, aquifers critical to our area and San Antonio, an original Stage Line and part of the Old Spanish Trail, descendants of original landowners, and a pristine beauty that is the Hill Country. the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance is working to protect these treasures from destruction, "the area needs all protection possible".

Beavin says the group continues to gather support for the designation. Interested citizens can log onto <http://www.dwiiiassoc.com> to register a letter of support or contact Susan Beavin at [sheba4us@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sheba4us@sbcglobal.net) or 210-695-6627 to join the effort.

**Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance**

**PRESERVATION PETITION**

July 17, 2007

Susan Beavin of the Hill Country Planning Association reports many area residents have signed a letter of support for the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance in their efforts to attain historic designation of this important corridor.

Dixie Watkins and Associates has provided a place for interested individuals to register their support for this cause online.

Susan reports it is not necessary to resubmit letters. "If you have already submitted a letter of support, you do not need to resubmit them, but if you haven't done so and would like to you can click on the link."

Click on "Links" at the bottom of the Dixie Watkins and Associates main page to send an online letter of support for preservation of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor.

Dixie Watkins and Associates: [www.dwiiiassoc.com](http://www.dwiiiassoc.com)

## Dodging the plow

By **Lauri Gray Eaton** - Editor/Northwest Weekly      San Antonio Express News - SA Communities  
Web Posted: 02/19/2009 12:00 CST

Picture a family of field mice quaking in fear for their home and health in the path of an oncoming plow.

That's a scenario out of a children's book that Jennifer Nottingham used Feb. 12 to describe the plight of residents along the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Road Corridor, which she said is threatened by the bulldozers of developers encroaching from both ends.

"That's us!" she told a group largely comprised of Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Alliance members and sympathizers gathered at the Scenic Loop Playground Club in Grey Forest. They were staging a press conference to "celebrate" what the SLBSA describes as a much-appreciated "award."

On Feb. 11, Preservation Texas named the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor to its sixth annual Most Endangered Historic Places list. It was the only site named to any of the nonprofit organization's lists that is not an individual site but an entire area that is deemed endangered.

Much as it seems a dubious honor, members of the alliance and Preservation Texas plan to use the designation as impetus to rally residents and petition state legislators to protect the area from encroaching development and destruction of the unique ecology, geology and wildlife habitat. That protection could come, in part, in the form of an official historic designation by the state of Texas.

An area first traversed by buffalo, then Native American Indians, the Scenic Loop in the past century earned its name as a weekend destination for motorists taking a worn dirt road into the wilds of nature once far flung from the hubbub and ruckus of urban San Antonio. As its popularity grew and the road was paved, it became flocked by "Sunday drivers," some of whom decided to build weekend getaways.

Many of the quaint and quirky homes remain among the small city of Grey Forest even as they are joined by more mainstream homes and some palatial "McMansions" built in more recent decades.

Ironically, the SLPC was the first subdivision to form in the middle of Grey Forest, now an incorporated city. In an alliance collection of old documents related to the corridor, developer E.N. Requa promoted his 320-acre Eden in 1928 as "a rural recreational resort within easy commute of San Antonio." Today, what was once a 46.3-mile roundtrip from downtown San Antonio, it is now scarcely a few stones' throw from the Alamo City limits.

The area is under pressure from all sides, however, as developers' enthusiasm for building in the scenic Hill Country brings suburban sprawl ever nearer, said Nottingham, president of the SLBSA.

"We are all well aware of the plight of our neighbor, Camp Bullis," Nottingham noted, referencing the widely publicized threat of development to the military's mission of night maneuvers training.

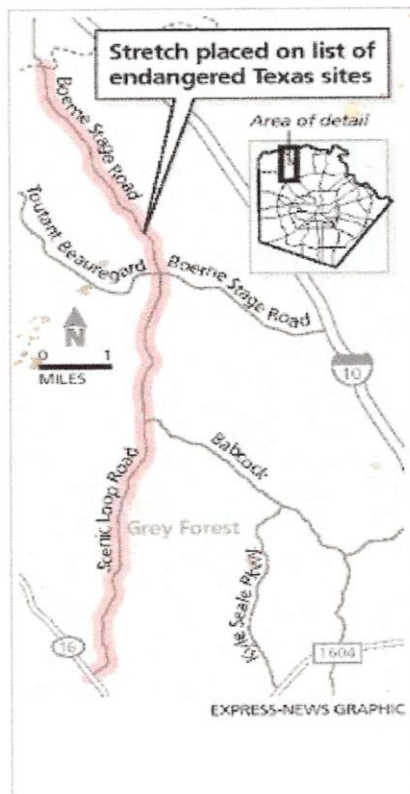
Look around,” she said. “See, hear, smell this quiet valley. Now listen very carefully. What you probably hear is the jackhammers, the traffic. And at night, there's a creepy orange glow behind those hills, where the moon should be rising. It isn't really that peaceful anymore. This scenic historic corridor, this valley, is in the same situation as Camp Bullis.”

