

Description of North Bexar County OST 2006

At the intersection of Houston St. and N. Flores St. are the Frost Bank building and Frost Park. An early Frost family home can be viewed on the Fredericksburg Rd. corridor of the OST. The OST proceeds north on N. Flores. The 300 block of N. Flores has the Robert E. Lee hotel (highly important sponsor of 1920s OST development), cafes, lounges and the new Villa Hermosa apartments. The 400 block is old established businesses, Alamo Music and an OST 1920s sponsor, S. X. Callahan auto repair. The Callahans are our greatest OST100 sponsors as well. We will continue for another mile within the "Downtown Empowerment Zone." Funds generated in the zone by the city allowed renovation of the modern-looking ARTPACE building in the 400 block facing Main. The old Sunshine Laundry, 617 and Akers family business facing Main St. are also some of San Antonio's oldest businesses. Fox Tech was San Antonio's first "Old Main" High School, oldest high school in south Texas

At the Kingsbury St. intersection, tile panels by the Fox Tech art students and the landscaping in the triangle, along the fence and in the next block were part of a public and private partnership between the city, school district and Scenic San Antonio. (*Beautification of Louis W. Fox Technical and Academic High School* in www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.com ARTICLES section)

On each side of IH-35 notice palms planted by Scenic San Antonio that will reach above the freeway in a few years; under the Credit Union sign on the south of IH-35 and against the fence on the north of IH-35 in the grass on the west side of the cul-de-sac. During 2005 and '06 volunteers of the Scenic San Antonio N. Flores Beautification project planted over 200 trees and a like number of donated flowering plants along this two-mile OST corridor. (*NORTH FLORES: STREET OF FLOWERS* in www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.com ARTICLES section)

Along N. Flores, Positive Solutions Charter School, Salvation Army, Refugee & Immigrant League & Education Services, and I Have a Dream Foundation are interspersed among the historic homes with supporting shops: dental, barber, restaurants, etc. A very mixed-use corridor.

This area is within the Five Points Neighborhood. The two year Scenic San Antonio Beautification of N. Flores was more than just a landscape project. Still within the empowerment zone, all but one empty building was sold and in 2006 Councilman Roger Flores began the procedure to create the city's newest Historic District. The long brick building, 1021 built as a bakery, with later use as a restaurant, is now being restored. 1028, Rainbow Party House has been newly purchased and is being converted with city incentives, by a couple of young artists, into a studio and home to raise their family.

The earliest ones here were built along El Camino Real cart road from Mexico thru the old Republic of Texas to the US. From Houston St. to San Pedro Springs the OST was built on this N. Flores section of El Camino Real. 1108 has historic designation as a Carranza meeting place. 1219 with the blue and white roof was the Walsh family city home. The Walsh's followed El Camino Real back to their large ranch south of town near the new Toyota plant. The small caliche building south of the main house, behind San Antonio's oldest rose bush, is being restored, in part with a grant from the San Antonio Conservation Society. The cross street is still Walsh St.

"SoFlo", investors who began on South Flores have fixed up 1224 for rent and the very attractive orange 1325 complex further up. Most of that complex is Positive Solutions classrooms. Notice the milk sign over the building at 1440. Dairy buildings, once prominent along this corridor, now have new uses.

The Flores/Fredericksburg intersection is known as Five Points. Early cart roads led to San Pedro Springs from Fredericksburg, Laredo, Culebra hill & Blanco. The city of San Antonio began here in 1718. The springs was set aside by the King of Spain for public use. It became San Pedro city park; oldest park in the nation after Boston Commons.

The OST follows Fredericksburg Rd. north. 300 Fredericksburg Rd. along the RR tracks was built by the Pianta family as their concrete art studio. Notice the concrete enhancements at the entrance. Another shape is above the opposite end of the building. The Pianta's concrete art can be seen in the Majestic Theater and Cottonwood building on the Houston St. corridor of the OST. Across the street is one of the original Pig Stands pork sandwich drive-ins, with its distinctive corner adornments on the roof. And next door is a converted fuel station. Much economic development is needed on this area of Fredericksburg Rd. before inviting motorcades for the OST Centennial. On the northeast corner of the road to Blanco is an old Texaco station still being used for auto work.

From the RR to IH-10, the 300 to 1000 blocks, this section of Fredericksburg is within a newly created Neighborhood Conservation District, a tool for neighborhoods to retain their basic character as demolition and development invades

the inner city. This neighborhood has opted for new construction to have burglar bars inside the windows eliminating the appearance of danger while allowing businesses to protect their properties. They also limited new building heights to four stories.

