

A Look Back . . .The Old Spanish Trail

by Carol Habgood, 2004/5 San Antonio Woman's Federation President

As the Old Spanish Trail plans its centennial celebration, it's appropriate to look back to March 1924 when "The Old Spanish Trail" organization held a three-day celebration in San Antonio. The highlight of the celebration happened on March 27, when the City Federation of Women's Clubs (SAWF's predecessor) presented a "zero marker" to "The Old Spanish Trail," the City of San Antonio and Bexar County. The marker was placed at a point from which to measure all distances on the old Spanish Trail and its connecting lines. The trail covered 4,000 miles, and this was the third zero marker placed in the United States. The marker was placed on the grounds of City Hall on Military Plaza, within the shadow of San Fernando Cathedral. Military Plaza was considered to be the zero point for all trails. Prior to this, the cathedral had been considered the geographical center of San Antonio and had been used as the beginning point for all land surveys.

The "marker," a five-ton boulder of Texas granite and believed to be a million years old, was donated to the Federation by Professor N. J. Badu of Llano, and transported by the Cassady Granite Company of Llano. The Charles Lucar Monument Works of San Antonio placed the marker. All those efforts were provided free of charge to the Federation.

The ceremonies included a host of dignitaries including the governor of Texas. The ladies of the Federation escorted the special visitors to the dedication program. Messages were received from the governor of California and the mayor of San Diego. California was interested because the Old Spanish Trail that ended in San Antonio began in San Diego.

The marker was unveiled by the Indian Girl Scouts. Mrs. J. K. Beretta (Sallie Ward), president of the Women's Federation, gave a speech to present the marker, and the governor of Texas dedicated it. "Thus an important epoch in the history of our city was made an unforgettable part of our heritage by Mrs. Beretta and the City Federation of Women's Clubs."
(Source of article and quote: "History of the City Federation of Women's Clubs, San Antonio, Texas," by Alice Collins Moon, published October 3, 1960.)