# CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT

# SOUTHWEST TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

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## Abstract

Preservation Central, Inc., under contract to the Travis County Historical Commission, completed historic and architectural investigations in southwestern Travis County in accordance with the Travis County Request for Services Solicitation #S1409-002-JW. The project area encompassed a semi-rural and suburban section of southwest Travis County and includes the cities of West Lake Hills, Rollingwood, Sunset Valley, and San Leanna. Preservation Central conducted a cultural resources survey within the boundaries of the project area to provide the necessary identification, documentation, and framework for future preservation efforts for southwest Travis County, Texas. The survey has resulted in a complete inventory of the historic-age resources (50 years old or older) within the project area and Texas Historical Sites Survey Forms for all of these properties, regardless of condition.

The cultural resources survey was conducted in compliance with applicable Texas Historical Commission (THC) and U.S. Department of the Interior standards. The survey followed the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Identification and Evaluation* for reconnaissance level surveys. This project was funded in part through a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, as administered by the Texas Historical Commission. The contents and opinions, however, do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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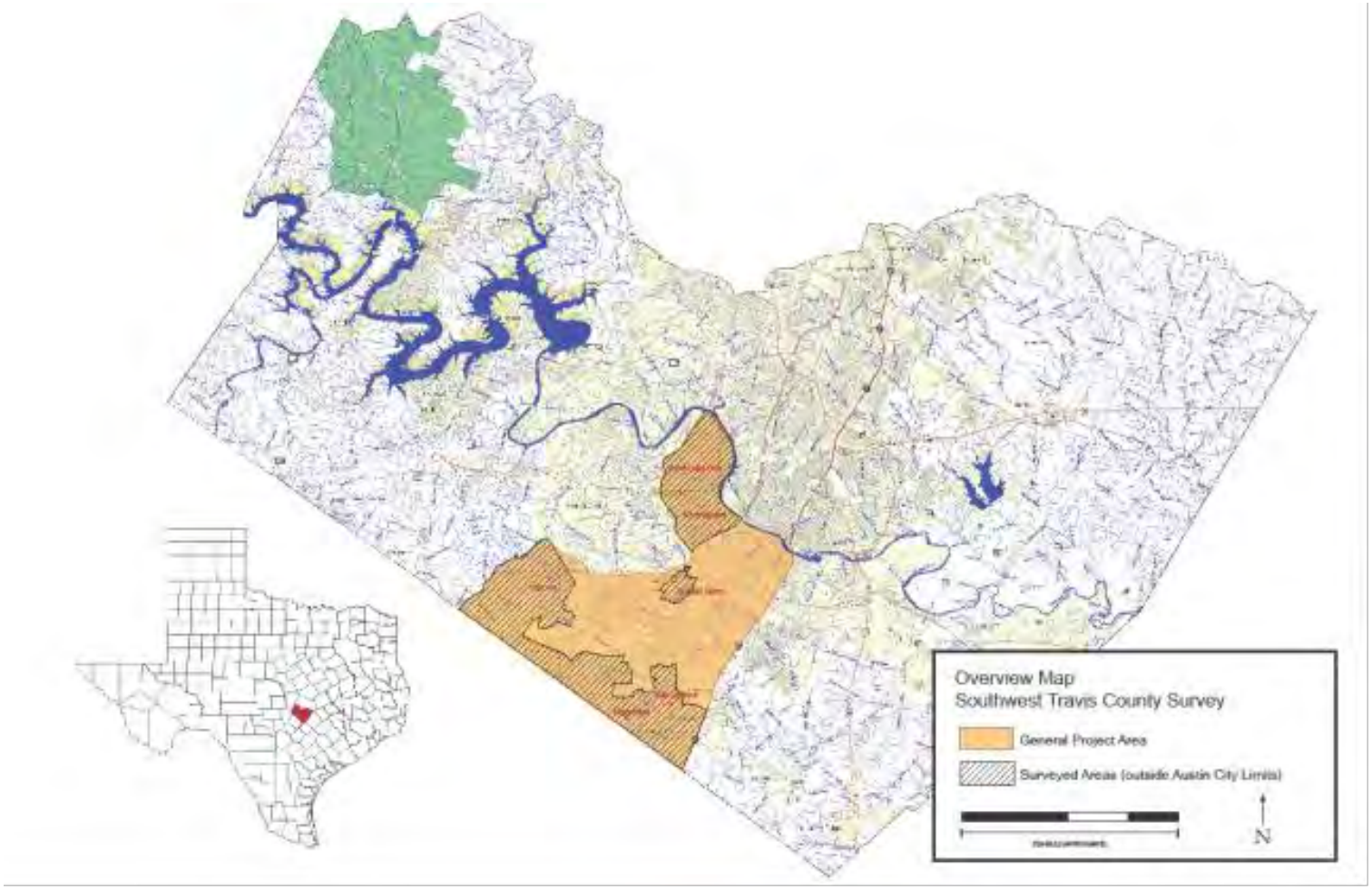
Rights Act (49 U.S.C. 5200d). Preservation Central does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, age, disability, religion, national origin, or sex in any of its projects.

Figure 1: Map of Travis County showing the Project Area in the Southwest Quadrant



## Introduction

The Southwest Travis County Cultural Resources Survey project documented every historic-age (50-years old or older) building, structure, object, and above-ground site in the southwestern Travis County project area. The project area encompasses a semi-rural and suburban section of Travis County in the southwestern quadrant of the county. It is bounded by South IH-35 on the east, the Travis-Hays County line on the south, US Highway 290 from the Hays County line north to its connection with South Loop 1/MoPac on the west, then north to its connection with the Capital of Texas Highway Loop 360, following Loop 360 north to the Colorado River that forms the northern boundary. It includes the incorporated cities of West Lake Hills, Rollingwood, Sunset Valley, San Leanna, and the area around and associated with the unincorporated town of Manchaca (Figure 1 – location map).

The project area contains rural landscapes first settled in the 1850s and dense subdivisions that developed as Austin suburbs beginning in the 1950s. A few scattered farmsteads and ranches survive in the area, but Austin's suburban growth since the latter half of the twentieth century has reached out to surround them. The survey documented early outposts, remnants of rural communities, such as Bear Creek and Oak Hill, as well as historic-age subdivisions. Survey efforts were conducted by project director Terri Myers and preservation professional Caroline Wright, with assistance from volunteer members of the Travis County Historical Commission, and from the Manchaca and Onion Creek Historical Association (MOCHA). The survey consisted of research in the Travis County Appraisal District's (TCAD) property files to identify historic-age properties on county roads and systematically driving those roads to identify historic-age properties that may have been missed or dated incorrectly in the TCAD database. Wherever historic-age properties were encountered, the survey teams documented physical characteristics by completing a Texas Historical Commission (THC) historic sites form, and taking color digital photographs of each property. Ms. Myers and Ms. Wright dictated information to volunteers, when they were available, and the volunteers recorded the information on the THC sites forms and plotted the locations of the resources on a county map.

The project director reviewed the data collected and conducted historical research to identify four historic contexts that cover significant historic and architectural themes in the project area. They are Early Settlement and Agricultural Development (1851-1880), Agriculture (1881-1965), Transportation (1848-

1965), and Rural and Suburban Lifestyles in Travis County (1935-1965). Each surveyed property was identified according to its appropriate context and period of significance.

The project director also assigned preservation priorities to each surveyed property. These priorities were based on age, their architectural significance within one or more of the identified contexts in the project area, alterations if any, and known historic associations. Resources were labeled as High, Medium, or Low preservation priorities, according to their physical integrity and how well they conveyed a sense of history. In general, High priority properties retain their historic architectural fabric to an exceptional degree and are often associated with historical events, people, or trends in the survey area. In some instances, High priorities may have been assigned to properties with only modest architectural integrity but with very significant historical associations. Medium priority properties are historic-age resources that are good or typical examples of an architectural type or style and retain sufficient historic physical attributes to be recognizable to the period of significance. Low priority properties have been significantly altered and no longer convey a good sense of history.

This document is a report of the survey activity and results. It contains a discussion of the research and survey methodology used in the project, an outline of the four historic contexts identified in the project area, and an examination of the historic property types found in the region. It discusses the survey results and offers recommendations for preservation. It includes a complete inventory of properties, maps locating the surveyed properties by region, a map legend, and a bibliography of sources used in the research and report preparation. Deliverables include this report, electronic versions of the database, individual survey forms, and labeled photographs for each historic-age property surveyed in the project.

## Research, Survey, and Report Methods

On December 19, 2014, Travis County entered into a contract with Preservation Central, Inc., to conduct a cultural resources survey of southwest Travis County. Terri Myers, historian and principal of Preservation Central, Inc. signed the contract for the firm. On January 29, 2015, Ms. Myers met with members of the Travis County Historical Commission to present the findings of the southeast Travis County project and discuss the goals of the upcoming southwest Travis County project.

***Research Methodology***

From her previous survey and research experience in the project area, Ms. Myers had accumulated a large collection of primary and secondary research materials related to the project area. She reviewed her files and earlier reports and concluded that they would provide a good foundation for studying the historic and architectural development of the current project area, particularly of the Manchaca/Bear Creek region in far south Travis County. Her previous reports include the *Heep Jersey Farm Rural Historic District* National Register nomination (Knight and Myers, 2006) and *Rural Community Development in Southern Travis and Northern Hays Counties, Texas, 1865-1905*, a historic context for the Ransom Williams Homestead (41TV1051)(Myers and Boyd, May 2006), the *Historic Context for Southeast Travis County and Cultural Resources Survey and Assessment for the New Austin Airport* (Myers, et. al., Hardy Heck Moore, 1996), and *Historic and Architectural Resources of Southeast Travis County, Texas*, Multiple Property National Register nomination (Myers et. al., Hardy Heck Moore & Associates, 1996).

In addition, Bob Ward, Travis County Historical Commission survey coordinator, acquired digital copies of several recent cultural resources reports that covered properties in southwest Travis County. Among the most helpful of these were Hicks & Company's draft survey for SH 130 (2001) and aci consulting's survey of SH 71 (2008). Ms. Myers also encountered people during field investigations who provided valuable information about the area and its cultural resources. Marilyn McLeod, a member of the Manchaca and Onion Creek Historical Association (MOCHA), provided a transcript of Frank Fruth's diaries spanning 1889-1899 on CD. Fruth was a relative of Ms. McLeod and an early farmer in the Manchaca/Bear Creek region. The diaries provided valuable insights into life in the area during the late nineteenth century. Ms. Myers also conducted census and tax research to identify early families and their occupations in the project area, and to assist in dating cultural resources found there.

Little information was found on the families who settled in the project area except for the Fruths, Ransom Williams, Jack Dodson, and the Heep family. The Williams, Dodson, and Heep families are associated with properties that lie in the Manchaca/Bear Creek portion of the project area. Most of the southwest quadrant's early settlers were farmers or stock raisers whose roles in Travis County's history were largely limited to their families and immediate communities. Their physical contributions to the

development of southwestern Travis County are found in the historic farmhouses, agricultural resources, commercial buildings, schools, churches, and cemeteries of the region.

Ms. Myers and preservation professional, Caroline Wright, both conducted new research on Austin's post-World War II development trends. Ms. Wright, who surveyed the area's suburban neighborhoods, already possessed considerable knowledge of the region's postwar architectural history. She gathered additional information on architect and builder, A. D. Stenger, and his contributions to subdivision development in the project area, especially in Rollingwood. Ms. Myers used the internet to learn basic facts on the founding and incorporation of the quadrant's suburbs and the transportation systems built to serve them.

Prior to her survey work, Ms. Wright conducted research in the Travis County Appraisal District's database to identify historic properties that might otherwise be missed in the vehicle survey and to exclude roads that had no historic-age properties. This research saved time in the field and helped direct the survey efforts.

***Survey Methodology***

Field work commenced on February 16, 2014, and continued through March 28, 2015, when they were suspended due to the principal investigator's illness. The survey resumed in August, 2015, with preservation professional Caroline Wright leading the investigations. Early field investigations were hampered by an abundance of rain during the spring, but Ms. Myers was able to complete work in and south of Manchaca in the southernmost part of the project area, in the Oak Hill community node located in the 6200 block of US 290 west of Austin, and in a nearby farmstead associated with the Oak Hill community. Ms. Wright surveyed the remaining land in the project area, a vast territory that stretched from north of Manchaca, in the southern portion, to the Bee Cave and Oak Hill sections to the west of Austin.

***Reconnaissance Survey***

On February 16, 2015, Ms. Myers and volunteer Dan Hickox conducted a reconnaissance survey in the territory to identify distinct communities and the variety of property types to be found. The survey identified the Manchaca Springs area with c. 1920s farm houses associated with the Boone Heep family occupation. The team drove roads throughout the Manchaca area and identified a number of early twentieth

century resources associated with agriculture and town-building in Manchaca. When Ms. Wright took over the field investigations, she drove through the rural areas and then through the incorporated cities of West Lake Hills, Rollingwood, San Leanna, and Sunset Valley to familiarize herself with the cultural resources in those areas and to plan for the intensive level survey.

***Intensive Level Survey***

Systematic surveying commenced with Ms. Myers and volunteers documenting resources along and near Old San Antonio Road, FM 1626, Manchaca Road, and Bliss Spillar Road in the Manchaca/Bear Springs region, and US 290 and Old Patton Ranch in the Oak Hill region in the more rural parts of the county. Ms. Wright completed the rural and semi-rural areas of the county and then concentrated on the incorporated cities.

Ms. Myers and Ms. Wright conducted intensive-level field work both by themselves and with the assistance of Travis County Historical Commission volunteers. With volunteers, the survey leaders dictated information about each resource to the assistant who recorded it on a Texas Historic Sites inventory form and plotted its location on a county map. Each property was identified by a unique site number. Ms. Myers and Ms. Wright photographed each surveyed property and the volunteers plotted their locations on county maps.

Travis County Historical Commission volunteers for this effort included Bob Ward, May Schmidt, Dan Hickox, and Rosemary Morrow. In addition, Marilyn McLeod, member of the Manchaca and Onion Creek Historical Association (MOCHA), spent a day as a volunteer surveyor. Daily fieldwork was conducted in pre-determined sections of the project area. In most cases, the volunteers met the professionals in Austin in the morning and the team spent most of the day in the field, driving the county roads and documenting historic-age properties found there. Some roads were eliminated due to the absence of historic-age properties as revealed in TCAD research. Otherwise, all county roads were surveyed in sections until the entire southwestern project area was covered.