The history of the area spans several thousands of years. Along the route is evidence of prehistoric archaeological sites, 19th-century rock structures, the Old Spanish Trail, hill country vistas, historic farms and ranch lands including the Maverick Ranch, and natural resources.

From the south at Highway 16, Scenic Loop Road winds along creeks and springs and continues up the hills to connect with the Boerne Stage Road. At that point, the road turns north and continues as Boerne Stage Road to the Balcones Creek at the Kendall County line.

“Like the other places on our 2009 endangered list, the Scenic Loop- Boerne Stage Corridor reflects the increasing awareness across our state of the importance of preserving sites that have played important roles in the physical and natural history of our state,” said Libby Buuck, president of Preservation Texas Inc.

“The sites represent places that are as important to our history and way of life as longhorn cattle and 10-gallon hats. Many have been such an important part of our heritage that it is easy to take them for granted. By calling attention to them now, we want to encourage residents to act while there's still time.”





## SCENIC LOOP RECEIVES DESIGNATION

File photo

Helotes Creek snakes through the Scenic Loop Playground Club in Grey Forest.

By Joni Simon  
Contributing Writer

This month's designation of the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage corridor as one of the state's most endangered historic places has shed new light on the road's unique place in

early 20th century Bexar County history.

The Scenic Loop was created in the 1920s as a paved road for families in San Antonio, many of whom were just then moving out of the horse-drawn era and getting their

See **SCENIC, P5**

### SCENIC from P1

first cars, allowing them to escape the increasing urbanization of the city and to enjoy a Sunday in the Hill Country.

"It was a paved touring route," said Jennifer Nottingham of the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Alliance. "It came from the Bexar County courthouse, all the way up Bandera Road, through Helotes, around the corner to what is now Interstate 10, but was Fredericksburg Road at the time, and went back into town on the old Fredericksburg Road to the courthouse. That's 46.3 miles of touring for the Model T's."

Included in the designation is the Scenic Loop Playground Club, which was developed in 1928 as a rural recreational resort for the weekend motorists, including boating, fishing and swimming.

The unique Hill Country style building was built largely out of the empty wooden ammunition crates which had been used to haul ammo to Camp Stanley during World War I.

"My father remembered when (the loop) was built and remembered driving on it," said Bebe Fenstermaker of the Maverick Ranch. Her family has lived in Leon Springs for 150 years.

But Nottingham says the designation also recognizes the importance of Boerne Stage Road for the activity that gave it its name, a stagecoach and horse carriage route.

"It had been for many, many years the wagon trails.

People rode horses into San Antonio on this road; we've lost track of how many stagecoach stops there were on this road. It has a very long history," she said.

The recognition also highlights the designation of a portion of Boerne Stage Road as a part of the pioneering Old Spanish Trail, the ambitious cross-country highway built in the 1920s, linking St. Augustine, Fla., and San Diego, Calif.

"When they built the big auto highway, they followed a lot of old cattle trails and stagecoach routes," said Charlotte Kahl of the Old Spanish Trail Association.

"They followed the road from San Antonio to Boerne, so when they got to Leon Springs, they turned west, went over to Toutant Beauregard, went north and crossed Balcones Creek on into Boerne."

The designation for the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor comes from Preservation Texas, a nonprofit organization which advocates for preserving the historic resources in Texas.

"In addition to the passion of the residents, it's just the beauty of the area," said Krista Schreiner Gebbia, the Preservation Texas executive director. "This is uniquely Texas."

The next step is to gain historic corridor designation from the Legislature. That action would carry legal weight in preventing future development in the area, which is also a key portion of the recharge zone of the Edwards Aquifer.

Nottingham says she was especially driven to act by a new high density housing development which is going in at Scenic Loop and Toutant Beauregard, just a couple of miles from the Scenic Loop Playground Club, which sits behind the Grey Forest city municipal building.