Rosie's Lounge, 439 has been nearly forty years at the corner of Princeton Ave. Rosie lives in the white house with the picket fence just behind the bar. Garcia's have had their Mexican Restaurant at 842 for 43 years. The Victory Theater at the flashing light at Ashby is being used as one of St. Ann's Catholic parish buildings. At French/Michigan renovation for mixed residential and retail use and the creation of the pocket park has enticed other investment by new businesses across from St. Ann's. During the early 1920s Fredericksburg Rd. was named Foch Highway in honor of French Field Marshall Ferdinand Foch, Allied Commander credited with winning the Great World War. He visited San Antonio Dec. 7, 1921. The Old Spanish Trail wouldn't have been built without its designation as a necessary US military route. (*MILITARY ASPECT OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL* in www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.com HISTORY section)

The north end, very small shorter section of the red brick building at the southwest corner of Fredericksburg and Woodlawn was the first San Antonio Branch Library.

The OST route passes under IH-10 into an area that was dairy cattle pastures along Martinez Creek. Note stonework across from Oak Farms Dairy and then Cool Crest, the second oldest miniature golf course in the nation. Uphill into housing developments and shops built during the 1920s. Then to the Deco District, part of San Antonio's Jefferson Woodlawn Lake Community Development Corporation corridor where building facelifts and new infill projects are generated by grants and economic development funding. Underground utilities, stone planters and bus shelters, student hanging tile art, and palm trees enhance the corridor. 1800 is the city owned building renovated over the last 15 years and now managed by the CDC. Across the street one of the larger Texaco stations has been converted to restaurant use. Hanging tile art mosaics were created by urban youth in the ASKEW studio next to the Woodlawn Theater.

The most successful model used by OST100 to encourage developers to follow in the footsteps of 1920s OST Beautification suggestions is the new stonework added by Jack-in-the-Box matching old stonework placed at North Dr. during the 1920s. This stone enhanced pocket park leads into the Monticello Park Historic District. A successful OST100 preservation model, within the Primrose Senior Community, is the restoration of the German style stone Bihl family home. Previously surrounded by large dairy pastures, the stone home indicated to early drivers that the OST was leaving San Antonio and entering the foothills of hill country German settlements. The building is now the home of Bihl Haus Arts, a multi-use community arts space serving both the Primrose residents and surrounding neighborhoods. Neon lighting on the east side of the street, from deco time period, can be seen at Bingo and Tip Top and further along at Fontana Motel.

Walgreen's stone retaining wall at 3326, leads to the remaining stone bench of a pair installed at Vance Jackson by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas in 1936 to commemorate the OST. When placed here, these benches marked the early city limits of San Antonio.

The Villa Motel at 3426 is an example of early motor court construction. Instead of attached rooms, there was space between cabins to park the small old autos. OST100 is looking into the history of the pink faux-brick building, further along on the west side, and its trailer court behind to see if it was possibly an early OST tourist court for early campers. The OST Beautification ladies took great care guiding tourist camp grounds developers, advising them to provide a sense of safety with lighting and cleanliness with white paint. (*Beautification of the Old Spanish Trail* in www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.com ARTICLES section)

Purple street signs indicate the separate city of Balcones Heights. The Balcones Escarpment, 300 feet above downtown San Antonio, is on the fault line separating the rocky hill country from sandy soil leading to the gulf. In 1929 when the OST was finally paved from coast to coast, a Grand Finale Motorcade from San Diego, California to St. Augustine, Florida, paused and waited in Balcones Heights until the local cars and dignitaries joined them. Then with police escort and much fanfare, the motorcade was led down the OST into San Antonio for a fine dinner in the Gunter Hotel sponsored by the OSTA and Chamber of Commerce. There was another westbound motorcade from St. Augustine to San Diego in October 1929.

The final paving motorcades of the OST coincided with the Great Depression leaving those wanting to build motor courts, restaurants and travel related businesses without funds until nearly WW II. Fredericksburg Rd. has been greatly widened removing any enhancements and even old motels, gas stations, cafes and tourist sites supporting the

OST. The Siesta Motel, 4441 Fredericksburg is one of the oldest motels left in Bexar County. It was certainly Balcones Heights first business establishment. The pool is original.

The Balcones Heights Convention and Visitors Bureau with a new Convention Center in the mall, supported by new hotels, brings the Rodeo Cowboy Breakfast, Jazz Festival, and a nationally sanctioned Bar-B-Q Cook-Off to the city annually.