Both investigators used current county roads maps to identify survey areas and to plot resources. They attempted to survey properties on roads following North-South/East-West coordinates, but main roads in the survey area tended to follow topographical lines, skirting waterways, and traversing hills along

terraces. Because of topographical challenges and the distances between resources, it was determined that the survey would be a vehicular one conducted in zones marked by major roads, distinct communities, and subdivisions, rather than in a strict north-south/east-west road manner.

Within these zones, the teams conducted a vehicular survey proceeding along the roads within the area, mapping and recording salient features of resources or groups of resources on either side of the roads. All public roads within the given zone were covered before proceeding to the next zone until all zones within the project area boundaries were covered. Sites were plotted on roads throughout the area. Roads were color-coded to make sure that all areas were surveyed. In areas where historic-age properties were more concentrated or where vehicular survey was dangerous, as in the West Lake Hills area where there are steep climbs and descents and blind curves, the field team walked the roads to document properties.

Field work consisted of the survey team leader identifying historic-age properties according to their plan, style, use, and her experience in the field, and the volunteer recording that information on a Texas Historical Commission's Historic Resource Form. Basic information was dictated to the assigned volunteer for each property or group of property that have achieved the recommended 50-year mark for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Recorded information included the property address (when known), the property type, subtype, style if any, age, and materials used. In addition, the professionals narrated a brief property description to the volunteer who copied it onto the form.

At the same time, the team leaders photographed the resource or resources. Where possible, the photographs were taken as oblique views to capture the front and at least one side elevation. Additional photographs were taken to portray unique or interesting features of the property such as decorative architectural details. In some cases, photographs were taken to show the property within its physical context. The volunteer plotted the location of the resource on a field map prepared for that purpose.

Ms. Myers assigned a Preservation Priority of High, Medium, or Low to each property that she surveyed in the field. She assigned Preservation Priorities to the properties Ms. Wright surveyed from photographs and integrity notes taken by Ms. Wright from her field work. High level properties are almost always excellent examples of a recognized type or style of architecture or are associated with historic events, trends, or people who were significant in the settlement, development, and growth of the project area. Such properties may be eligible for individual listing in the National Register.

Medium preservation priorities are good or typical examples of their architectural type or style and, while perhaps not individually eligible for listing in the National Register, may be considered Contributing elements in a potential historic district. Low preservation priorities are properties that are either nonhistoric or are historic-age properties that have been severely altered such that they are no longer recognizable to their period of significance. Such properties would be considered Noncontributing elements of a historic district.

Though Low preservation priorities were technically exempt from the survey, the Preservation Central teams documented all historic period properties due to the potential for several historic districts for which this information would be required. Nonhistoric properties were not surveyed unless they were found to be within a few years of the recommended 50-year age.

Ms. Myers took all the photographs for the properties she surveyed and Ms. Wright took all the photographs for her properties. Both investigators took multiple photographs of most properties. They made every effort to take two images of each resource to show the maximum number of facades. Because many resources were set back far from the public right-of-way, it was difficult to capture two different photographs and in those cases, photographs were taken of the same image with a slightly different exposure. All High priority properties were photographed in color digital JPEG format at 300 dpi resolution. Digital photographs are 1200 x 1800 in size and are submitted on DVD-R. Images were renamed according to address and property number.

An overview map and four quadrant maps were made that show the location of each surveyed resource. A USGS 7.5 series map was used as a base map. Site numbers are keyed to a tabular inventory form. In the case of building complexes containing a large number of individual resources, “inset” maps were prepared showing the relationship of buildings within the complex.

Upon completion of the field work, all survey data was entered into a Microsoft Access database compatible with that of the Texas Historical Commission and the Travis County Commissioner’s office. Photographic images were linked to numbered properties so that they appeared on the Image page for each one.

***Report Methodology***

Upon completion of the survey, this report was written to discuss the results of the survey. It contains an Abstract and Introduction that briefly describe the project and its purpose, a discussion of the project Methodology, historic contexts for southwest Travis County, and an analysis of Property Types found in the project area. The narrative contexts are based on primary and secondary sources, including documents on file at the Austin History Center, resources available at the Center for American History (University of Texas at Austin), and information gathered from local citizens and from members of the Manchaca and Onion Creek Historical Association (MOCHA). The Handbook of Texas online was used for general information about specific topics, such as the early history of Manchaca, Oak Hill, and incorporated cities in the project area. It includes a bibliography and internal citations. The narrative is organized chronologically within each of the four contexts identified in the project area. It provides information on the settlement of the area, agriculture, transportation, and suburban development in southwest Travis County.

The *Property Types* section identifies the types of cultural resources in the project area and outlines the basis for their assessment as High, Medium, or Low Preservation Priories, as well as the criteria required for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The *Results* section of the report includes the total number of historic resources recorded, and the numbers of High and Medium (Contributing) and Low (Noncontributing) priority historic resources in the survey area. It also discusses the potential for historic districts in the project area.

The principal investigator made observations and recommendations for future preservation efforts in southwest Travis County. She provided some strategies on how to highlight and preserve resources that reflect the history and architecture. Such recommendations include nominating High priority resources to the National Register of Historic Places and pursuing the designation of historic districts in the area.

Final products include four bound copies and one unbound copy of the survey report containing the inventory of properties and maps. It is recommended that one bound copy of the report be submitted to the Austin History Center. The Travis County Historical Commission should retain the unbound report for reproduction. Digital versions of the report, database, and photographs will be submitted to the Texas Historical Commission and the Travis County Historical Commission on CD or DVD-R.

The survey report complies with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and State Historic Preservation Officer's (SHPO) directives and shall be consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Identification and Evaluatio*n. All activities and deliverables will conform to the requirements of the Scope of Work.

### *Appendices*

In addition to the Survey Report, Preservation Central has produced the following work products as appendices:

- Historic Resources Inventory
- Project Area Maps with each Surveyed Site noted by Site Number
- Individual Texas Historical Resources Survey Forms for each surveyed property
- Report, Maps, and Digital Photographs on DVD-R

A Historic Resources Inventory follows the report as Appendix A. The inventory lists each site and its components and their essential qualities, such as plan type and materials. Preservation priorities of High, Medium, and Low are also included in the inventory. Some gaps in numbering appear in the inventory. They are due to minor errors or adjustments made in the field and later resolved in the data entry process. An overview map and zone maps based on regions identifying all historic resources in the project area are included as an appendix to this report. All data has been input in a Microsoft Access database and copied onto a DVD-R to as a work product along with the report. The database includes a Texas Historical Commission Historic Resources Survey Form for each surveyed resource.

### *Photographs*

Color digital photographs were taken of all historic-age properties and were presented to the Travis County Historical Commission and the THC on DVD-R. The digital photographs are 300 dpi JPEG or TIFF files, 1200 x 1800 in size and saved to CD. In most cases, two or more photo images were taken of surveyed properties. In some instances, properties were set far back from the public right-of-way or were obscured by vegetation and only one view was taken.

### *Site Maps*

All surveyed sites are located on a USGS 7.5-series base map. Maps are of sufficient size to readily identify surveyed sites. All surveyed properties are indicated on the map by site numbers keyed to a tabular inventory.

### *Computer Data*

Preservation Central, Inc. has submitted digital copies of the maps, inventory, historic sites forms, report, and color photographs on a DVD-R.

All designations and codes set forth by the THC are used in the forms, inventory, and project report. Architectural styles and terminology conform to those developed by Virginia and Lee McAlester, John J.G. Blumenson, and Steven J. Phillips. The inventory will be reviewed by the Travis County Historical Commission designee and THC.

## Historic Contexts of Southwest Travis County: 1848-1965

The Southwest Travis County cultural resources survey area ranges from South IH 35 on the east, the Travis-Hays County line on the south, US 290 from the Hays County line north to its connection with South Loop 1/MoPac on the west, along the Capital of Texas Highway 360 north to the Colorado River, which forms the northern boundary. It includes the cities of West Lake Hills, Rollingwood, Sunset Valley, and San Leanna, and the unincorporated town of Manchaca.

Cultural resources in the project area may fall within one or more historic contexts that are themes, trends, and patterns of development within which the property can be understood and assessed for significance. Four historic contexts have been identified for properties lying within the southwest Travis County project area. They are 1) Early Settlement and Agricultural Development (1844-1880), which focuses on pioneer settlement and early agricultural endeavors in the project area; 2) Agriculture (1881-1965), which covers agricultural maturity through the historic period; 3) Transportation (1848-1965), which covers the impact of stagecoach routes, railroad lines, and road improvement on settlement; and 4) Rural and Suburban Lifestyles (1935-1965), which discusses the movement of urban residents to the countryside in the years just prior to, and principally following, World War II.

The following discussion traces the history of cultural resources in southwest Travis County in terms of their contextual development. Each context is developed separately but with references to the others as relevant. For the most part, they progress in chronological order from the earliest known settlement in the territory through the historic period ending in 1965.

### *Early Settlement and Agricultural Communities (1851-1880)*

The first of these contexts relates to properties built by frontier farmers and ranchers during the initial settlement phase in the region. Manchaca Springs (Site 3), the site of Adolphus Weir's c. 1851 "plantation", and the 1875 Townsley Cemetery, resting place of early Bear Creek settler William A. Townsley (Site 36), are associated with this early settlement and agricultural context. So, too, is the Ransom

and Sarah Williams archaeological site (Site 39), a c. 1871 African American farmstead on Bear Creek, before the town of Manchaca was platted in 1881.[1]

Although part of the Spanish and Mexican empires in the present United States, early settlement in southwest Travis County begins with the Anglo and slave populations introduced into the region as a result of Stephen F. Austin's colonization efforts in the 1820s. Spanish and Mexican governments offered generous land grants to Americans and Europeans to settle their vast lands in Texas, New Mexico, and other northern territories in an effort to authenticate their claims to the region. Petitioners were required to obey the law of the land, convert to Catholicism, and eschew slavery that had already been outlawed in Mexico. American settlers typically ignored these conditions and steadily relocated to the newly opened territory of *Tejas y Coahuila* starting in the 1820s. The earliest of these tended to stay in the eastern part of the territory or along the coastal plain. Few came to Central Texas, including present-day Travis County, due in large part to fear of attack by Comanches and other hostile tribes who roamed the area.

After Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836, the tiny hamlet of Waterloo emerged on the north bank of the Colorado River in present Travis County. In 1838, only four families lived at the site on the edge of the wilderness. Its selection as the capital of the Republic of Texas in 1839, however, ensured its growth and development into the future. In 1840, the Texas Congress created Travis County, with Austin as the county seat. Hays County – among others – was carved out of the original 40,000-square-mile Travis County in 1848 and San Marcos was designated as its seat of government. Both Austin and San Marcos became regional agricultural hubs with a variety of stores and mills to serve the surrounding farmers and ranchers. Five years later, Austin was made the capital of the new state of Texas. Fueled by the presence of new state agencies, the city experienced a huge growth spurt that spilled over into the county.[2]

Following the Mexican War in 1848, the United States government established a series of forts to guard the western boundaries of Texan civilization. The presence of an armed and trained military force along the frontier pushed the Comanche and Apache tribes further west. Relative safety from raiding parties

[1] Douglas K. Boyd, Aaron R. Norment, Terri Myers, Maria Franklin, Nedra Lee, Leslie L. Bush, and Brian S. Shaffe, *The Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead: Post-Emancipation Transitions of an African American Family in Central Texas, Volume I* (Austin, Texas: Texas Department of Transportation, May 2015).

encouraged the growing number of American immigrants to venture beyond Austin to the surrounding countryside where they sought to make their living from the land. By 1850, Travis County had a population of 3,138 residents; in ten years, that number more than doubled to 8,080, most of whom lived in out in the county.[3]

Most of those who lived outside the capital city, however, tended to build homes in the eastern and southeastern part of the county, where the land was richer than in the rocky western hills. Too, while Indian raids decreased substantially in eastern portion of the county by the 1850s, they remained a threat to homesteaders in the western hills which provided ample cover for marauders as late as the 1870s. As a result of better soil and greater safety, the eastern half of the county developed faster and in greater numbers than the western half. During the 1850s, when eastern Travis County supported a society of wealthy cotton-growing planters like Aaron Burleson and Thomas McKinney who lived in spacious limestone houses on large tracts of land, southwestern Travis County drew only a smattering of scattered pioneer families to its less bountiful, more isolated environs.

Little is known about the original pioneers in the Southwest Travis County project area. The area's principal attractions were a number of permanent springs and spring-fed creeks that ranged across the territory from Manchaca Springs, at the southeastern point in the project area, to Williamson Creek in the western part of the zone. Apparently, a farmstead existed at Manchaca Springs as early as 1844,[4] and the Austin-to-San Antonio stagecoach stopped at the springs as early as 1848. Early residents typically came to the area from Tennessee, Kentucky, and elsewhere in Appalachia and the Upper South. They purchased land out of the original surveys and built log houses with stone chimneys on the banks of waterways including Onion, Bear, and Slaughter creeks whose tributaries traversed the quadrant. According to early census and tax records, the immigrants had little cash but owned between about 275 and 880 acres of land on which they engaged in subsistence farming and cattle or sheep grazing. They owned few slaves.[5]

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[2] Vivian Elizabeth Smyrl, "Travis County," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook'/online/articles/hct08, accessed September 03, 2015. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
[3] Ibid.

[4] Wayne Roberson, "The Study of Extinct Rural Communities in the United States: A Test of Feasibility" (Master's thesis, University of Texas at Austin, December, 1972).
[5] Ibid.

Virtually all residents in southwest Travis County in the early years of development, from the 1840s through the 1870s, engaged in subsistence-level farming from the outset. Corn was the principal field crop, but farmers also grew wheat and other grains. By 1860, Travis County farmers produced 137,700 bushels of corn and 27,900 bushels of wheat.[6] Cotton was not yet a significant cash crop. Virtually all Travis and Hays county farmers and ranchers also raised livestock of some type. Cattle and sheep dominated, but area farmers also raised goats, hogs, and poultry.[7] As their livestock numbers increased, farmers were able to sell the excess for cash.