## **Saving history, view is the goal for Scenic Loop**

2/12/2009

By David Rauf and Elaine Ayo, Express-News

AUSTIN — A roughly 10-mile stretch of road famous for its Hill Country vistas made a nonprofit group's 2009 list of the state's most endangered historic places, preservation advocates announced Wednesday.

The section of Scenic Loop and Boerne Stage roads between Texas 16 and the Kendall County line is threatened by encroaching development from both ends, but committed groups of residents have fought to preserve the area's rural character.

For those reasons, the road was placed with 10 other sites on the list unveiled on the steps of the state Capitol by the nonprofit Preservation Texas Inc.

The group has compiled an annual list since 2004, selecting locations that reflect the cultural heritage of Texas and face the greatest threat of destruction or neglect.

This year's sites include a former elementary school in Houston, a nearly 170-year-old mission rectory in El Paso and a Bell County church that was built in 1874. The Scenic Loop/Boerne Stage corridor was the only one in the San Antonio area.

"It's never a given that these sites will be preserved, but it's our hope that through this effort we can help make that happen," said Libby Buuk, the organization's president.

The Scenic Loop Road, a winding two-lane path that follows Helotes Creek and connects with Boerne Stage Road, was built in the 1920s as part of a driving route.

It became popular for picnics and weekend drives, said Charlotte Kahl, chairwoman of the Old Spanish Trail Centennial Celebration Association, a group that, in conjunction with the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Alliance, nominated the road.

"Every driver who had a car would drive this thing," Kahl said of the complete loop on what's now Bandera, Scenic Loop and Fredericksburg roads.

Preservation advocates are hoping Wednesday's designation will help generate funds to preserve what they say is thousands of years of history along the route, including prehistoric archaeological sites, 19th-century rock structures and historic farms and ranches.

"We're hoping through this award we'll be able to get some grants, to create a buffer space to prevent subdivisions with thousands of cars," said Jennifer Nottingham, president of the alliance. "We're being encroached upon daily by developers ... and we don't want to lose that history."

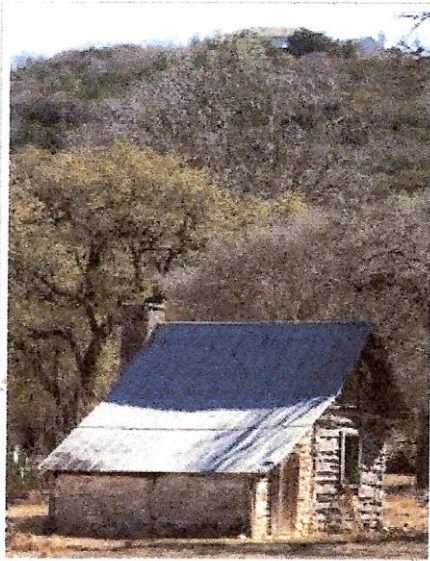
The Scenic Loop Playground Club, a community of weekend cottage owners that formed along the road, laid the groundwork for what would become the city of Grey Forest in the 1960s. It's now a nonprofit homeowners' association.

"It became named that because it was windy and went through the Hill Country and had scenic views," Grey Forest Mayor Don Darst said of the road.

But as northwest Bexar County grew, so, too, did demands to straighten and widen the road to four lanes to better accommodate traffic. Residents led a successful campaign in 1985 to prevent the widening, spawning organizations dedicated to protecting the area's cultural and natural treasures.

"I am thrilled with groups like this, (because) they cross county lines, they get together and look at what's best for everyone," Darst said. "Sometimes it's better to keep things the way they are, believe it or not."

The Boerne Stage Road section of the corridor was built as part of a highway called the Old Spanish Trail. That predecessor to Interstate 10 was the first paved highway for motorists to cross Southwest and Gulf Coast states was built between 1919 and 1929, Kahl said.



An old log cabin with a limestone addition is at the bottom of a hill on Boerne Stage Road. More modern structures are popping up on the top of the hill.

Other sites in the San Antonio area that have made the list in past years include the Gonzalez and Cyneo houses on the West Side, which date from the 1840s or 1850s; the John S. Harrison house in Selma, which dates from 1852; and the town of Quihi in Medina County.