North of loop 410 live oak trees begin to soften the rolling landscape especially at Oak Hills Country Club in the Oak Hills subdivision. The Texas Open was here for many years. This area was no longer open fields and pastures, but oak covered hills and cattle ranches.

Many professionals from the Medical Arts Building (restored as the Emily Morgan Hotel on the OST behind the Alamo) were among the earliest OST highway promoters. Offices, hospitals and other facilities of the medical community are now located in the Medical Center to the west between Louis Pasteur and Hamilton-Wolfe Dr.

Beyond the Medical Center land was used for ranching. The prominent Frost banking family owned hundreds of acres to the west and Wurzbach family of lawyers and politicians to the east. The Frost home has been incorporated into Las Cimas apartment complex at 8331 and as the office, is open to the public. The Wurzbach/Mickler home, and its stone out-buildings, is located one block east of Fredericksburg at 8534 Wurzbach Rd. The home, carriage house, smoke house and pump house can be viewed from the large shaded parking lot built to serve the conference center, converted from one of the later family ranch houses. The Wurzbach intersection sits atop famous Nine-Mile Hill; all downhill from here into San Antonio. Stone walls have been saved on the northeast corner with an explanatory plaque placed by 7-11 Corp.

USAA Insurance Co. grounds, new apartment complexes and a bit of undeveloped land occupy the next mile. Approaching Heubner Rd., historic Lockhill Cemetery is on the southwest corner of the intersection. There are two more blocks of Fredericksburg Rd, but from there north to 1604 the OST has been paved over by IH-10. It is easiest to enter IH-10 via Huebner Rd. from the south.
Right on Huebner, left to IH-10 North.

This is all part of the 32-mile "Headquarters Section" of 1920s OST promotion. The OST Beautification group asked businesses and residents to landscape and decorated their entrances with native stone. Architectural drawings were made available to OST association members to encourage enhancement from coast to coast. Much was lost with the widening of Fredericksburg and overlaying of IH-10.

Exit IH-10 at UTSA Blvd, cross over UTSA Blvd. and park in the north end of North Point Mitsubishi Motors (Acura, Jaguar) to view, across IH-10, the State Historically Registered Moos Home and Smokehouse restored in the Gunn Auto Complex under the giant American flag. Florence Moos was National Chair of the OST Beautification Committee encouraging decorative stone walls and landscaping, as still seen north of 1604 at Leon Creek. This Moos home is better viewed from the IH-10 southbound access road.

Do not reenter IH-10 while proceeding north. Beyond ramp that enters IH-10 move to left to follow curve to 1604 west. Under highway, move back to right lanes even tho' turning left to get on 1604W access road. Stay in furthest right lanes. **IMMEDIATELY** after emerging from underpasses, Old Fredericksburg Rd. proceeds north. Watch traffic carefully to pass under last overpass section, move across traffic to right lane and immediately turn right onto OST. Darden Restaurants from Orlando, Florida has built an Olive Garden on this IH-10/1604 corner and has been working with OST100 to create OST signage for the property

The Old Fredericksburg Rd. Leon Creek concrete low-water-crossings was a luxury for auto travelers used to fording streams with rocky bottoms and even large boulders. We are so fortunate to have this small stretch of OST not overlaid by IH-10 and 1604. It is a small isolated section of what the 32-mile Headquarters Section was designed to include.

North beyond the Leon Creek low-water-crossing begins the OST requested 100-foot wide right-of-way, stone walls and decorative entrances. There are the nice stone walls remaining along the east side. Proceeding very slowly, notice that there were also stone walls among the vegetation on the west. They were shorter, but had very attractive pillars at the entrance gates and rock decorated driveway sides over the ditches. When USAA purchased this investment property, they allowed the homes to be moved off the site. Rock pillars on one side of each drive had to be removed to allow the wide houses to be trucked out. Some of the original homeowners landscaping still exists in a much overgrown state.

At the north end of Old Fredericksburg Rd. follow IH-10 access south under 1604 following "EAST LOOP 1604" signs left and left onto west bound IH-10 access road. Under the overpasses is a VIA Park and Ride area. From IH-10 rock quarry reuse, seen at La Cantera Parkway intersection, has led to Fiesta Texas on the west and The Rim, a multi-use entertainment, retail and residential complex on the east being built by Thomas Enterprises of Atlanta, Georgia. A rail line was brought into this area to ship the good hard rock from this escarpment down across the many miles of sandier land to build the seawalls of Port Aransas and Corpus Christi. Martin-Marietta-Materials is still in the quarry business with a functioning railroad running into the quarry just over the hill to the east.