William A. Townsley and his family were probably typical of the earliest settlers in the Bear Creek and Manchaca areas. Townsley hailed from Tennessee but moved to Texas by 1847 where he married his wife, Susan, a native of Alabama. All of the couples' seven children were born in Texas. About 1856, the family moved to Bear Creek, where they lived on several hundred acres of land. They put about 15 acres of land in cultivation and the rest was used for pasture or left wooded. The Townsleys were subsistence farmers who grew corn and garden vegetables for their own use and raised a few head of cattle and about 20 hogs (U.S. Agricultural Census, 1860). Townsley probably hunted wild game to augment the family diet. The family owned no slaves, so Susan and the older children most likely worked alongside William on the farm. Even so, the three oldest children attended school in 1860. While he was 42 years old and had a houseful of children to feed when the Civil War broke out, Townsley joined Carter's Company, a cavalry unit, and served as a private in the Confederate Army. Townsley died in 1875 and his grave on Johnson Lane (Site 36) is the only physical evidence of his life in the Bear Creek region.[8]

### *Community Development in Southern and Southwestern Travis County*

Small community nodes emerged in southwest Travis County as early as the 1840s when a settlement appeared at Manchaca Springs, on the Austin-to-San Antonio stagecoach route. By the 1850s, small enterprises had sprung up at points such as Oatmanville (present Oak Hill) and Dripping Springs, on the Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road (approximating US 290). Such centers were generally located on a main road, at a crossroads, and/or a good watering place such as a spring or spring-fed creek where horses and

[6]Smyrl, *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Travis County".
[7]U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Agricultural Schedules" (Travis County, Texas, 1850, 1870, 1880).

passengers could get water and food. Such community centers generally featured a store or trading post that also served as a post office, a blacksmith shop, and possibly a school that doubled as a church on Sundays. One of the more noteworthy community-building efforts of the time occurred at Manchaca Springs. In 1851, Mississippi native, Adolphus Weir traveled to Texas to seek a drier climate for his health. Weir was an exception to the yeoman farmers who typically occupied southwestern Travis County. He was a wealthy man who reportedly visited the springs as a passenger on the stagecoach that stopped at the site to water the horses in 1851. According to local historians, Weir was so impressed with the natural beauty of the site that he immediately bought the 500 acres of land that included the springs (Site 3). There he had a large two-story stone "plantation" house, horse barns, a blacksmith's shed, and outbuildings built to run a sometimes-hotel and horse-exchange operation at the stagecoach stop.[9]

During the 1850s, a small community grew up around Weir's stagecoach stop. Weir employed his sons as blacksmiths and horse wranglers and hired others who lived on his land as cooks and servants. Clerks assisted with sales of goods offered at the stagecoach stop. They distributed the mail that came to the community post office at "Manchac House." Other local residents regularly visited the Weir place for mail and as guests at Weir's commodious home.[10] Weir died in 1860 and his wife and family moved to Austin. The community began to dwindle afterward, and by 1874 the post office was closed at "Manchac" house.

The Civil War and its immediate aftermath curtailed much of the county's growth. In 1866, Travis County property tax receipts had dropped nearly 50 percent from those collected in 1864; much of the decline was due to the loss of slaves, but farm and livestock values decreased by 25 to 40 percent as well.[11] The county slowly began to recover in the 1870s, however, and in the following decade much of the heretofore undeveloped tracts of land began to open up for new farms. South of Austin, much of the land that had remained in the hands of large grant holders until the Civil War began to be subdivided for family farms and ranches in the postwar period. At the same time, ranchers were attracted to the stock-raising potential at the edge of the Hill Country in the western part of the project area.[12]

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[8]U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Population Schedules, 1860, 1870, 1880).
[9] Frances Stovall et.al., *Clear Springs and Limestone Ledges: A History of San Marcos and Hays County* (Austin: Eakins Press, 1986), 361.
[10] Ibid, 361-362; Manchaca and Onion Creek Historical Association (MOCHA), *Manchaca*, (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2013.
[11]Smyrl, "Travis County" *Handbook of Texas online*.

Because Texas escaped relatively intact from the Civil War, many survivors from war-weary southern states moved to the state to start new lives during Reconstruction. At the same time, European immigrants flocked to the United States and Texas in greater numbers following the war. Many were farmers seeking inexpensive land and a number of newcomers joined existing – or formed new – communities throughout Central Texas. Several small settlements that were little more than stagecoach stops in the 1840s and 1850s began to attract farmers to the surrounding land.

***Bear Creek***

The John G. McGeehee grant, in the southernmost part of the county, is a good example of the type of land development that occurred in the county after the war. McGehee, himself, never lived on the grant but held it as an investment. In 1871, his descendants divided his original 4,000-acre tract into 40-acre parcels and advertised them to hundreds of new settlers who fled the war-ravaged old South or who were recently arrived from Europe, particularly Germany, Poland, and Ireland. Within a few years, every one of the McGehee tracts had been purchased for family farms.[13] The Wilkins, Williams, Labenske, Murphy, Lutz, Gagnon, Cunningham, and Boyle families were among the most abiding residents of the community and their names consistently appear in the tax rolls from the time they purchased their land through the nineteenth century. Many of these families persisted well into the twentieth century and some of their descendants continue to live in the area. Along with the Townsleys, these families constituted the core of the white community along Bear Creek Road in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[14]

Smaller but more typical community nodes developed in the Bear Creek area and in Oatmanville (Oak Hill) during the 1870s. After her husband's death in 1875, Susan Townsley remained in her homestead on Bear Creek, about two miles west of present Manchaca, where she ran a small store and donated several acres of land for a local school. The store doubled as a polling place for elections.[15]The location was fortuitous for Mrs. Townsley as a major community road was forged along her property line in the early 1870s. Long time property owners, descendants of the original grantees, finally began to carve up

[12] Boyd, et. al., 2015.
[13] Travis County Deed Records, various dates 1871-1878.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

the grants after the Civil War for new, smaller farms of between 40- to 60-acres. Most of the newly surveyed farms had good access to Bear Creek Road which linked them to the small community at Manchaca, to the Onion Creek settlements in northern Hays County, and to the newly built road to Austin. The road followed the property lines of these new farms and owners, like Gottfried Birkner (Site 37), Daniel Labenske (Site 38), and Ransom Williams (Site 39) built homes between the road and Bear Creek itself. Townsley's store and school, at the eastern limit of the road, served as a small community center for the white farmers among them.[16]

At the same time, a community center emerged in present Oak Hill. In 1870, J. A. Patton opened a frame store on his property fronting the Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road (present U.S. Highway 290). The store sold dry goods and groceries and also served as the area post office. A one-room school was built on land donated by Patton next to the store by 1879.[17] Both the school and store were later replaced on site by substantial stone buildings that remain extant to the present (Sites 41 and 44).

When the post office closed at "Manchac House" mail service shifted to the fledgling community at present Manchaca, about two miles north of the Weir place and about twelve miles south of the capital at Austin. Its success was short-lived, however, and the post office closed the following year, presumably for lack of patronage. Mail for the Manchaca and Bear Creek communities moved to the nearby stagecoach and post office on Onion Creek, in northern Hays County. Community growth in the area remained limited to the small clusters with a single store and school until the arrival of the railroad in 1880.

The nascent community at Manchaca would be revived when the International and Great Northern Railroad (I&GN) laid its tracks south from Austin to San Antonio in 1880-1881. At the same time, a railway was laid to the Oak Hill area, in southwestern Travis County, to carry limestone from local quarries for the construction of the new capitol building in central Austin. The railroads would spawn great commercial and residential growth in areas near their depots.[18]

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[16] Boyd et. al., 2015.
[17] *The Defender 1936: Rural Schools of Travis County*, "Oak Hill School".
[18] U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880; Manchaca and Onion Springs Historical Association, 2013: 78.

### *Oak Hill*

At the same time the Manchaca Springs and Bear Creek communities were forming, pioneer settlers ventured into the western part of the county in the vicinity of present Oak Hill.[19] The area was subject to Indian raids until the 1870s, but the Austin-Fredericksburg Road stretched through the landscape and a few intrepid souls had moved into the area and along the road as early as the 1840s.[20] Originally called Live Oak Springs, the community had a log school under the direction of teacher J. A. Baker by 1856. A post office opened in 1870 with Swen M. Berryman as postmaster. That year, J. A. Patton moved to the area with a family group of seventeen members. Patton built a wooden store that was later replaced by the extant rock store (Site 44). He ran livestock on his ranch on present Old Patton Ranch Road. Inhabitants of the community lived in log houses chinked with limestone shards and mud.[21] A log house still stands at 5613 Old Patton Ranch Road (Site 45). A log barn and a small, one-room log dwelling lie nearby.

An early resident, James Austin Enochs, recalled that he was born in the nearby community of "Hottentot" where Marshall Ford Dam is now "somewhere west of Austin in the mountains on the Colorado River in a double pine log house with a rock chimney at each end of it, and with a stake and rider rail fence around it."[22] In 1924, a stone school building was erected next to the Patton Store. Originally a two-room school, a third large room was added in 1933 and a fourth room was built in the 1950s (Site 41). Heinrich Marx, a German stone mason who lived in the area, is credited with the construction of both the store and the original section of the school.[23]

### *Fitzhugh*

Fitzhugh is still another southwestern Travis County community that emerged after the Civil War along an old cattle trail. Originally called Barton Springs Crossing for its location at the junction of the old Austin-Fredericksburg Road and Barton Springs, the community straddled the Hays-Travis County line. Ranchers from counties further west drove their cattle through Fitzhugh on their way to Austin's rail yards.

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[19] Oak Hill was named Live Oak Springs in 1856. It was changed to Shiloh after the Civil War and renamed Oatmanville in 1869. The name "Oak Hill" appeared about 1900 (Mary Starr Barkley, *A History of Central Texas* (Austin: Austin Printing Company, 1970), 56.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid, 56-57.
[22]Ibid, 36.
[23]Students of Travis County, "Oak Hill School", *The Defender 1936: Rural Schools of Travis County*.

A small school operated in the community during the 1880s and by 1898, a "Barton Creek Settlement" post office was established in Fitzhugh. The community dwindled in the early twentieth century as cattle drives became a thing of the past. The post office closed in 1914; the population dropped to 25 residents that year. Half a century later, in the mid-1960s, the population of people who called Fitzhugh home remained at twenty-five.[24]

### *African Americans in the Bear Creek Area*

Lesser known were the newly freed African Americans who also purchased land along Bear Creek out of the McGeehee tract. Most of these appeared to have been former slaves of nearby landowners like the Buntons and Perrys, who had settled in northern Hays County in the 1840s and 1850s. Chatham Perry and Ransom (Bunton) Williams were among them. Williams bought a 45-acre parcel on the south side of Bear Creek and purchased his first farm on the north side of the creek. Both men married and had large families who lived on their land for thirty years or more. Williams built a log house with a stone chimney, extensive stacked rock fencing, and several outbuildings on his property (Site 39). His wife, Sarah, and children moved away from the farm after his death about 1901. The remains of the Sarah and Ransom Williams farmstead have been described as one of the most pristine archeological sites associated with emancipated slaves in Texas.[25]

Chatham Perry eventually owned about 100 acres of land on the north side of the creek. The location of his home is unknown, but the original house was probably a log cabin. Perry is buried in the Perry Cemetery in a subdivision on his former farm (Site 40). Jack and Mary Jane Dodson joined the community around 1880 and built a frame two-room house a few years later (Site 86). Jack Dodson became major figure in the African American community in the Bear Creek and Manchaca area. The Dodsons owned a large farm and supplemented their income by selling molasses and making barbeque. Jack Dodson served as a trustee for the African American church and school in the area. Mary Dodson was interviewed in 1936 as part of the "Slave Narrative" project of the Works Projects Administration (WPA). Not all African Americans in the community were property owners; some rented farms as tenants or sharecroppers and

[24]Daniel P. Greene, "Fitzhugh, Texas".http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/htf03Handbook of Texas Online.
[25] Douglas K. Boyd, personal communication with Terri Myers, August 10, 2015.

others were farm laborers. Between 1870 and 1880, African Americans in the community comprised about two-fifths of the resident population of Bear Creek.[26]

### *Agriculture (1881-1950)*

The second context covers a long period of time in which farming and stock-raising played a dominant role in the region's economy and rural development. In addition to farmhouses and outbuildings, it includes properties found in small commercial and civic nodes such as schools, churches, and stores built to serve the surrounding farms and ranches.

Agriculture dominated the economy in the region and most development was dedicated to its perpetuation throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. In the easternmost section of the region, the land was tillable and cotton was grown as a cash crop. In the westernmost portion, ranchers raised sheep, goats, and beef cattle in the grass-covered hills. New commercial and civic buildings like churches and schools were built to serve the agricultural population of the area. Despite the rise of small community hubs, southwestern Travis County remained largely rural in population, character, land use, and physical appearance throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The countryside was divided into crop and pasture lands with timber lines and running creeks marking property boundaries. Building clusters centered on the property owner's house with tenant dwellings, barns, corrals, and other agricultural structures trailing to the side or rear. Dirt lanes led from the farm-to-market roads to the main house and parking yard. Each farmstead was arranged for function and ease of use.

The main roads that traversed the southwestern quadrant of Travis County were the Austin-San Antonio Road that connected the two cities north to south and the Austin-Fredericksburg Road that stretched westward from Austin through Oak Hill to the Texas Hill Country. By 1880, however, other roads were built that linked communities in the county to one another. The Manchaca Road was likely built from Austin to Manchaca when the railroad was built in 1880-1881. Bear Creek Road connected the community along Bear Creek from just west of the Ransom Williams place to the new railroad town. The origins of

[26]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules (1870, 1880).

Bear Creek Road are unknown, but a road was probably built in the last quarter of the nineteenth century – possibly as early as 1871 when the land was subdivided – to access new farms that were being established in the area at that time. The road probably emerged from the Austin-San Antonio post road that passed through Manchaca Springs – and later, Manchaca – to the east. Since there is no evidence of any farming or ranching activity or any lot sales in the vicinity of the project area prior to 1871, it is unlikely that a road approximating the Bear Creek Road predated the 1871 subdivision. Pioneers moved further west along Bear Creek from the mid-1850s through the 1860s settled without benefit of an established road.[27] In 1897, the county purchased right-of-way through various property owners' land to survey and build or improve what had become known as Bear Creek Road (later Bliss Spillar Road), which served as the primary access to lots in the southeast quadrant of the McGehee tract from that time forward.[28]

A new generation of farmers emerged in the Bear Creek-Manchaca area starting about 1880. A typical agricultural family in the area was that of Frank Xavier and Margaret Fosselman Fruth. The couple married in 1876 and lived in the Bear Creek community by 1880 when they appeared in the census with two daughters and Frank's father, John. Both Frank's and Margaret's parents were born in Germany, but they immigrated to America by 1855 as Frank was born in Texas and Margaret was born in Louisiana. Fruth was a farmer who painted signs and buggies on the side. Margaret Fruth spent 21 years between the ages of 20 and 41 giving birth to five boys and four girls and raising them to adulthood.[29]

During this time, Frank Fruth kept a diary that noted daily weather conditions, work accomplished, special events and social activities from at least 1889 to his death ten years later on December 25, 1899. He chronicled the work and activities of his neighbors as well. From the Fruth diaries, we know the crops and livestock that were raised in the Manchaca area, the type and cost of purchased goods, typical social life of an average farmer, and details of special events such as the birth of a child, Christmas, and the death of livestock that wandered onto the I&GN railroad tracks. The Fruths appeared to be typical of the white families who lived on or near Bear Creek in the last years of the nineteenth century, and it is likely that other family farmers in the southwest quadrant of Travis County shared many of their experiences.[30]

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[27]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules, Travis County, Texas (1870, 1880).
[28] Boyd et. al., 2015.
[29]U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880.
[30]Frank Fruth diaries, 1889-1899.