Three sites in Travis County were also named to the endangered list this year, including the American National Bank building on West Sixth Street in Austin and the Hamilton Pool Preserve in Dripping Springs. Most notably, however, was the addition of the arson-gutted Governor's Mansion, which was heavily damaged in a fire last June.

# Opinion

## *Keeping Scenic Loop scenic*

Today, the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor remains the last remaining historical and scenic pathway connecting San Antonio with the Texas Hill Country. Every other corridor that connects San Antonio with the Texas Hill Country, without exception, has been upgraded to allow for maximum transport of traffic. The corridor follows a pre-historic migratory route used by Comanche and Lipan Apache Native Americans. Spanish land grants were given to Mexican, Canary Islander and German immigrants, and homesteads were established in the mid-1800s.

Boerne Stage Road was the main stagecoach and freight route from San Antonio to the City of Fredericksburg. In the 1920s, the Old Spanish Trail auto highway followed this beautiful, scenic route. The original Scenic Loop Road was a 46.3 mile roundtrip loop from downtown San Antonio.

Because of the lack of county regulation, minimal municipal regulation, and intensive development of rural areas outlying San Antonio, the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor is under continued threat of being upgraded. Over the years, there have been attempts to develop the corridor to make it just one more fast multi-lane roadway to get from San Antonio to the Hill Country. Folks living along the corridor managed to defeat a serious attempt in the 1980s to expand Scenic Loop to four lanes and increase the speed limit. Since then, the community has remained vigilant in its defense of the integrity of the corridor.

In January of this year, the Grey Forest Historical Society applied for a historic subject marker for the Scenic Loop Playground (which is

now the City of Grey Forest). It has been approved by Bexar County Commissioners Court and the Texas Historical Commission. The Grey Forest Historical Society has also applied for Historic District designation for the Scenic Loop Playground. In addition, there has been a resolution from Rep. David Leibowitz to grant county authority to protect the corridor, and letters of support have been submitted (or have been received) from the cities of Grey Forest, Helotes, and Leon Valley, the Bexar County Commissioners Court, the Southern Texas Archaeological Association and the Bexar County Historical Commission to preserve the corridor and have it declared historic and scenic.

To help preserve the corridor, last week the Helotes Heritage Association (HHA) applied for a Worldwide Tourism Grant to create a roadside storyboard inclusive of maps, images and descriptions of the extensive history of the corridor, with references for more information to educate tourists and local residents of its rich natural and cultural history.

In-kind contributions have been committed by HHA, the Friends of Scenic Loop, the Grey Forest Historical Society, Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Alliance, Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance, Hill Country Planning Association and the Scenic Loop Playground Association.

The Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor project will go beyond educating travelers and local communities of the significant historic and cultural history of the Corridor. Preserving the integrity of the Corridor will also protect its fragile natural resources including the source area for the Edwards Aquifer

and endangered bird and cave species. In addition, and very importantly, it will provide a fitting and appropriate roadway to the soon-to-be-developed 33-acre Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park.

Ron Green, President  
Helotes Heritage Assn

**Resolutions  
And  
Letters of Support**



TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

JOHN L. NAU, III, CHAIRMAN

F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 18, 2008

Susan Beavin  
Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance  
19807 Scenic Loop Rd  
Helotes, TX 78023

RE: Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor, Bexar and Kendall counties, Texas

Dear Ms. Beavin:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor, in Bexar and Kendall counties. The corridor constitutes a significant rural historic landscape which merits preservation, but which is also threatened by intrusive private development. Last September, THC staff and the State Board of Review toured some of the historic resources along the corridor, and witnessed the nature of the new development in the area. The THC has not made a determination as to whether the corridor could be listed in the National Register in its entirety, but we recognize that numerous individual properties meet the National Register criteria, and it is possible that contiguous groups of historic ranches and farms could be listed in the National Register as rural historic districts. Please keep in mind that private property owners may prevent the listing of their property in the National Register, and that listing alone is only a first step in documenting and protecting historic resources. While the state and county governments have limited ability to control private development in rural areas, any projects that require federal funding, permits, or licenses may be subject to review by the THC under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The Texas Historical Commission has been working recently with preservation partners in Bexar County to document historic sites in the corridor area. We recently received a draft of the *Grey Forest - Scenic Loop Playground* National Register nomination, and have submitted our initial comments to the applicant, David Bentley. The nomination of a such a large rural/suburban landscape is quite an undertaking, but we hope to have a finished draft ready for submission to the State Board of Review in the coming year. You may also be aware of efforts by the San Antonio Conservation Society and the City of San Antonio to document historic rural sites associated with agriculture and ethnic heritage in Bexar County and nominate several of them to the National Register as part of a multiple property submission (MPS). To date, we have reviewed the MPS cover form, and the State Board of Review has enthusiastically supported the nomination of the first two properties (including the Heidemann Ranch on Toutant Beauregard Road). We anticipate submitting these documents to the National Park Service very soon. I encourage you to work with the San Antonio Conservation Society, property owners, and other interested parties to help identify significant properties and work towards documenting them and nominating them to the National Register.