Raymond Russell County Park and Mission Park Cemetery are nestled among subdivision developments with handsome stone enhancements.

Exit IH-10 at Leon Springs Boerne Stage Road. Bear to the right on Old Fredericksburg Rd. Leon Springs is a historic old Texas frontier community. We again advise walking this area between Old Fredericksburg Rd. and the IH-10 access road to view the Aue log and stone buildings, Leon Springs school, church, dance hall and Rudy's Bar-B-Q and gas station of OST early days. You can see the tin ceiling of the original overhang to Rudy's filling station. This was a very lively place during the great world war with all the soldiers being trained at Camp Stanley. Between Max Aue's log store and two-story stone hotel was a refrigerated cooler large enough to hold a train car of beer. (*Leon Springs Short History* in www.OLDSPANISHTRAILCENTENNIAL.com HISTORY section)

The OST leaves Old Fredericksburg Rd. in Rudy's parking lot and follows Boerne Stage Road west and then north into Kendall County. A plaque explaining some of the military establishments of the area is in the Park-and-Ride parking lot on the south side of Boerne Stage Rd. just east of the IH-10 underpass. .

Soon after crossing IH-10, on the south side of the road, down the white fenced lane of 24137 is the former home of past San Antonio Mayor, present Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolfe. The springs that brought settlers to the community of Leon Springs flows from a hillside beyond the house. Owners of The Lodge at Leon Springs assisted living facility have given permission for OST travelers to quietly drive back to view the long ivy-covered house and spring fed creek.

Over the Stage Run entrance bridge, on the north side of Boerne Stage Rd. from The Lodge, an OST plaque has been installed next to the bronze stallion. A bit further west, on the south side of the road across from Stage Run are the 1850s log and brick cabins of the von Plehwe family – early German settlers.

Unlike Balcones Heights, Leon Springs has not incorporated and as can be seen by the many subdivisions, is in danger of having their wild Texas atmosphere engulfed. Open the windows, enjoy the smell of cedar, sounds of birds and Leon Creek, views of mesquite, cedar, and oak landscape and both old and new stone enhancements. As the sign indicating the Breeze Oak intersection is being approached, the county changed the route of the roadbed when the new bridge was built. Younger trees show where the old roadbed was between larger old cedars and oaks. In the creek on the north of the Judge Reeves bridge are remnants of the old road and low-water-crossing.

Boerne Stage Rd. makes a sharp right at the Scenic Loop/Toutant Beauregard stop sign, continues past stables, farms, deer, livestock, beautiful fences and gates and rocky terrain of the hill country. To the west the land belongs to Primarily Primates for the preservation and housing of unwanted monkeys. One of San Antonio's very early Mayors was Sam Maverick. To the west around these curves you will see the wooden gate to the Maverick Ranch. We are fortunate to have these few hills belonging to that family saved as cedar and oak covered areas, not to be developed.

On the northeast corner of Boerne Stage Rd. and Dos Cerros (Two Hills) Rd. is a complex of very old square-cut stone buildings. This is the mid-way point on the stage line from Leon Springs to Boerne. These buildings were built during times of Indian unrest along the stage route to California. The most sturdy two-story stone building has very narrow slits for windows, similar to those seen as gun ports on early forts. North of the old buildings is the Boerne Stage airport. Hopefully this will become one of the small local airports participating in the "Fly the OST" program for pilots of small planes looking for new routes to explore. A bit further on there is another section of straightened OST roadbed with the old roadbed still in use for a short distance.

As the road begins to dip down into the creek area, Balcones Creek Park is approached. The Bexar/Kendall County line was the first large project of the 1920s OST Beautification Department. The 32-mile "Headquarters Section" of the OST from San Antonio to Boerne was the model for other counties and states to follow. Architectural drawings would be sent for the suggested city, county and state line markers, stone or concrete gateways or columns. Balcones Creek Park was created by the joint efforts of civic organizations from San Antonio and Boerne; land, work, material and

monetary donations. The stone caretaker's house was built to oversee the park of stone tables, benches and fences. Altho' flooding, utility and road construction has removed many enhancements, parts of the county line marker on the east side of the road, north of the creek and the stone walls and restored caretaker's house south of the creek remain, now returned to private ownership. The Bexar County Medical Society Auxiliary spearheaded the building of this park in 1927.

Charlotte Kahl 2006