Fruth and his sons worked throughout the week on their own farm and also worked for trade or shares on farms of nearby neighbors. The work year started in January when they raked and plowed corn and cotton fields in preparation for planting. Cotton was the main cash crop and in February of 1897, Frank Fruth hauled 755 pounds to the gin at Manchaca. He sold 130 pounds to a local merchant for $210 and traded 625 pounds to another farmer for a third interest in a bale. Corn and cotton were planted in the early spring, but in March 1897, a heavy frost killed the corn, Irish potatoes, and much of the cotton. They had to replant their crops and Fruth took five buckets of red potatoes from another farmer to plant on the halves. Children in the family chopped cotton throughout the growing season. The family also grew hay for livestock and Fruth hauled and stacked 810 bushels of hay in a single day. Everyone in the family helped cut corn and pick cotton in the harvest.[31]

Planting, hoeing, chopping, and picking were the main crop activities, but the family also built and repaired fences throughout the year, cut and hauled wood from their timber lots, built additions onto their house, and tended to their livestock, which included plow and buggy horses, dairy cows, chickens, and hogs. They grew and picked peaches, berries, and vegetables and caught fish to vary their diets. It was typical for farmers to trade foodstuffs and livestock among themselves depending on what was needed. One month, the Fruths bought two pigs from neighbor Jack Dodson for $2.00, and a few months later Dodson got 10 chickens from the Fruths for the same $2.00.[32]

Despite the drudgery of farm life, the Fruths and their neighbors enjoyed a remarkably varied and constant social life. A week rarely went by that the family did not host guests for dinner or visit friends and relatives. There were dances, parties, and barbeques in the community every month. Special events were the Fourth of July and Christmas and baseball games at Manchaca or Manchaca Springs. The children took excursions to St. Edward's University in Austin to see plays, concerts, and commencement ceremonies. The family apparently was of the Catholic faith and attended church in Austin. They bought clothes at a dry goods store in Austin, but made weekly trips to Manchaca where they bought staple goods, conducted business, and caught up on the news. Frank Fruth tallied the following purchases for his family of eleven for the year 1898:

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[31]Frank Fruth diaries, 1889-1899.
[32] Ibid.

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|---|---|
| Flour (36 sacks) | 46.30 |
| Bacon | 33.50 |
| Sugar | 15.75 |
| Coffee | 7.75 |
| Soda | 1.60 |
| Matches | .50 |
| Oil | 3.70 |
| Soap | 1.80 |
| Molasses | 8.20 |
| Total | $111.50 |

Frank Fruth's diary abruptly ended in August of 1899. Apparently he took ill because he died on Christmas day, 1899. He was only 44 years old and his youngest child was only a year and a half. His life had been filled hard work, a large family, and a rich social life. His life and work were probably typical of the time and place in southwestern Travis County at the turn of the twentieth century.[33]

A new wave of African Americans moved to the southern part of the project area in the 1880s. Those who lived on or in the vicinity of Bear Creek and the town of Manchaca in the last part of the 1800s formed a community of their own. Sometimes called Rose Colony for one of its members, school trustee John Rose, it was comprised of several dozen African American families who lived on the fringes of the white community. Jack and Mary Dodson and their children were among them, having moved from Fayette County between 1880 and 1890. Both had been slaves of a white farmer named Dodson. Jack Dodson was a farmer who amassed more than 100 acres of land off the Old Manchaca Road by 1900. He augmented his income by selling molasses and barbeque in the early twentieth century.[34] The Jack and Mary Dodson House still stands at 11726 Old Manchaca Road (Site 86).

African Americans in the Manchaca area had their own school, which may have also served as a church by 1880. Jack Dodson served as a school trustee along with John Rose. Except for Dodson's molasses gin and barbeque stand on Manchaca Road, there were no commercial enterprises specific to the African American population. Some worked for white businesses, such as the livery stable in Manchaca.

[33]Frank Fruth diaries, 1889-1899.
[34]Travis County Deed Records, various dates; Manchaca and Onion Creek Historical Association, 2013.

Two cemeteries in the project area are specifically associated with African American farmers, the Brown (Site 5) and the Perry (Site 40) cemeteries

During the 1870s, agriculture in southwest Travis County grew beyond bare subsistence levels. After the Civil War, cotton emerged as an important crop in the southeastern portion of the project area where the blackland prairie stretched into Travis County. The crop surpassed corn and grains in both Travis and Hays counties by 1880, and cotton was king from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century. Construction of the International and Great Northern (I&GN) railroad between Austin and San Antonio in 1880 greatly improved the farmers' ability to ship their produce and livestock to distant markets. The prospect of improved shipping capabilities attracted new farmers to the area and the new towns of Manchaca, Buda, and Kyle sprang up about every ten miles along the railroad tracks. For the first time, area farmers grew cash crops and had the means to buy a few luxuries besides just the basic necessities.

With a more affluent populace, entrepreneurs were drawn to the new town. Some farmers even traded in their plows or contracted with tenant farmers or sharecroppers to work their land while they opened businesses of their own in the towns. New business buildings, with a wide selection of wares, filled the town lots fronting the railroad lines. Churches, schools, and new homes appeared in the residential streets behind them. Manchaca became the regional hub for area farmers who came to ship their crops, attend church, school, and purchase "store-bought" goods at Ellison and Rosenburg's General Merchandise Store or have their cotton ginned at W. P. Summerow's gin on the railroad siding.[35] The hard-scrabble days seemed to be gone.

Real prosperity for the farmer was short-lived, however. By the mid-1880s, Central Texas farmers and ranchers were plagued by a prolonged drought and the loss of the open range meant that cattlemen could no longer be easily moved to greener pastures. At the same time, overgrazing of fenced pastures resulted in a loss of between one-half and two-thirds of the carrying capacity of land during this time.[36] On top of everything, the great blizzard of 1886 dealt a crushing blow to cattlemen across the region as entire herds

[35]Manchaca and Onion Creek Historical Association, 2013.

[36] Amy C. Earls, et al. "Cultural Resource Investigations in the O.H. Ivie Reservoir, Concho, Coleman, and Runnels Counties, Texas." Volume V: Historical Resources (Austin: Mariah, Inc., 1993), 20.

perished in the storm.[37] Agriculturalists responded to these setbacks by improving stock tanks, drilling water wells, erecting windmills, and breeding new breeds of cattle that produced more meat on less grass.[38]Stock raising in rural Travis County actually increased in importance after 1890 and continued to be significant into the 20th century, especially in the westernmost part.

Even so, cotton remained king as the most important cash crop in central Texas from 1890 to 1925, including much of southwest Travis County.[39]In 1890, the census reported that more than 65,000 acres in Travis County were devoted to cotton cultivation. That number accounted for nearly 30 percent of the county's improved farmland at that time. By the turn of the century, the number of acres planted in cotton had increased to 113,300, or 56 percent of the improved farmland.[40] Every crossroads had a gin and every farm owner had tenants and sharecroppers to work the cotton fields.

Years of high yields encouraged farmers to invest even more money and devote even more land to cotton production. Many relied entirely on the crop to support their families and were reluctant to diversify when it was so profitable to keep their fields in cotton and bet on its enduring value. Numerous new frame farmhouses, stylish bungalows, and large pole barns were built on farms developed largely on the basis of cotton production during those years. Some remain on farms in the project area, though most dating to the early years of the twentieth century have been long since abandoned. Eventually, however, poor land stewardship, combined with natural disasters, took their toll on the landscape. Heavy rains washed the topsoil away in 1901 and 1913. Despite these setbacks, cotton remained the farmers' choice well into the twentieth century; no one wanted to return to the early days of subsistence farming.

After more than a decade of relative prosperity, however, cotton farmers were stunned by back-to-back disasters in the mid-1920s. In 1925, a violent wind and hailstorm ravaged the countryside, damaging homes, businesses, and crops. Cotton was stripped in the fields. Extreme drought followed the storm, resulting in complete crop failure throughout the county. The following year saw the worst boll weevil infestation in Texas' history. Cotton production limits that were set in place to support prices only

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[37]David L. Wheeler, "The Blizzard of 1886 and Its Effect on the Range Cattle industry in the Southern Plains."*Southwestern Historical Quarterly 94* (Austin: Texas Historical Association, 1991) 415-418.
[38]Earls et al., 20.
[39]Kay Hindes, "Historic Resources Survey of Rural Agricultural Properties in County Commissioner's Precinct 2 of Hays County, Texas." (Charlotte, Texas: Hays County Historical Commission: 1996), 27.

hampered the farmers further and the crash of the cotton market in 1926 drove many out of business entirely. For many farmers in central Texas, the Great Depression started with the cotton failure of 1926, in which they lost their homes, their farms, and their way of life.[41]More than a thousand family farms were lost in the cotton crash and the Great Depression. The population of Buda dropped from an estimated 600 residents in 1929 to only about 300 in 1933.[42] The town of Manchaca also dwindled in size as the cotton crash dealt an equally hard blow to the farmers and merchants who relied on the cash crop for a living.

The fall of cotton affected more than just the farm owners in the county. Farm tenancy and sharecropping had become a way of life since the 1890s when cotton rose to dominate agriculture in Travis County. Numerous houses that may have sheltered tenants in the project area are still found, including a Shotgun house in downtown Manchaca (Site 21). Tenant farming in Travis County peaked in 1930, when two-thirds of the county's 3,642 farms were operated by tenants. The total number of county farms fell considerably during the Great Depression, as many tenant farmers were forced to move away or turn to other means of employment.[43]

After the fall of cotton, farmers who remained in agriculture learned to diversify their crops. Many turned back to livestock, once an area mainstay, for a living. The number of cattle in Travis County increased from 32,000 head in 1920, to more than 51,000 head in 1950. The number of sheep and goats increased as well, boosting wool and mohair production from 23,600 pounds of wool and 4,292 pounds of mohair in 1920, to 127,800 pounds of wool and 183,600 pounds of mohair in 1959. By the late 1950s, cotton had rebounded somewhat from its low point in the 1930s, but it never again dominated agriculture in the county as it once did. Only about 26 percent of the total cropland was devoted to cotton in the late 1950s and by 1980, that figure had fallen to only 8 percent. By the late 1960s, hay and sorghum together accounted for about 60 percent of the cropland harvested in Travis County.[44]

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[40]Smyrl, "Travis County".

[41]Hindes 27.

[42] Daniel P. Greene, "BUDA, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hlb59), accessed October 08, 2015. Uploaded on June 12, 2010.Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

[43]Smyrl, "Travis County."

[44]Smyrl, "Travis County."

Dairy farming picked up some of the slack left by the demise of cotton in the project area during the Great Depression. Area farmers had always raised some dairy cows for personal use and a little milk and butter money, but commercial dairy farming did not arise as a major commercial enterprise until the 1920s when brothers Boon and Herman Heep established dairy farms on their farms near Manchaca Springs (Sites 1 and 2). Before 1925, Boone Heep had planted some 300-400 acres of land in cotton but he turned to dairy farming after the crash. Heep started his farm with a small herd of 15-20 Herefords on his land northeast of Buda, in far-south Travis County (Site 3). At the same time, his brother Herman was already well-involved in dairy farming. During the 1930s, he developed a model dairy farm with Jersey cows, known as superior milkers, on his ranch east of the springs. He began moving into the beef cattle business in the late 1930s and by 1956 he owned a herd of 200 Hereford cattle and only about 100 Jerseys. Other area farmers followed the Heep brothers into the dairy business during the late 1920s and early 1930s and dairy farming quickly became a profitable substitute for cotton for those who could make the change. In 1928, local dairy farmers sold milk to the newly opened Buda Cheese Factory, as well as to Bryant's and Meyer's Creamery and the Bell Ice Cream Company (forerunner of Blue Bell Ice Cream). Dairy farming proved to be a big success for agriculturalists in the project area throughout the Depression and into the 1950s. The industry began to decline in the 1970s as higher production and labor costs, and higher taxes cut into the profits. Tax hikes were linked to the increased value of land for Austin-area suburban housing developments that began to encroach on the rural countryside.[45]

***Transportation (1844-1965)***

In 1840, the only named road that passed through the southwest Travis County was the Old San Antonio Road between the new capital of the Republic at Austin and the older city of San Antonio, to the south.[46] It followed the trail of Spanish explorers who blazed their path according to the terrain and presence of potable water. Once Austin was established as the capital of the Texas Republic, Texans used some iteration of the old road to travel between Austin and San Antonio. By 1844, at least one homestead was

[45]Hindes 28; Terri Myers, "Heep Jersey Farm rural Historic District, Travis County, Texas" (Knight & Associates with Preservation Central, Inc., National Register Nomination, August 10, 2006) 23.

[46]Roberson, 160.

located at Manchaca Springs, which became a major watering stop along the route.[47]By 1848, the regular stagecoach between Austin and San Antonio ran along the road and stopped at a station at Manchaca Springs (Site 3) to water and/or exchange horses.[48] The road provided the only known access to property in the eastern portion of southwest Travis County at that time.