In the course of our continuing work on the Grey Forest nomination, I will most likely be traveling to the area, and would be happy to meet with you to get a closer look at the resources and discuss strategies for their preservation. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (512) 463-6013. Thank you for interest in the preservation of Texas' rich heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Smith".

Gregory W. Smith  
National Register Coordinator



**CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ**  
Member of Congress  
District 23 Texas

August 31, 2007

The Honorable Phil Hardberger  
Mayor, City of San Antonio  
PO Box 839966  
San Antonio, TX 78283

Dear Mayor Hardberger:

I support the efforts of the Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Alliance to pursue the historic designation of the Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Corridor from its intersection at Bandera Road (Hwy 16) to the Balcones Creek at the Kendall County Line near I-10.

In a day when many of our Hill Country roads and their charming communities are being altered by urban expansion and highway modernization, Scenic Loop Road and other parts of Northwest Bexar County, are rich with legend and history, abundant in wildlife and overhanging oaks that serve as a constant reminder of the past and an avenue of a quiet, peaceful way of life – a way of life that is becoming increasingly rare.

Much documentation of the history of the Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Corridor is found in archaeological records, Spanish Land Grants, civil war veteran land scripts, historic deeds, stagecoach schedules and various other writings, including oral histories. Several areas and homes along the route have either received or applied for national and/or state historical markers. In fact, some are included in the Heart of Texas – East Scenic Trails, produced by the state of Texas.

I fully support the protection and preservation of what remains of this historic route as well as the natural integrity of this area.

Sincerely,

Ciro D. Rodriguez  
Member of Congress

**Resolution by the City of Grey Forest  
To Preserve the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor**

Whereas, our historic Hill Country is a major resource for Texas and the Trinity and the Edwards Aquifer,

And

Whereas, historic Hill Country roads and their associated communities are being heavily altered by urban expansion and highway modernization,

And

Whereas, Scenic Loop Road and its associated community in North West Bexar County are an important part of the history of that county and the Texas Hill Country and continue to reflect the original nature of this historic scenic Hill Country pass,

And

Whereas, this road and associated community which are rich with legend and history, abundant in wildlife and a profusion of overhanging oaks may be adversely affected by development adjacent to the road,

And

Whereas, Scenic Loop Road and the associated community are both a remnant of the past and an avenue of a quiet, peaceful way of life ~ a way of life that is becoming increasingly rare

Now

Therefore, be it resolved by the City of Grey Forest to support efforts to preserve the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor, acknowledging the Corridor's scenic and historic value.

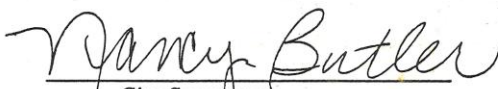
Passed and approved by City Council on October 31, 2006

Signed



Donald D. Darst, Mayor

Attest:

  
City Secretary



RESOLUTION NO. 189

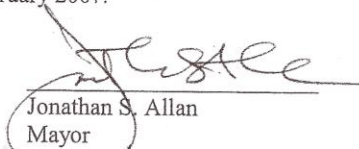
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HELOTES, TEXAS SUPPORTING A HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR THE SCENIC LOOP-BOERNE STAGE ROAD CORRIDOR.

- Whereas, the City of Helotes has a governmental interest in the preservation of scenic and historic areas and natural resources for future generations; and
- Whereas, Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Road Corridor lies within the historic Hill Country and is a major resource for Texas, for the Trinity and Edwards Aquifer, and is teeming with wildlife and resplendent with overhanging oaks; and
- Whereas, Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Road Corridor configuration reflects the area's history and the original nature of this scenic hill country corridor; and
- Whereas, preserving the Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Road Corridor helps retain the rich heritage of our past while enhancing the quality of life for the present and the future; and
- Whereas, Scenic Loop showcases intrinsic resources, such as natural, scenic, recreational, historical and cultural qualities.

