

## Schertz, Texas – City of Historic Trails

“Trailing” is a term most frequently associated with the mid-nineteenth century movement of cattle herds from the Southwest to the railyards of the North. On November 17, 1884, Texas cattlemen attempted to thwart proposed northern quarantines against Texas cattle by proposing the enactment of a bill that would create a “National Trail” from the Red River north to Canada. The bill was blocked in the House of Representatives by northern cattle interests and by Texas railroads, which presumably wanted to replace the trail with rails. The failure of the “National Trail”, the northern quarantines, and the western migration of farmers and barbed wire all contributed to the end of “trailing.”

But the establishment of trails was not just a cattleman’s interest. The presence of Native Americans and subsequent Spanish explorers/missionaries forged trails across the State of Texas and particularly across the central and southcentral portions of the State. The paths carved by Native American pole rails that were used to transport the tribes supplies, teepee materials, and small children were the forerunners of Spanish trails used to locate, establish and resupply presidios and missions beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Just as they were to the State of Texas in those early centuries, trails have been an important feature of the Schertz historical landscape. Whenever the Schertz Historical Preservation Committee speaks about the history of our community, we are obligated to reflect on the fact that much of that history is captured through a discussion of the various trails that intersect our City. Ten such rails are identifiable as important to the community’s historical heritage. Each trail is briefly discussed below:

**El Camino Real de los Tejas (Kings Highway/Royal Road)** – Nomadic Native American tribes originally forged the trail in pursuit of favorable hunting grounds. The trail was actively used from about 1690 to 1845 by Spanish explorers and Franciscan missionaries. Today, ninety-percent of the trail lies amidst privately owned lands. A portion of the trail passes through Schertz’ northern sector along what is today FM 482 and Nacogdoches Road. The trail’s importance has been recognized (as of October 18, 2004) by its designation as a National Historic Trail. The trail originates in Mexico City and ends at Los Andaes, Louisiana. The Daughters of the American Revolution, in recognition of its importance, placed markers at 15-mile intervals along the trail. Communities eventually developed along the path of the trail to include the Schertz community. (see: *Remembrances 2010-6*)

**The European Migration Trail** – This trail was forged in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by the thousands of European immigrants who arrived along the Texas Gulf Coast and proceeded onward toward the Texas Hill Country. One of the first settlements along the trail was at what is Industry, Texas. Between 1844 and 1850, ninety-three ships, under the auspices of the German society of the Verein, arrived at Gulf Coast ports with immigrants destined for settlement in Central and Southcentral Texas. Between 1844 and 1845, 5,200 European immigrants found themselves stranded at Texas ports without adequate means of transport to their desired Hill Country destinations. The intolerable living conditions resulted in the death of at least two-thirds of the 5,200. Fortunately, several thousands more survived the journey and settled on land along the European Migration Trail to include Schertz, Texas.

**Chisholm/Shawnee Trails** –From the early 1840s to about 1890 thousands of Texas Longhorn cattle were herded northward by Texas cowboys to railheads in Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. The trail most used to move the cattle herds was known as the Chisholm/Shawnee Trail. Both the Chisholm and Shawnee trails are referred to as one, since Shawnee led into the Chisholm to form a single trail to the North. The origination point for most of these early cattle drives was San Antonio, Texas. The pathway out of San Antonio led through territory not yet fully settled including the Schertz area. The track of the trail was along the same general route as was the El Camino Real de los Tejas and the later tracks laid by the railroads that now pass through northern Schertz. This trail represents a much romanticized aspect of the western frontier history and helped establish the iconic cowboy folk hero as depicted by the Hollywood film industry.

**Post Road Trail** - This road passes through Schertz along the northern sector of the city and forms what is today FM 482. This road was built in 1915 and represents Texas' first state/county road building collaboration that provided safe and convenient vehicle transport for the United States Postal Service from Dallas to San Antonio. (see: *Remembrances 2011-6*)

**Old Spanish Trail** – The trail was formed to promote a paved automobile highway across the southern United States connecting six centers of historical interest, one of which is San Antonio, Texas. The project began in 1915 and in 1929 the first automobile motorcade traveled along the road from St. Augustine, Florida (America's oldest city) to San Diego, California. The trail passed through Schertz along what is today FM 78. (see: *Remembrances 2011-7*)