In the western part of the county, roads developed after the United States made Texas a state and fought a war with Mexico for the privilege. The federal government authorized a line of forts to be established along the western edge of Texas settlement. In 1848, a U. S. military expedition rode west from Austin to a German settlement on the frontier and forged what became known as the Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road which linked the new state capital and the village of Fredericksburg.[49]The military road spawned watering stops on Williamson Creek in what would become known first as "Live Oak Springs", then as "Oatmanville", and, since 1900, Oak Hill, and at Dripping Springs, in Hays County.[50] Present US 290 approximates the route of the Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road, passing through Oak Hill and Dripping Springs on its path to the western Hill Country. The Old San Antonio and the Austin-to-Fredericksburg roads were the only major roadways between Austin and the settlements in the southwest Travis County project area until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

By the 1850s, trails between properties in the Manchaca Springs and Live Oak Springs (present Oak Hill) areas grew into makeshift roads that followed property boundaries, linking pioneer neighbors to one another. Most veered off the established San Antonio and Fredericksburg roads, taking advantage of natural fords and following the flattest terrain in patterns that remain to the present. People naturally built their houses near the roads and small settlements grew up along their paths or at particular crossroads[51]. In the eastern part of the project area, Bear Creek Road emerged along the creek and linked the Onion Creek settlement in northern Hays County to the Old San Antonio Road in Travis County. Eventually, in the early 1870s, numerous farmsteads would spring up along Bear Creek Road.[52] Population growth in the

[47]Ibid., 38.
[48] Dorothy Schwartz, "The Times of Hays County, August 27, 1880: A: 7", (Mountain City: Hays County Free Press: 1986) 361.
[49] Terri Myers, "Dripping Springs Historic District" National Register Nomination (Hays County Historical Commission, August 4, 2012).
[50]The Defender, 1936, "Oak Hill School."
[51]Roberson, 10, 150.
[52] Boyd et. al. 2015.

country outside of Austin led to a demand for road construction and improvements in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1883, the state government amended the Texas Constitution to provide funding for county roads. Each county commissioners court was given the power to choose routes and construct roads. One of the state's goals in funding new and improved roads was to link county seats throughout Texas and many roads were named for the destinations, like the Austin-to-Bastrop Road or the Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road. In Travis County, existing trails between rural destinations that were little more than wagon ruts before the legislation, were widened to 40 feet, had stumps removed, and the road bed improved with hard-packed limestone shards starting in the 1880s. By the late 1890s, the county made major improvements to the most significant of these roads by straightening curves, eliminating hazards, and buying easements for new road construction.[53] As a result, travel by wagon and horse was much easier and more predictable as fewer farmers were left stranded in perennial mud-holes or blocked by downed trees.

In 1880, the I&GN railroad built its line between Austin and San Antonio, through a tiny settlement in southern Travis County. The 1880 census shows scores of railroad workers, many of whom lived with local families, in the vicinity of present Manchaca. Some of the workers may have remained in the area after the railroad work moved on. The following year, the railroad company platted the new townsite of Manchaca on its frontage, over the existing little hamlet on the site.[54] The new railroad spurred agricultural growth in the area and Manchaca almost immediately grew into a thriving commercial and civic hub that offered the surrounding farmers several general stores, blacksmith shops, a cotton gin, and loading docks for shipping agricultural products.[55] By 1884, Manchaca claimed seventy-five residents and served as a regional shipping point for grain, cotton, wood posts, and other lumber products. In the 1890s, it boasted separate schools for white and African American students, a hotel, and a Methodist church.[56]

Following the path of the I&GN railroad tracks, a new road was extended from South Congress Avenue to Manchaca by 1890. Many Manchaca-area residents traveled on it to St. Edwards College and the

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Travis County Deed Record, Vol. 100:238, January 7, 1881.
[55] Manchaca and Onion Creek Historical Association, 8.
[56] Vivian Elizabeth Smyrl, "MANCHACA, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hnm08), accessed October 08, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010.Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

city of Austin for concerts and plays.[57] In 1898, the county surveyed existing roads, built new ones, and organized local farmers to maintain them along their property frontage. In fact, every able-bodied man between the ages of 18 and 45 were required to volunteer several days each year to maintain their roads.[58]As a direct result of road improvements, farmers and their families enjoyed better shopping, better schools, and greater opportunities to socialize with agricultural families who came to town for Saturday market days and Sunday church services. To a large degree, more improved roads led to a better educated and more sophisticated rural population by the turn of the twentieth century.

Rail transportation not only brought shipping capabilities and consumer goods to rural areas, it also brought inexpensive milled lumber to southwest Travis County. Area residents were then able to build new frame homes that followed popular national trends in architectural styles and types. Examples of late Victorian and modest Classical Revival styles are found in small numbers in the south Travis County community of Manchaca. The Carpenter House at 911 FM 1626 is a good example of a late-Victorian era frame house with Doric columns that were probably transported to the area by rail (Site 22). The railroad also brought kit homes to meet bungalow "craze" of the late 1910s, '20s and '30s. The bungalow was wildly popular throughout the country and they are found in good numbers in both rural landscapes and communities in the project area. Most display a few features taken from the Craftsman stylistic palette such as half-façade front porches, exposed rafter ends, paired windows, and knee braces. Several examples are on Twin Creeks Road (Sites 17 and 18) and Polk Road (Site 31 and 32).

As the towns rose in importance, some of the some of the old community nodes like that at the Townsley place on Bear Creek fell by the wayside. Others, like the Live Oak Springs community, with direct access to the improved Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road, grew into an important hub of its own. As the I&GN railroad created a bustling town at Manchaca, it also provided a boost to the small community at Live Oak Springs when it built a rail line specifically to carry stone from area quarries there to the new capitol building in central Austin in 1882. Convicts housed near the stone works quarried the limestone used in the

[57]Fruth diaries, 1889-1898.
[58] Travis County Commissioners Court records, various dates 1879-1910; John E. Wallace and William R. McDonald, "Map of Travis County Roads" (Austin: Travis County Commissioners Court, 1898-1902).

construction of the new capitol, and businesses sprang up along the old Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road to serve both the prison community and the small settlement at Live Oak Springs.[59]

A small boom ensued near the railroad depot and the Fredericksburg Road and a few stores appeared near the present juncture of US 290 and SH 71, about eight miles from central Austin. Although the railroad was abandoned in 1888, residents remained in the area, which had a population of about 200 in 1904.[60] Remnants of the town building effort include the 1898 J. A. Patton Store (the "old rock store") (Site 44) and the adjacent school site where a one-room frame school was replaced by the present stone school in 1924 (Site 41). The 1924 stone school, the Patton Store, a c. 1935 highway marker (Site 43), and the Enochs House (Site 42) survive on present US 290, near the "Y" at Oak Hill.

The advent of the automobile spurred a new era in road development and expansion in Texas. In 1903, a citizens group formed a "good roads" association to lobby the state legislature for improved roads.[61] Even though property owners were charged with maintaining county roads, the efforts were not sufficient for automobile traffic. The county roads often zigzagged around property boundaries, made abrupt turns, held water, and had steep, rock-filled climbs that stymied automobile travel. A 1914 guide to Texas roads offers a glimpse of the hazards faced by drivers on roads at the time. A description of a portion of the Austin-to-San Antonio Road route follows:

0.0 (mile) Leave Driskill hotel, turn left on Sixth St. to congress, go straight out Congress.
2.0 Turn left, then quick turn right
4.4 Slow, curve to left, caution
5.1 Down hill slow
6.2 Rough, down grade
6.6 Curve to right and quick left, rough
6.7 Bad bridge
7.2 Rough spot
8.6 Curve to right, creek bottoms
8.7 Rough

[59]Barkley, 56.

[60] Vivian Elizabeth Smyrl, "OAK HILL, TX (TRAVIS COUNTY)," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hlo02), accessed October 08, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010.Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

[61] "Kirk Kite, "HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/erh02), accessed October 08, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010.Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

8.8 Steep grade
9.9 Bad hill and sharp turn
10.5 Bad curve and rocky road

And so on to San Antonio.[62]

By 1926, the state took the lead in road construction, designation, and maintenance. That year US 290 from Austin to Blanco was designated as a national highway, and in1934, it was rerouted between Austin and Fredericksburg,[63] passing along the old Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road out of Austin and through Oak Hill. In 1937, the state initiated the county road system, starting in Rusk County. At the same time, the State Highway Department initiated efforts to build a more direct route between Austin and San Antonio, bypassing the old San Antonio Road. Known as State Highway (SH) 2, and later SH 81, the new road cut diagonally across Herman Heep's ranch at Manchaca Springs. In 1933, the state undertook highway beautification and planted thousands of trees along state roads, including SH 2/81.[64]

Modern road building efforts began in earnest during the post-World War II era. In 1946, state began securing right-of-way for the future "inter-regional highway" that became Interstate Highway 35 (IH 35) that spanned the country north and south from the Canadian border to Laredo on the United States-Mexican boundary. In Texas, the interstate runs for just over 407 miles.[65] It marks the eastern boundary of the project area.

About the same time, the state undertook improvement of county roads, and in 1945, the state highway commission authorized a three-year program to plan for the construction of 7,205 miles of Farm to Market (FM) roads through the state. The highway department, now the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), established the Farm to Market (FM) and Ranch to Market (RM) road system in 1949 to better connect farmers and ranchers to markets.[66] In the project area, FM 1626 from IH 35 to Manchaca was designated in 1951, and RM 2244, also known as Bee Cave Road, was designated from RM

[62] Bexar County Highway League, *Road Log Book*, Texas (San Antonio, May 20, 1914).
[63] "Interstate 35 in Texas" Wikipedia, accessed September 26, 2015.
[64] Myers, "Heep Jersey Farm" April 4, 2006.
[65] "Interstate 35 in Texas", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interstate_35_in_Texas, accessed September 26, 2015.
[66] "Highway Development", accessed September 22, 2015.

93 (now SH 71), southeast to the western city limits of Austin. In 1957, it was extended to reach US 290 and later, another section linked it to Loop 1.[67]

As the population of Austin increased dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s, major developments in road construction were planned to accommodate new suburban and rural growth. In 1967, the first leg of Loop 1 was constructed along the Missouri-Pacific (MoPac) railroad tracks from US 290 on the south to FM 1325 on the north. By 1975, the central part of Loop 1 between RM 2244 and FM 2222 was completed, and in 1981, the loop was extended from RM 2244 to Loop 360. Loop 360 between US 290 and RM 2244 opened February 1970. On February 19, 1980, the Travis County Commissioners Court designated Loop 360 as the "Capital of Texas Highway."[68]

This major road construction into the rural hinterlands vastly promoted and supported suburban growth in Travis County, especially in new subdivisions to the west into West Lake Hills and Rollingwood, and to the south in San Leanna and Sunset Valley. Rural landscapes were transformed into modern suburban enclaves in a matter of a few years starting about 1946, and increasingly in the 1950s and 1960s.

### *Rural and Suburban Lifestyles in Travis County (1935-1965)*

The "Rural and Suburban Lifestyles" context covers properties built beyond the Austin city limits from about 1935 through the historic period. This last context deals with rural properties not necessarily associated with agriculture, as well as those built in the post-World War II suburban towns of Rollingwood, West Lake Hills, Sunset Valley, and San Leanna. The shift to rural and suburban living was a milestone in the growth and development history of southwest Travis County, and it continues to be a transformational force on the landscape to the present.

The southwestern part of Travis County remained largely rural throughout the first part of the twentieth century. Prior to World War II, the county's rural population experienced a gradual, then increasing, decline as people moved from the country to the city for better jobs. Rural areas lost more of its population when the United States entered the war and young men were called into military service. Many

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[67] "Texas State Highways" https://en.wikipedia.org/Texas_State_Highways, accessed September 16, 2015; "Highway Development", accessed September 16, 2016.
[68] "Texas State Highway Loop 360" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas_State_Highway_Loop_3600, accessed September 15, 2015.

other rural residents left the country to work in war-related support industries and farms closed for lack of workers to operate them.

After the war, that trend was reversed as the country outside the Austin city limits became a haven for new rural and suburban growth. The move to suburban or rural environs was driven by an acute housing shortage in Austin during the postwar era, a new-found desire to live in a quieter, more natural landscape, an appreciation of modern housing styles designed and built by a new breed of architects in the suburbs, and the fact that, with better roads and automobiles, it was not so difficult to commute to Austin for work, shopping, or special events. Three general categories of rural and suburban development occurred in southwest Travis County from about 1935 to 1965; they range from 1) individual homes built in secluded or pastoral settings with some acreage, to 2) suburban tracts filled with standard Ranch style homes and city amenities, and 3) architect-designed or -influenced modern homes in Hill Country settings, some with dramatic views and multi-level sites.

Individual homes built between 1935 and 1965 are scattered throughout the southwest Travis County project area. Even before the war, some families built homes in the country, not because they intended to farm, but because they merely wanted a quieter, more pastoral place in which to live. They were drawn to rural settings for their natural beauty, abundant wildlife, and country charm. They valued privacy and were not attracted to suburban subdivisions. Typically, families seeking a rural lifestyle purchased a few acres of secluded land where they built new homes with modern conveniences and good transportation routes to Austin. Some attributed good moral values with rural lifestyles and they occasionally moved their families to the country to protect their children from the vice and crime they associated with city life. As people earned better incomes in the mid-twentieth century, some could afford to build homes in the country as weekend "getaways" to enjoy the rural lifestyle on a part-time basis. Some intentionally built "Rustic" style houses with natural stone siding and exposed timbers to "fit in" with their rural setting. Others built new Ranch style homes that were popular throughout the country. They liked the old fashioned charms of the rural landscape, but not at the cost of fashion and convenience.

Such independent rural development comprised only a fraction of the housing starts in the early postwar era. Much greater numbers, by far, were drawn to the many new modern subdivisions that were springing up beyond Austin's boundaries during that time. The enormous postwar population boom in the

Austin area caught city planners and developers by surprise, but it proved a blessing to the new architects, university professors, and young professionals who wanted something different and exciting in a home. The housing shortage and high prices in the city compelled architects and buyers to undeveloped land beyond the city limits where fewer restrictions gave builders more freedom to experiment with design and landscaping, and new home buyers could find modern, fashionable homes in a fresher, more natural environment. Some were drawn to architect-designed modern multi-level Ranch style houses set in the midst of Travis County's western hills. Development in West Lake Hills and Rollingwood attracted this type of home buyers. Others were drawn to more modest Ranch style houses in the suburban enclaves of San Leanna and Sunset Hills to the south of Austin.

The city of San Leanna lies about 10 miles south of Austin and just northeast of Manchaca, in southern Travis County. San Leanna began as a subdivision in the 1950s and was incorporated in 1970. The corporate boundaries generally range from River Oaks Drive on the north, FM 1626 on the south, River Oaks Drive and Katy Lane on the east, and Chapel Lane on the west. The town straddles FM 1626 on the south with Sleepy Hollow Road, Bluebonnet Lane, and Bethel Church Road lying south of the farm-to-market road. It comprises about 256 acres of land and had a population of 497 in 2010. Today, there are approximately 217 houses in the city.[69] Good examples of early Ranch style houses are found in San Leanna; a cross-gable Ranch built of cut stone lies at 11401 Circle Drive (Site 94), an elongated cross-gable Ranch is at 11505 Ridge Drive (Site 92), and an excellent hipped roof example is at 11504 Ridge Drive (Site 91).