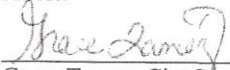
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HELOTES, TEXAS:

The City of Helotes, Texas supports efforts to preserve Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Road Corridor with a Historic Designation.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2007.

  
Jonathan S. Allan  
Mayor

Attest:

  
Grace Tamez, City Secretary



OLD SPANISH TRAIL CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION ASSOCIATION  
SUPPORT OF  
SCENIC LOOP - BOERNE STAGE ROAD ALLIANCE

The Old Spanish Trail Centennial Celebration Association (OST100) is grateful for the formation of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Road Alliance. Their efforts are to be commended as they strive to save the ambiance of the rustic country roads designated during the early years of auto travel as San Antonio's Scenic Loop. The southern portion of the loop along State Highway 16, and eastern portion now under Interstate 10, have been widened for city growth and lined with commercial and residential development. The Boerne Stage Road section of that scenic loop was paved in the 1920s as part of the Old Spanish Trail 3000-mile transcontinental auto highway (OST) that eventually become Interstate 10.

The OST from St. Augustine, Florida to San Diego, California was designed, built and managed during the 1920s by an OST Association Board with offices in the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. One of the first practical steps of the National Board's Beautification Department was to adopt the 30-mile roadway from San Antonio to Boerne as a special Headquarters Section to give practical experience and qualify them for leadership. Wayside parks, county line markers, stone gates, walls and landscaping features of the headquarters section were sent to other OST communities as models for highway beautification. These sites remaining along Boerne Stage Road are well worth saving today.

OST100 would like to support the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance in any way possible as they move forward to save the spectacular hill country vistas, historic landmarks, and narrow roadway of the remaining portion of that original scenic driving loop between State Highway 16 and the Balcones Creek at the Bexar/Kendall County Line. We ask others with the ability to save this gently meandering roadway to also support these efforts.

Sincerely,

*Charlotte Kahl*  
Co-Chair OST100  
(210)735-3503  
with Marianna Jones  
[www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.com](http://www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.com)

**SOUTHERN TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 791032  
SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78279**

January 8, 2007

Honorable Nelson Wolff, County Judge  
Bexar County Commissioners,  
Bexar County Court House,  
Bexar County, Texas

Dear Sir(s):

The Southern Texas Archaeological Association wishes to express its strong support for the historic designation of Scenic Loop Road. Historic Road designation will ensure the continued protection of Scenic Loop Road and the many historical, cultural, and archaeological sites along its route.

The STAA is particularly interested in the rich number of both historic and prehistoric archaeological sites found along Scenic Loop Road and its abutting properties. With the astronomical growth and development of the north side of Bexar County in the past 30 years there are fewer and fewer places where such archaeological diversity can still be found. When and where possible, the STAA advocates for the continued preservation of historical, cultural and archaeological landscapes. Scenic Loop Road is just such an opportunity.

The STAA was founded in 1973 and has a long history of collaboration with both public and private entities. Our experience over the years shows us that when only one or two organizations are interested in protecting or managing a resource they will often fail - and that for STAA to get involved, while laudable, will ultimately be fruitless. The Save Scenic Loop Road Committee has over twenty years of advocacy on this subject - with the support of both residents and the local municipalities. Furthermore, the Texas Historical Commission and other interested parties are also on board with this effort. This is a civic vision that has generated long term and ardent support and the STAA is happy to count itself among the promoters of this proposal.

We heartily endorse the efforts of the Save Scenic Loop Road Committee and encourage you to do the same.

Very truly yours,



Clinton M. M. McKenzie, Chairman 2005-2007  
Southern Texas Archaeological Association ([www.STAA.org](http://www.STAA.org)),  
Steward, Texas Archaeological Stewards Network, Texas Historical Commission

**Grey Forest Historical Society  
Letter of Support**

February 23, 2007

To Whom it May Concern,

As the Chairperson for the Grey Forest Historical Society, I support the efforts of the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Alliance in their pursuit of historic designation of the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor. This designation would include Scenic Loop Rd from the intersection of Bandera Rd (Hwy 16) and continue through Grey Forest to the Balcones Creek at the Kendall County Line near I-10.