**Stage Coach Trails** – The first stage coach routes ran along the Post Road (North and South) from Dallas to San Antonio and from (East to West) from Seguin to San Antonio. Using the term “ran” is a bit of an exaggeration in that the coaches moved at a speed of approximately four miles per hour. The North/South coaches moved along the Old Austin Highway (replaced in modern times by Interstate Highway 35). The East/West coaches moved along what is today Main Street Schertz. (see: *Remembrances 2016-5*)

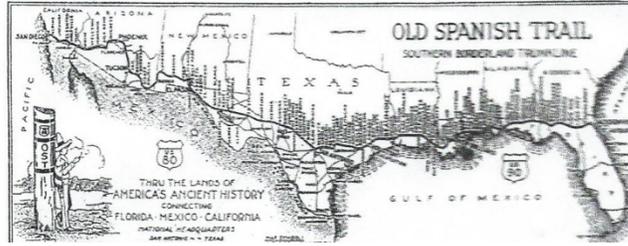
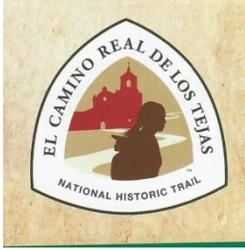
**Historic Ancestral Resting Place (HARP) Trail** – This trail is marked by the placement of ten historic cemeteries within the Schertz city limits and/or its extra- territorial jurisdiction

(ETJ). These cemeteries contain the early settlers, their children, and laborers who transformed the territory into a livable and economically prosperous community. The number of these “resting places” is thought to be among the largest of any Texas city of its size. The trail begins at the South end of the city where there are three of the cemeteries. Six additional cemeteries are in the central sector of the City. The trail ends in the North portion of the City at St. Joseph’s cemetery. (see: *Remembrances 2011-1*)

**Rio Cibolo Trail** - The Rio Cibolo (aka: Cibolo Creek) has a storied history passed down from generation to generation by way of anecdotal discussions and by archaeological discoveries in the form of Native American arrow heads and scraping tools. The banks of the Rio Cibolo were reported to be the place where Native American hunting parties would stampede the buffalo over the creek’s steep banks and then make their kill of the crippled buffalo. The Rio Cibolo demarks the boundary between Bexar County and the counties of Guadalupe and Comal. The trail serves as the dividing line between Schertz and its Bexar County neighbors. The trail provides Schertz a life-line against severe flooding during periods of extensive and long lasting rainfall.

**Trail of the Rails** - Three sets of Railroad tracks make their way through Schertz. The first railroad to establish an East/West path through the city in 1877 was the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio (GHSA) Railroad. This railroad line would eventually become the first southern transcontinental railroad from the East Coast to the West Coast. The GHSA established a depot in Schertz in 1899 on land donated by William Schertz in honor of his father, Sebastian Schertz. Subsequent to the depot’s construction, the name of the city was changed from “Cutoff” to “Schertz”. Established in 1881 and running North to South through Schertz (at a location previously called Comal Settlement) was the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad (MKT)(aka: “KATY”) and the International and Great Northern (I&GN) Railroad. Union Pacific Railroad now owns and operates each of these railroads and provides much of the nation’s commercial rail transport. (see: *Remembrances 2011-9*)

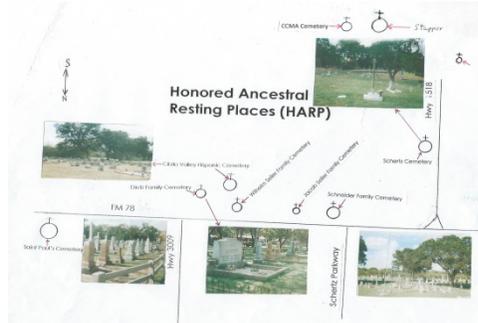
**Trail of the Pappion**– The Monarch Butterfly (“Pappion” in French) Migration Trail stretches from the Upper Midwestern and Northeastern United States to Mexico. The Monarch passes through Schertz once each year. While not a human migration trail, the Monarch Butterfly’s flight path forms a spectacular nature trail. The Monarch’s beauty, endurance, navigational skill, motion of flight, and contribution to crop production mark it as a special creature. Its importance to our state is captured by its having been identified as the State Insect of Texas. Schertz is blessed to be along the trail (flight path) of such a colorful and significant creature.



Post Road Trail



Stage Coach Trails



Trail of the HARP



Trails of the Rail



Trail of the Rio Cibolo



Chisholm/Shawnee Trail



European Migration Trail



Trail of the Pappion