Sunset Valley, lying about 12 miles south of Austin, was platted as a subdivision of Austin in the 1950s and was incorporated as a separate city in 1954. Its corporate boundaries run from US 290 on the north, Oakdale Drive and Allegro Lugar on the south, West Gate Blvd. on the west, and it straddles Brodie Lane on the east, with Starnes Lane in the city but lying north of Brodie Lane. It comprises only one square mile and is now completely surrounded by Austin. Sunset Valley had a population of 749 in 2010.[70]Sunset Valley has a variety of Ranch style houses; a very long side-gabled Ranch with an attached carport and

[69]"The Village of San Leanna", sanleannatx.com; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/san_Leanna,_Texas.
[70] " Sunset Valley, Texas" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunset_Valley,_Texas

rectangular brick chimney is at 10 Pillow Drive (Site 116), an early hipped roof, brick Ranch house is at 8 Sunset Trail (Site 135), and a stone U-plan Ranch style house is at 737 Oakdale Drive (Site 152).

The city of Rollingwood lies about six miles west of Austin near Loop 360. It was founded and developed by George Hatley in 1955. It was incorporated in 1963 with a mayor-council form of government. It is roughly bounded by Stratford Drive on the northeast, Park Hills Drive on the northwest, FM 2244 (Bee Cave Road) on the southwest, and Vale Street and the MoPac (Loop 1) frontage road on the east/southeast. It comprises several hundred acres of land covering 0.07 square miles, and had a population of 1,412 in 2010.[71] Many good examples of Modern Ranch houses are featured in Rollingwood: one is an angled shed-roofed example at 4821 Timberline Drive (Site 196), and a stone Modern Ranch with a split front gable entry lies at 4902 Timberline Drive (Site 200). Many are multi-level Ranch style houses like the one at 4905 Timberline Drive (Site 202) and a stone and wood multi-level Modern Ranch at 4802 Timberline Drive (Site 183). A long, low brick and wood Ranch with clerestory windows is at 407 Almarion Drive (Site 265) and a very modern multi-level house at 2802 Rock Way has glass walls and a massive fireplace (Site 270).

West Lake Hills, about six miles west of downtown Austin, straddles FM 2244 (Bee Cave Road) and lies predominantly northeast of the road. It was incorporated as a village in 1953. The city straddles FM 2244 on the south/southwest, Loop 360 on the west, West Lake Drive on the northeast, and Stratford Drive on the east. It is bounded by Wild Basin Preserve and Wild Basin Ledge on the north. The city covers 3.7 square miles and has 1,125 houses. Its population was 3,116 in 2000.[72] Ranch styles in West Lake Hills range from the common long, low, brick side-gabled house with a double-door entry at 1505 Ridgecrest Drive (Site 487) to the cross-gabled brick house with a glass-walled entry at 207 McConnell Drive (Site 420), to the unusual cross-gabled, very high-pitched gabled frame house designed by A.D. Stenger at 2318 Matador (Site 485).

All four of these incorporated cities are essentially "bedroom communities" for Austin. Since their subdivision and initial development in the 1950s, Austin has grown out to their boundaries such that it is

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[71] "Rollingwood, Texas" https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hjr12; Rollingwood, Texas https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rollingwood,_Texas

[72] "West Lake Hills, Texas" (https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hgw04 "West Lake Hills, TX"; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Lake_Hills,_Texas.)

difficult to tell where Austin ends and the newer communities begin. From the 1970s onward, commercial enterprises have grown up in the midst to serve the towns.

***Architectural Trends in the Suburbs***

After World War II, the entire country embraced the Ranch style for domestic architecture. The long, low, linear plan was adopted for suburban tracts within the project area as well. Early examples are generally small, side-gabled or cross-gabled varieties with two bedrooms at one end and a living room, dining room, and kitchen clustered at the other end. Later versions built from the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s feature more bedrooms, several bathrooms, and "bonus" rooms such as dens. Varieties of both types are found in southwest Travis County, whether in rural settings or modern subdivisions. Many have integral one- or two-car garages indicating the level of importance to which the automobile had risen in American life. Because the Ranch house rose to such great popularity in the 1950s and early 1960s, the style is well-represented in these subdivisions.

At the same time, architects and developers began to build Modern Ranch houses, with a capital "M", in these subdivisions, particularly in Rollingwood. They responded to a demand for affordable, modern homes from a "progressively minded clientele" that included many University of Texas professors. Their residential designs focused on a central living area with bedrooms relegated to more private spaces and featured sloping rooflines, clerestory windows, and glass walls to bring the outside in.[73] Developer-architect-builder A.D. Stenger was pre-eminent among these new modernists. He was described by his contemporaries as a "maverick" and "innovator" who built many more than 100 Austin homes "that represent the greatest expression of modernist principles executed in Austin." Because his designs were so different from traditional residential construction, he developed his own subdivisions and built his own projects outside the Austin city limits where his work was not subject to city regulations.

Ridgewood Village in Rollingwood was one of three subdivisions that Stenger developed and where he built a number of houses in the 1950s and early 1960s. His houses were organized around a central living area that opened to a wall of glass. His homes typically featured low-pitched gable or sloping rooflines, pronounced rafter tails, clerestory windows, and a massive stone hearth as the focal point of the family

[73] "A.D. Stenger: Architect and Builder/The Man," stenger.rileytriggs.com/man.html.rileytriggs.com/man.html.

room. His homes in the hills west of Austin were built to blend in with the terrain. Two good examples of Stenger's work are found in the project area at 433 Brady Lane (Site 305) and 442 Ridgewood (Sites 325) in Rollingwood. The first features a swooping roofline, clerestory windows, and a unique hooded fireplace. The house at 432 Ridgewood is organized around a small entry corridor leading to the central living room. It features a high ceiling, walls of glass, and a limestone fireplace. Outside, the alternating stone and wood siding gives the house a strong horizontal character.[74]

### *Conclusion*

Today, the city of Austin stretches into southwestern Travis County along numerous roads; among the most heavily are US 290, SH 71, IH 35, Loop 1/MoPac, and Manchaca and Bee Cave roads. It is sometimes difficult to detect historic patterns in the oldest areas as extensive new development and re-development obscures their presence. However, historic properties exist in the project area that reflect themes ranging from pioneer settlement and agriculture to town-building and suburban development. They represent the entire span of historic development from earliest known permanent, non-Native occupation, beginning in the 1850s to the end of the historic period set at 1965.

Historic resources in the region include archeological sites, such as the ca. 1851 stage coach station at Manchaca Springs, and early pioneer homesteads, such as the log house and barns on Old Patton Ranch Road in Oak Hill. Numerous frame farm houses and pole barns attest to the dominance of agriculture in rural settings from the 1880s through the mid-twentieth century and a scattering of frame in-town houses date to the platting and development of Manchaca. Suburban construction on the outskirts of Austin, beginning in the late 1930s and booming in the post-World War era, spread hundreds of then-popular Ranch style houses throughout the project area.

New development stemming from Austin's phenomenal growth into the county seems destined to engulf its remaining rural tracts. In addition, roads such as the new SH 45 will have a significant character-altering impact on the area, as it spawns new housing and starts commercial growth in its path. This cultural resources survey is intended to identify and document surviving properties and building trends that represent

[74]"A.D. Stenger: Architect and Builder/The Man," stenger.rileytriggs.com/man.html.

the area's history and development from the nineteenth century to 1965 marking the end of the historic period.

## Historic and Architectural Resources in Southwest Travis County, 1848-1965

The southwest Travis County project area contains rural, semi-rural, and suburban properties dating to early settlement, agricultural growth, transportation-influenced development, and suburban development in the post-World War II era. The southern and southwestern regions in the project area are characterized by their more rural and semi-rural resources, including farm houses and barns. Suburban growth is also represented in southern Travis County by the San Leanna and Sunset Hills suburban developments of the 1950s and 1960s. The hills west of Austin contain some rural or semi-rural properties, but the region is largely characterized more by its postwar suburban growth with hundreds of 1950s and 1960s Ranch and Modern Ranch style houses as seen in Rollingwood and West Lake Hills. Because the suburban areas of the project area were more intensely developed than in the surviving rural and semi-rural regions, greater numbers of historic-age properties were found in the suburbs than elsewhere in the quadrant.

### *Historic Resources and Building Trends in Southwest Travis County*

The oldest surveyed properties in the project area date to the early settlement and initial agricultural development in the region. They include archeological sites such as the c. 1851 Manchaca Springs homestead of Adolphus Weir (Site 3) and the c. 1871 Sarah and Ransom Williams homestead (Site 39) in the Manchaca/Bear Creek area. They also include farm and ranch properties associated with early settlement and agricultural development such as the log dwelling and barn complex at 5613 Old Patton Ranch Road (Site 45).

Following initial settlement in the southern and western parts of the project area, more stable agriculture-related development occurred. Dating from about 1880 and extending throughout the historic period, resources associated with a long period of agricultural use are scattered throughout the quadrant but are found primarily in the vicinity of Manchaca/Bear Creek and Oak Hill. They include frame farm houses and agriculture-related commercial buildings in small community hubs, such as the "old rock store" of J.A. Patton on US 290 in Oak Hill (Site 44). A two-room frame dwelling on Old Manchaca Road (Site 86) was built about 1885 by former slaves Jack and Mary Dodson and is representative of early vernacular farmhouses in the region. A c. 1900 Free Classic version of a Queen Anne style farmhouse associated with the Enochs family of Oak Hill reflects Victorian-era influences in the country with decorative features, such

as patterned shingles and classical columns. Early twentieth century houses associated with the agricultural theme include frame bungalows and pyramidal-roofed houses.

Early transportation routes in the project area started as mere trails through the wilderness. Trails that connected population clusters such as the Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road, grew into farm-to-market and county roads that were maintained by ranchers and farmers whose properties lay on or near their frontage. These roads later grew into highways that drew tourists and Austinites from the city to the western Hill Country. Community hubs with mercantile stores, blacksmith services, schools and churches, and homes sprang up along these roads. The extension of railroads from Austin to San Antonio and from the capitol to Oak Hill also spawned development along their paths. Historic resources associated with road and rail transportation include a cluster of properties on the old Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road, now US 290, in Oak Hill, and in the unincorporated town of Manchaca that was platted on the International & Great Northern railroad line in 1881. They include Victorian-era stone commercial building, modest Queen Anne- and Prairie School-influenced dwellings, and a 1924 rural school.

Suburban growth into southwestern Travis County is, perhaps, the most dominant development theme in the quadrant. Starting as early as 1935, Travis County experienced a rise in the construction of "country houses" not associated with agriculture. The trend was spurred by lake development and road improvement in the mid- to late-1930s, the desire to live outside the hustle and bustle of the city and closer to nature, and the increase in automobile ownership in the early postwar years. Individual "country houses" dating from the late 1930s through the end of the historic period occur throughout the region. They are generally single-family dwellings set on sites of between two to ten acres of native grasses, rocks, and trees. They are sometimes situated on a hill or rise that provides inhabitants with vistas of the surrounding landscape. They tend to be Minimal Traditional, Rustic stone, or Ranch style houses with only a few related auxiliary resources, such as garages and sheds.

The city of San Leanna, near Manchaca, contains examples of such "country houses," most of which appear to have been built in the 1930s. They lie on a few roads that pre-date the founding of San Leanna. The city of San Leanna appears to have been platted over these original country and farm houses. The newly platted subdivisions are filled with Ranch style houses with long, low-pitched hipped and side-gabled roofs. A number of excellent Ranch style houses are found in the city, some with rooflines reminiscent of the

earlier Prairie School style. A mid-century cemetery, Onion Creek Memorial Park, featuring a large mausoleum in the center, lies within the city.

More common than building infill housing in established areas was the trend toward comprehensive subdivision development in the 1950s. The small city of Sunset Valley is an example of this type. In the early 1950s, brothers M. H. and Clarence Flournoy purchased about 600 acres of pastureland south of Ben White Blvd. where they planned to build a new subdivision. Other members of their family thought the Flournoy brothers were "crazy" because the project lay so far outside the city of Austin. The townsite encompassed one square mile and featured only four streets that soon filled with modern Ranch style houses. An inward-looking development, only one of the streets connected to an existing arterial while the other three terminated in dead ends. Sunset Valley incorporated in 1954 and today it is completely surrounded by the city of Austin.

Projects outside the Austin city limits were attractive to builder-designers who wanted more freedom to pursue new design aesthetics and exert their influence on a larger scale than single-home construction. They were able to achieve their goals by building in the county where they were not subject to Austin's stringent regulations that tended to favor more traditional building types. Among the well-regarded builder-designers in the project area is A.D. Stenger who was prominent in the development of Rollingwood starting in the 1950s. Stenger was part of a new generation of designers who chafed at traditional restrictions on what height to build dining room windows and what constituted "a proper ceiling." He platted his first development, the A.D. Stenger Addition, outside the city limits for the creative freedom to build beyond traditional boundaries. His homes often featured high-pitched ceilings and walls of glass with views to the Hill Country. Many were set into the rocky hillsides of Rollingwood where they blended in with the natural topography of their sites.

The builders' concepts of modern suburban living attracted hundreds of relatively sophisticated younger buyers, many of whom worked at the expanding University of Texas. Such patrons largely turned away from traditional streetscapes and the Revival style houses and bungalows of the pre-war era to embrace modern designs, materials, and plans, as expressed in Ranch style houses that enjoyed wide popularity throughout the country in the 1950s and '60s. Ranch style homes with their long, low profiles sprang up in new subdivisions across the county. They are found in great numbers on the meandering streets and

hillsides in the Rollingwood and West Lake Hills subdivisions, west of Austin. The low-slung houses of stone or brick were designed to blend in with the natural landscape rather than dominate it, and some were built in several offset horizontal levels that followed the slope of the hilly terrain. Less emphasis is accorded the front of these houses as compared with earlier domestic styles. Porches play a smaller role in their design and they tend to have only small entry or inset porches. More emphasis is placed on the backyard and natural landscape. Ranch houses in the western part of the project area often feature large expanses of windows open to Hill Country views.

***Property Types in the Survey Area***

An analysis of Property Types surveyed in the project area reveals the variety of cultural resources (buildings, structures, objects, and sites) in southwest Travis County. The resources span the period from about 1848 to 1965, and represent themes ranging from early settlement and agricultural land use, to the role of transportation in rural development. Archeological sites, farmsteads with frame dwellings and barns, early commercial buildings and schools, and houses built in small agricultural hubs and along railroad lines, relate to these themes and are among the properties represented in this survey. Only 72 of the 468 surveyed properties date to the earliest periods of development in the region.