The preservation of this area is crucial for the quality of life for current and future generations. For over 20 years, residents have fought to keep the history alive. Much documentation of the history of the Scenic Loop-Boerne Stage Corridor is found in Spanish Land Grants, historic deeds, family cemeteries, oral histories, etc. The Grey Forest Historical Society is in the process of completing the application necessary to be listed as a historic district through the National Registry of Historic Places. In addition, the Society has also submitted an application for a Historic Subject Marker for the Scenic Loop Playground (which is now the city of Grey Forest). The Bexar County Historical Commission has approved this application. It is now being reviewed by the Texas Historical Commission.

We lend our support to preserve and protect this historic road. Let's keep the "Scenic" in Scenic Loop.

Sincerely,



Freda Hoffman  
Grey Forest Historic Society  
Chairperson



Huebner Onion Homestead  
Circa 1862

## Historical Society of Leon Valley

*Dedicated to preserving our history and heritage through education and research.*

<b>Darby Riley</b> President	<b>Irene Baldrige</b> Vice President	<b>Anita Eggert</b> Recording Secretary	<b>Gayle Green</b> Corresponding Secretary	<b>Barbara Fryer</b> Treasurer	<b>Carol Poss</b> Memorial Trust Officer	<b>Shirley Owen</b> Archivist
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February 28, 2007

Susan Beavin  
Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Alliance  
19807 Scenic Loop Rd.  
Helotes, Texas 78023

Dear Ms. Beavin:

The conservation of the environmental and historic values of the Scenic Loop and Boerne Stage areas was discussed during the February meeting of the Historical Society of Leon Valley. We wish to go on record as offering the enthusiastic support of our membership for the efforts of the Scenic Loop – Boerne Stage Alliance to obtain historic designation.

This is an important scenic and historical area which must be preserved for future generations. Thank you for your efforts.

Very truly yours,

Darby Riley, President  
Historical Society of Leon Valley  
225-7236

BALCONES CITIZENS ASSOCIATION FOR RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Route 3, Box 3352  
Boerne, Texas 78006

At a meeting of Balcones Citizens Association for Resources and Environment (Balcones C.A.R.E.) held on October 7, 1985 at seven o'clock P.M. it was moved, seconded, and unanimously

RESOLVED: that the Balcones Citizens Association for Resources and Environment is against the proposed changes that appear in the San Antonio City Ordinance #57906 of August 10, 1983 and is against the drawings showing changes of straightening and an eighty-five foot right-of-way in the south end of Scenic Loop.

  
Ann E. Kercheville, President

***Here's how you can help:***

The Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor was recently listed on the prestigious Preservation Texas "Most Endangered Places 2009". The historic Corridor is under siege! The hills are being dynamited for subdivision development. Our water quality and resource, wildlife habitat, view sheds, and historic communities are being destroyed and/or compromised.

This corridor and every other one that connects San Antonio with the Texas Hill Country, without exception, has been upgraded to allow for maximum transport of traffic. Because of the lack of county regulation, minimal municipal regulation, and intensive development of rural areas outlying San Antonio, the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor is under immediate threat of being upgraded.

**SCENIC LOOP - BOERNE STAGE CORRIDOR**

**Letter of Support**

To Whom It May Concern,

I support the efforts of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Alliance to pursue the historic designation of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor from its intersection at Bandera Rd (Hwy 16) to the Balcones Creek at the Kendall County Line. This Corridor also includes Boerne Stage Rd at Leon Springs at I-10, west to the Toutant-Beauregard intersection, and continues west on Toutant to the Kendall County Line.

Much documentation of the history of the Scenic Loop - Boerne Stage Corridor is found in archaeological records, Spanish Land Grants, Civil War Veteran Land Scripts, historic deeds, stage coach schedules and various other writings, including oral histories. Several areas and homes along the Corridor have received or have applied for national and/or state historic designations. Some are included in the Heart of Texas Wildlife Trail - East, produced by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and two of several novels written about the area: Helotes: Where the Hill Country Begins (C. Massey) and The Settlement of Leon Springs, Texas: from Prussia to Persia (M Richardson).

We lend our support in protecting and preserving this historic Corridor and the natural integrity of the area, and encourage you to do the same.

Sincerely,

-----  
Signature

-----  
Date

**Please Print:**  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please check:***

You can count on my financial support

You can count on my active participation

Please mail to Susan Beavin, 19807 Scenic Loop Rd, Helotes, TX 7802

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## **Picture Contributors** (credits listed separately with each picture)

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