The great majority of historic resources in the project area, however, are associated with the tide of suburban development beyond the Austin city limits starting in the late 1930s and exploding in the early postwar years of the 1950s and '60s. Cultural resources surveyed in the southwest Travis County project area relate to the theme of rural and suburban development between 1935 and 1965. They include country homes in rural or semi-rural settings and the many Ranch style houses set in densely populated suburban settings just outside Austin's corporate boundaries. They also include commercial, educational, and religious resources built to serve the needs of those who adopted rural and suburban lifestyles in southwest Travis County from about 1935 to 1965.

The following table shows the types of resources surveyed in southwest Travis County during this effort. This classification system is based primarily on the original or intended use of the resource and is consistent with terms and definitions used in the statewide historic context "Community and Regional Development in Texas 1690-1945" and *National Register Bulletin 16a.*

| Table of Surveyed Resources Organized by Property Types | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Property Type** | **Plan, Style, or Function** | **Examples** |
| Domestic: Vernacular | Log houses, two-room houses | Site 45, Site 86 |
| Domestic: Popular Plan | Pyramidal roofed, Bungalow | Site 29, Site 17 |
| Domestic: High Style and Revival Styles | Queen Anne/Classical Revival Neoclassical Style | Site 22, Site 7 |
| Domestic: Ranch Style | Hipped-Roof Ranch Style | Site 16, Site 91 |
| | Side- and Cross-Gabled Ranch House Forms | Site 116, Site 141 |
| | Modern Ranch Style | Sites 323 and 183 |
| Agricultural | Barns, sheds, gins | Site 7, Site 45 |
| Commercial | Retail – 19th Century | Site 44 |
| | Retail – Mid-20th Century | Site 442 |
| Institutional | | |
| Education | All Public Schools | Site 23, Former Manchaca School |
| Religion | All Churches | Site 440, West Bank Bible Church |
| Funerary | All Cemeteries | Site 15, Brown Cemetery (African-American) |
| Transportation | Bridges, Roads, Ferry, Culverts | Site 9, Low-Water Crossing Bridge No. 18 |

Photographs of selected resources in the survey area depict good or typical examples of property types and styles found in the region.

## Selected Property Types

### *Vernacular Forms*

**Site 45: Log House c. 1855, 5613 Old Patton Ranch Rd., Oak Hill**

**Site 86: Jack & Mary Dodson House, c. 1885, 11726 Old Manchaca Rd.**

## *High and Revival Styles*

**Site 27: Carpenter House, c. 1900 Queen Anne/Classical Revival, 911 FM 1626**

**Site 18: Neoclassical Farmhouse c. 1905, 11406 Old San Antonio Road, Manchaca**

## *Popular Plan Types*

**Site 29: Hipped-Roof Center-Passage House, c. 1915, 1233 Wirth Road, Manchaca**

**Site 17: Craftsman Bungalow, c. 1930, 12405Twin Creeks Park Dr., Manchaca**

***Hipped-Roof Ranch Style Houses***

**Site 16: Transitional Hipped-Roof Ranch Style House, 1949, 1111A FM 1626, Manchaca**

**Site 91: Linear Plan Hipped-Roof Ranch, 1956, 11504 Ridge Drive, San Leanna**

## *Side- and Cross-Gabled Ranch Style Houses*

**Site 116: Long, Side-Gabled Ranch Style House, 1953, 10 Pillow Rd., Sunset Valley**

**Site 141: Cross-Gabled Ranch House, 1960, 2907 Jones Rd., Sunset Valley**

## *Modern Ranch Style Houses*

**Site 322: Modern Ranch, 1960, A.D. Stenger, architect, 432 Ridgewood Rd., Rollingwood**

**Site 183: Modern Ranch, 1965, A.D. Stenger, architect, 4802 Timberline Dr., Rollingwood**

## *Agricultural Properties*

**Site 45: Log and Metal Barn, c. 1855, 5613 Old Patton Ranch Rd., Oak Hill**

**Site 7: Two-story Hay Barn, c. 1920, 11406 Old San Antonio Road**

**Site 44: J. A. Patton Store (The Old Rock Store), 1898, 6266 US 290, Oak Hill**

**Site 442: Strip Shopping Center, 1963, 2808 Bee Cave Rd., Rollingwood**

## *Institutional Properties*

**Site 23: Former Manchaca School, 1905/1955, 1010 FM 1626, Manchaca**

**Site 440: West Bank Bible Church, c. 1965, 4010 Bee Cave Rd., West Lake Hills**

*Transportation-Related and Funerary Properties*

**Site 9: Low Water Crossing Bridge No. 18, 1915, 10,000 block Old San Antonio Road**

**Site 15: Brown Cemetery, c. 1877, 12500 block Twin Creeks Rd., Manchaca**

***Domestic Properties***

Domestic resources are, by far, the most common properties found in both rural and suburban settings within the project area. Resources in this category include single family and multi-family dwellings and auxiliary buildings, such as privies, wells, water cisterns and garages. Subtypes, based on use, plan, and stylistic features, are identified within each of the broader property types to further distinguish and evaluate the resources. Domestic properties are those resources most commonly associated with domestic life. Of the 467 properties surveyed in the project area, 433 were classified solely as Domestic properties. They account for approximately 93% of the total number of historic-age resources surveyed. Three additional properties were identified as both domestic and agricultural properties, while a fourth was identified as both a domestic and commercial property.

Dwellings are the most significant resources in the project area as they are most closely associated with the property owners and their settlement patterns. The earliest period of settlement in the project area (c. 1851-1880) is represented by archeological sites, a surviving log house in the Oak Hill region, and a few stone dwellings dating from the 1850s and 1870s in the Manchaca vicinity.

Many early settlers of modest means in Central Texas built simple one- or two-room log houses upon their arrival on the frontier. Some wealthier landowners, especially those with slaves who could perform heavy construction, built houses out of the abundant limestone in the area. Domestic archeological sites in the project represent both types of construction. At Site 3, Manchaca Springs, landowner Adolphus Weir had his slave built a 1 ½ story stone house that sometimes served as a hotel for stagecoach passengers delayed by inclement weather. The Ransom and Sarah Williams house at Site 39, on the other hand, was a log "cabin" with a limestone block hearth and chimney. Two extant log dwellings in the project area survive at Site 45. A 2-story stone house built by Matthew Brown in the 1850s (Site 10) and part of Gottfried Birkner's stone house (Site 37) represent early stone construction in the project area.

Most nineteenth and early twentieth century houses in the project area are one-story wood frame buildings with gable roofs. By the late nineteenth century and into first decades of the twentieth century, modest frame houses dominated the rural landscape. Jack and Mary Dodson built a modest side-gabled, two-room house (Site 86) on their farm in the Manchaca area about 1885. Though an addition was built to

the rear, the house remains a good example of an early vernacular house in the region. No other examples of this vernacular type were found in the project area, though they likely existed in both rural and community settings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A single shotgun house (Site 21) on FM 1626 may have been associated with the area's agricultural development as a tenant or sharecropper's house. It is another type of vernacular domestic resource that was probably found in good numbers on farms and along the railroad tracks.

During the when milled lumber was readily available, homeowners in the area adopted some of the stylish Victorian-era motifs that were popular across the country in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The c. 1900 Enochs House in Oak Hill (Site 42) is an example of the Free Classic variety of the Queen Anne style with its hipped roof and lower cross gables, Doric order columns, and decorative gable shingles. The c. 1900 Carpenter House (Site 22) in Manchaca is a cross-gabled dwelling with a wraparound porch and Doric columns. A large, two-story Neoclassical farmhouse (Site 7) on the Old San Antonio Road features a centered entry porch with squared columns and pilasters supporting an upper story balcony. Few other dwellings with Victorian-era stylings were surveyed in the project area, though they were once common in both rural and community settings and may still exist on private roads in the country.

Popular plan houses were once abundant in the area and a handful of pyramidal-roofed frame houses and front-gabled bungalows of this type were surveyed on farms and in the Manchaca area. Some bungalows were moved to rural sites in the 1930s and 1940s and several lie on or near Old Manchaca Road and Bee Cave Road. Bungalows, in particular, were popular from the 1910s through the 1930s. Kit houses were sold by mail-order companies and parts were shipped by rail to builders across the country. They were available to farmers and town-dwellers alike and it is possible that some of the project-area bungalows made their originated in this fashion. Good examples of bungalows appear on farms and in semi-rural areas (Sites 17 and 80).

By the late 1930s, Minimal Traditional and Early Ranch style houses began to appear in the project area. The Minimal Traditional style applies to compact, usually frame dwellings with slight references to early American Colonial or Tudor Revival styles. They were usually one-story, side- or cross-gabled houses with enclosed eaves and little or no overhang. In cross-gabled varieties, the front gable dominated the primary façade, albeit at a much lower and less dramatic pitch than their Tudor Revival forebears. Many

featured false shutters as decorative elements. Their small size and lack of ornament may have been a reflection of the Depression-era economy in which they developed. In form and style, they bridged a gap between the Craftsman and Revival styles prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s and the Ranch Style that dominated domestic architecture in the postwar era.

The Ranch Style took America by storm in the second half of the twentieth century. Modest precursors appeared as early as the late 1930s in some regions. They typically were small, side-gabled frame or brick houses with a more linear than massed footprint. Early Ranch style houses were built alongside Minimal Traditional homes in early postwar subdivisions, but they were soon surpassed by a longer, sleeker version that became universally recognized as the "Ranch Style," one of the most popular and replicated styles in American building history. The Ranch Style house, with its long, low profile, low-pitched gabled or hipped roof, and minimalist porch, was a radical departure from earlier, more romantic and decorative domestic styles. Its no-nonsense, streamlined appearance spoke to a postwar passion for modern, forward-thinking design in all areas of life, including the American home.

Interior space in Ranch Style houses was separated according to private or public use. Public rooms for family gatherings and entertainment were massed together at one end of the linear-plan house. Private rooms – bedrooms and baths – were set apart from the busier public spaces, accessed by a long, narrow hall. Some Ranch Style houses had a small, rarely-used formal living room at the entrance to the house, but the focal point of family and social life was the larger, main living space that was often set at the rear of the house where it opened to the back yard. Living rooms generally featured wide expanses of windows with views to the outdoors. Fireplaces built of natural stone or brick dominated living rooms and served as a gathering place for friends and family. Walls between public rooms were removed and activity often flowed unimpeded from the kitchen to the dining area through to the living room and outside to the patio and yard.

The Ranch Style achieved its great popularity at a time when suburban development exploded across the American landscape, pushing city limits further from the downtown core and into the surrounding countryside. Because the postwar suburban development surge coincided with the widespread appeal of the style, the two phenomena became intrinsically linked. The national trend was repeated in Travis County as well, where new subdivisions spread into the rural and undeveloped land around Austin. Development in Rollingwood, West Lake Hills, San Leanna, and Sunset Valley all started during this period of

unprecedented growth in the Austin area and historic-age Ranch Style houses are found in great numbers in all four suburban cities. In fact, the Ranch Style outnumbers all other styles in the project area combined.

### *Domestic Auxiliary Resources*

Domestic Auxiliary Resources include outbuildings closely associated with and necessary to domestic uses in rural and small town locations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These include features such as privies, wells, cisterns, and sheds. Cisterns lay close to the house to capture rain water and were often lined with brick or stone and sheathed in concrete. Most auxiliary domestic resources made for human use consist of a one-story, wood or metal building of one or two rooms. Included among domestic auxiliary resources are storage and tool sheds used for domestic rather than agricultural work. From the nineteenth century through the postwar period, most rural homesites in the project area included small privies set close to the rear of the house. Built of plank wood, they had fairly steep shed roofs.

### *Evaluation of Domestic Properties*

In evaluating domestic properties, it is important to understand the original form and style and to identify and assess the impact of alterations on the modified properties. Common alterations to the dwellings include changes to porch supports and the enclosure of porches to create additional interior living space, replacement of original wood frame windows with metal frame types, and the construction of large additions. Other alterations include the incorporation of older domestic forms, such as a mid-nineteenth century log cabin, into later buildings. Alterations to auxiliary resources, such as sheds, garages, and cisterns, are few.

### *Agricultural Properties*

Agricultural Properties in southwest Travis County warrant their discussion as a distinct Property Type because of their high numbers and significance in the rural history of the area. Such properties were essential to a local economy that depended almost entirely on agriculture. As a result, many agricultural properties, such as barns, sheds, pens, coops and other resources associated with crop cultivation and animal husbandry, are found in the project area. They are usually grouped together relatively close to but behind the

associated house. Their permanence on the rural landscape can be seen in the many abandoned farmsteads where the primary domestic building has fallen to ruin, but the barns and or sheds remain to mark the site.

Agriculture formed the base of the local economy in southwest Travis County during much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Cotton thrived in the black gumbo soil of the region and its cultivation was the mainstay of area crop production from the antebellum period through the early twentieth century. The successful cash crop provided a good lifestyle for many local farmers, allowing them to build substantial houses and acquire adjacent farms. Dairy farming rose in importance beginning in the late nineteenth century when dairies closer to Austin were subdivided for new housing starts on the city's periphery. Farmers in the area also grew corn and other grains. In addition, they usually kept large vegetable gardens and orchards whose products were canned and stored in root cellars or free-standing pantries.

Barns and sheds were built in proximity to the farmer's house for protection against fire or theft as well as convenience for the farmer. The farmer's house was usually set facing the closest road. The agricultural buildings generally lay behind the house in two rows with the doors facing a central work space. Barns sheltered seed, crops, horses, and milk cows. Pens or fenced areas held hogs, and wood and wire coops housed chickens. Some farmers stored hay in the upper loft sections of large barns to keep it from getting wet and moldy. Some sheds or sections of barns were used for agricultural work space, such as butchering livestock and repairing equipment and tools. Secondary agricultural properties include cattle chutes and corrals.

Some agricultural properties were also commercial in nature. They include the cotton gin, blacksmith's shop or shed, and livestock scales. These properties are usually found in community centers and, in fact, helped to establish communities as surrounding farmers would all be drawn to their services at one time or another. As a rule, gins served farmers close enough to haul cotton to the site, have it weighed, and return home in one day. As a result, gins were spaced as necessary throughout the southwest Travis County project area. Blacksmith's shops were found both on individual farms and in community centers, but only one is known to have been extant in the project area as late as 1996.

### *Commercial Properties*

Few properties in the survey area can be categorized as commercial resources, although more existed in the past when nearly all discrete communities featured at least general or dry goods store. Isolated communities historically gave rise to one or two commercial buildings that also served as the local post office. Such stores appeared in the area about 1870 or 1880 and began to disappear in the early twentieth century when better roads allowed residents easy access to Austin and other shopping venues.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial resources in the project area are typically one-story frame buildings with a rectangular plan, wood siding, and a false front or stepped parapet on the primary façade. This form is typical of small retail stores in rural communities and frontier settlements throughout the country at that time. By the mid-twentieth century, flat-roofed gas stations began to appear at the crossroads of county and state roads in the rural countryside. In southwest Travis County, commercial buildings are notable for their lack of excessive stylistic detail; they are primarily recognizable by their false front parapets and awnings.

### *Institutional Properties (Educational, Religious, Funerary)*

Institutional Properties are linked together by virtue of their function and historical associations with settlement and development in the project area. Included in this category are schools, churches, government, fraternal and social buildings, and cemeteries. They occur wherever people congregate in groups and they tend to represent the people of a community as a whole. Resources in this category generally convey a sense of pride, growth, and respect, and they are among the largest resources found in a given community.

#### *Educational*

Like churches, schools were among the earliest and most important institutional resources built in the rural project area. Educational Properties include resources whose function is directly related to educational efforts. However, they often served other institutional uses as early churches, post offices, and polling places until separate buildings could be erected for those activities. Most late nineteenth and early twentieth century schools in urban settings are roughly rectilinear in shape, have block massing and symmetrical facades. Schools in rural areas are more modestly scaled and typically are one-story, one- to two-room wood frame buildings with gabled or hipped roofs. An exception to the trend in southwest Travis

County schools is the c. 1924 Oak Hill School on US 290. It is a cross-gabled stone building that originally had only two rooms. A later stone addition was added to accommodate more classrooms. The addition is in-keeping with the architectural character of the original building.

*Religious*

Early Religious Properties in southwest Travis County during the historic period were mostly modest frame buildings with little architectural ornamentation. They often had a high-pitched gabled roof with a steeple atop it. Many of the original churches in the Manchaca, Bear Creek, and Oak Hill areas were replaced, some on site, with more modern edifices. Some of these replacement churches are themselves historic properties owing to their construction in the 1950s or early 1960s.

*Funerary*

Related to Religious Properties, Funerary Properties are found throughout the project area and range in size from a single grave in the Bear Creek section to hundreds of graves near larger communities like the Live Oak cemetery near Manchaca. They are often found at the outer edges of communities where there is less traffic and activity to disturb mourners. In general, cemeteries are defined by the organization and orientation of the graves, the type and design of grave markers, and landscaping features such as low concrete grave borders or swept cemeteries that are kept free of grass. Some cemeteries are enclosed by wrought iron or wire fences.

Tombstones indicate that cemeteries in the project area date from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and reflect settlement dates of their associated communities and farms. Monuments and markers are typically of granite or marble, though a few are denoted by simple wood or metal crosses. Early settlers often buried their dead on their own property and most of those have been lost to history. An exception is the Townsley burial on Johnson Lane in the Bear Creek region. A single grave is defined by a stone, rectangular wall about 3' in height. It lies within sight of busy FM 1626.

***Transportation Properties***

Transportation routes through the project area spawned development along their paths from the earliest years of settlement through the historic period. Early routes like the Old San Antonio Road and

Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road that linked Austin to other central Texas cities were well-established by the 1840s. Businesses like stagecoach stations and blacksmith shops sprang up to serve them and small settlements like Manchaca Springs and a hub at Oak Hill grew at those points. Farmers and ranchers built their houses near roads that followed property lines and led to crossroads where small communities arose with cotton gins, small stores, schools, and churches. Recreation

### *Historic Designations in Southwest Travis County*

A number of cultural resources in the county's southwest quadrant have received historic designations including archeological sites and Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL). Cemeteries in the area have been identified and recorded as Historic Texas Cemeteries. Sites of historic events, developments, and people are identified by State of Texas subject markers. Two sites were found to be designated Austin Historic Landmarks. No surveyed properties are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The following properties and sites in the project area currently hold historic designations.

| **Designated Historic Sites in Southwest Travis County and THC Historic Sites Atlas Number** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Historic Designations** | **Austin Historic Landmarks** | **RTHL** | **Texas Subject Markers** | **Texas Historic Cemeteries** |
| Robert Eanes | | | 5507015597 | |
| Eanes School and Chapel | | | 5453006469 | |
| Live Oak Cemetery | | | 5507016137 | |
| Oak Hill | | | 5453012695 | |
| Oliver Cemetery | | | 5507015140 | |
| Roberts-Teague | | | 5507016200 | |
| Education in Manchaca | | | 5507016207 | |
| Old Rock Store (J.A. Patton) | Austin Landmark | RTHL | 5453012249 | |
| Oak Hill School | Austin Landmark | | | |
| Manchaca United Methodist Church | | | 5507014442 | |
| Brown Cemetery | | | | 743003205 |
| Eanes Cemetery | | | | 545306470 |
| Grumbles-Fowler IV Cemetery | | | | 745301310 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Live Oak Cemetery | | | | 745303105 |
| Marshall-Eanes Cemetery | | | | 7453013603 |
| McQuistion Cemetery | | | | 7453003403 |
| Oak Hill Cemetery | | | | |
| Perry Cemetery | | | | 7453012305 |

Such designations help educate people about the historic sites and cultural resources in their midst. In the course of this survey, others among the High and Medium preservation priorities were found to be potential National Register or Recorded Texas Historic Landmark candidates.

***Results***

A total of 467 historic-age resources were surveyed in the southwest Travis County project area. Of these, 433 – just over 93% -- were domestic properties, including dwellings and associated outbuildings. Eleven were identified as structures, primarily bridges, culverts, and low-water crossings. Only one historic-age object was surveyed, a 1937 Texas State Highway marker. Eleven sites were identified. Among them were two archeological sites in the Manchaca area: Manchaca Springs and the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Site TX-1051. The remaining eight sites were historic cemeteries in the region.

Four historic contexts were identified in the project area based on historic development patterns and property types found. They are "Early Settlement and Agricultural Development (1851-1880)", "Agriculture (1881-1965)", "Transportation (1848-1965)" and "Rural and Suburban Lifestyles in Travis County (1935-1965)". Only twelve properties were identified with the early settlement context. These include archeological sites, log buildings, and early stone houses. Thirty-two properties related to the period of agricultural growth in the area. They include farm and ranch complexes. Ten properties relate to the importance of transportation in the project area. They include properties that sprang up along railroad tracts or roads during the historic period. The vast majority of surveyed properties are associated with rural and suburban development in the county from about 1935 to the end of the historic period in 1965. This last context covers the great suburban expansion into formerly rural areas and the emergence of the Ranch Style as the predominant domestic architectural type during that period.

The survey resulted in an assessment of historic properties according to preservation priority. Preservation priorities were assigned to each surveyed property to indicate its level of significance and

integrity. The surveyor weighed a property's known historic associations and architectural merit and assessed its integrity of location, setting, feeling, design, materials, workmanship, and contextual association to determine its preservation priority. A total of 24 High priority properties -- just over five percent – were identified in the project area. These properties possess considerable architectural and/or historical significance and display a high level of integrity. High priority properties may be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The great majority of surveyed properties – 354 resources, 76% of the total number – were determined to be Medium priorities; they are good or typical examples of their architectural type and would be considered "Contributing" elements in potential historic districts. Finally, 82 resources were determined to be Low priorities due to alterations that significantly detracted from the property's historic appearance and character. Low priority properties would be considered "Noncontributing" elements of any potential historic district.

Preservation Central also determined that three potential historic districts may exist in the project area; they consist of two post-World War II subdivisions, one in Sunset Valley and the other in Rollingwood, and a small late nineteenth/early twentieth century cluster in Oak Hill. Historic districts are well-defined areas with high concentrations of good, relatively unaltered resources dating to the historic period. Survey findings indicate that such potential districts may exist in the 6200 block of US 290, along Pillow Road, Reese Drive, and Sunset Trail in Sunset Valley, and on parallel streets Rollingwood Drive and Timberline Drive, and the adjacent 400 blocks of Brady Lane and Ridgewood Road in Rollingwood. Minimal research and field work would need to be done to make final assessments and boundary determinations.

Finally, the survey resulted in an awareness of the tremendous impact of suburban development and the dominance of the Ranch Style in the county starting in the mid-twentieth century. Although a handful represent the area's early history, the great majority of properties were built in the last two decades of the historic period when Austin's postwar suburban growth expanded into the former farmland and Hill Country beyond the city limits. The numbers clearly illustrate the impact of this historic development trend on Travis County's historic resource stock; only 72 surveyed properties date to the first 100 years of development – from 1848 to 1948 – while 396 resources date to the last twenty years – from 1945 to 1965, at the end of the historic period. As a result, Ranch Style houses, which were built in very large numbers

after World War II, far outnumber earlier historic types and styles. To a very large extent, suburban development and the Ranch Style house define the history of this area in the mid-twentieth century.

***Recommendations***

In order to preserve and protect the remaining historic resources of southwest Travis County, Preservation Central recommends that the Travis County Historical Commission pursue official historical designations at the local, state, or national level to highlight their historic and/or architectural significance and give them some level of protection or oversight. Properties assigned High preservation priorities may be good candidates for National Register listing. The consultants identified 24 High priority properties in the survey area. They range from early settlement-era archeological sites and log buildings to late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century farmhouses, and postwar Ranch Style houses. These are the most significant historic resources found in the project area. They are rare and excellent examples of their type or style, or possess substantial historic or archeological significance, and display high levels of integrity.

Individual candidates for state, local or National Register designation are found throughout the project. Among them are some of the earliest, rarest, and most important historic and architectural resources in the region. They are:

| Name | Local ID# | Address |
|---|---|---|
| Manchaca Springs | 003 | ~14063 Old San Antonio Road |
| Neoclassical Farmhouse | 007 | 11406 Old San Antonio Road |
| Brown Cemetery | 015 | ~12500 Twin Creeks Road |
| Shotgun house | 021 | 745 FM 1626 |
| Queen Anne house | 022 | 911 FM 1626 |
| Manchaca School | 023 | 1010 FM 1626 |
| Ranch style house | 026 | 2211 FM 1626 |
| Williams Farmstead (TV-10151) | 039 | ~2800 Bliss Spillar Road |
| Oak Hill School | 041 | 6240 US 290 |
| J.A. Patton Store (Old Rock Store) | 044 | 6266 US 290 |
| c. 1950s farmstead | 045 | 5612 Old Patton Ranch Road |
| c. 1875 Joseph Nalle Italianate House | 110 | 11726 Bob Johnson Lane |
| Ranch style house | 183 | 4802 Timberline Drive |
| Tudor-influenced Ranch style house | 231 | 1 Sugar Creek Road |
| Ranch style house | 250 | 304 Vale Street |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Modern Ranch style house | 265 | 407 Almarion Way |
| Streamline Moderne house | 268 | 2810 Pickwick Lane |
| Modern Ranch style house | 270 | 2802 Rock Way |
| Tudor-influenced Ranch style house | 277 | 205 Almarion Way |
| Modern Ranch style house | 299 | 419 Brady Lane |
| Modern church | 440 | 4010 Bee Cave Road |
| Modern house | 461 | 506 West Ledgeway Street |

In addition, the Commission may pursue National Register listings for potential historic districts in the project area. Three potential historic districts were identified by the survey. One is a small cluster of resources associated with Oak Hill's agricultural development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries along the old Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road. A second historic district may lie in the suburban town of Sunset Valley where a concentration of good, intact mid-twentieth century Ranch Style houses exists. The third potential district lies primarily along Timberline Road in the city of Rollingwood. The district is significant for its large number of architect-designed Ranch and Modern Ranch Style houses, many of which are attributed to A. D. Stenger, a pioneer in mid-twentieth century suburban development and residential design.

- Oak Hill – consists of four late nineteenth and early twentieth century resources associated with Oak Hill's agricultural and transportation-related development along the old Austin-to-Fredericksburg Road.

- Sunset Valley – contains three adjacent streets with high concentrations of good, intact Ranch Style houses dating to the 1950s and '60s. Pillow Road, Sunset Trail, and Reese Drive together display attributes of a potential historic district with a good ratio of "contributing" to "noncontributing" properties. Most are typical or good examples of the style, while others appear to be unique, architect-designed models. Overall, the neighborhood conveys a good sense of postwar development patterns and styles.

- Timberline Drive – a potential historic district may exist in the 4800-5000 blocks of Timberline and Rollingwood drives, and in the adjacent 400 blocks of Brady Lane and Ridgewood Road. These streets contain good concentrations of 1950s and '60s Ranch Style houses, including some excellent examples of the Modern Ranch. Houses on these streets appear to be architect-designed, many of them attributed to A. D. Stenger who developed Timberline Drive. High priority properties are found at 419 Brady Lane and 4802 Timberline Drive.

The boundaries given in this report indicate where good concentrations of intact, related resources with high levels of integrity exist in the project area. To assess whether these areas are eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, additional survey and research work would need to be done to determine the number of nonhistoric properties within the proposed boundaries, and what effect their presence has on the integrity of the potential district.

In addition to nominating individual properties and historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places, the Travis County Historical Commission can apply for Official Texas Historical Markers for significant sites identified in the survey. Subject markers may be appropriate for marking historic sites or events. Some properties with exceptional levels of architectural significance may be candidates for designation as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL). Only one property in the project area, the "Old Rock Store" (J.A. Patton Store) in Oak Hill, is a designated RTHL, but others in the project area, such as the Neoclassical farmhouse at 11406 Old San Antonio Road, may be eligible as well.

Finally, the Travis County Historical Commission may want to take action to preserve and protect the cluster of historic properties in the 6200 block of US 290. The small community node includes some of the project area's rarest and most significant resources. Among them are an intact 2-story, stone commercial building, a little-changed early twentieth century rural school, a 1937 Texas State Highway system marker, and a late-nineteenth century Folk Victorian with Classical influence style house. This node is experiencing intense development pressures and may be threatened by plans to widen and enhance US 290 at this juncture. The Travis County Historical Commission should consider taking an official position to protect this surviving remnant of the Oak Hill community by notifying TxDOT of its interest and concerns. The commission may also want to take steps to nominate the block in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.

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# Appendices

**Appendix A: Inventory of Properties by Property ID Number and Address**

**Appendix B: Historic Resources Survey Forms**

**Appendix C: Labeled Digital Photographs**

**Appendix D: Project Area Maps**

# Appendix A: Inventory of Properties

# Appendix B: Historic Resources Survey Forms

# Appendix C: Labeled Digital Photographs

# Appendix D: Project Area Maps