

Motor Courts and Other Tourist Lodgings

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When Ford's first Model T first came rolling off the assembly line in 1909, it revolutionized how Americans traveled by freeing them from the restrictions imposed by railroad routes and timetables. The advent of easily affordable automobiles and improved roads gave Americans their first opportunity to "see everything and do everything just as our fancies dictated."¹ In doing this, the automobile also gave rise to a specialized segment of the lodging industry that was expressly created to cater to the motorist's needs.

In 1909, hotels and restaurants were mostly located in towns served by the railroad; the only facilities available to motorists outside these towns were tents that they carried with them and pitched in some farmer's field or city park. A few years later, lodging had evolved into crude cabins which, although better than a tent, did not provide either private cooking or sanitary facilities. Travelers soon demanded the same comforts that they enjoyed at home and entrepreneurs, scenting the profit potential in serving the tourists' needs, were quick to offer well-furnished cottages complete with kitchens and baths. By 1950, however, individual cottages went out of fashion and motel owners built facilities that integrated all rooms in one building with a "U" or "L" footprint. At about the same time, kitchens disappeared from most motels and the lodging units became combination living/bedrooms with bath and are still common today. The late 1960's saw the invasion of national chains into an industry that had been formerly dominated by "mom and pop" owners running 20 to 40 unit motels. One consequence of this invasion was that the chain motels had better access to capital and could build larger facilities with 100 or more rooms plus provide such amenities as restaurants and swimming pools. Another consequence was that the major motels moved away from the traditional city gateways to locations on the new Interstate highways.

San Antonio's lodging industry closely followed this model. In 1920, the city started out with two city-owned campgrounds intended to specifically serve the automobile tourist. Twenty-five years later, the city boasted a mix of lodging facilities ranging from four-room apartments to crude cabins with outside toilets and showers. The 1950's saw a boom in motor court construction mostly having 30 to 40 rooms under a single roof. In the 1960's, the World's HemisFair brought the first nation-wide motel chains into the city's lodging market.

¹ Belasco, James, Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910 -1945 (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1979) 13.

Provision of lodging designed to serve the automobile tourist was vital because tourism was an important part of San Antonio's economy.² In 1923, the Chamber of Commerce anticipated that 100,000 tourists would enjoy the city's historical sites, play golf, or just bask in the warm winter sunshine.³ By 1926, this number had increased to 150,000.⁴ As early as 1923, the city fathers considered the tourist trade so vital to the city's economic well being that they invested \$60,000 for nation-wide advertising and other measures designed to promote tourism. Even during the depression year of 1938, the city hosted 60,000 visitors who spent an estimated \$1,800,000.⁵

Many of these tourists arrived in San Antonio by automobile.⁶ As early as 1921, enough motorists wintered in the city to establish a San Antonio "camp" [chapter] of the Tin Can Tourist Association.⁷ In the same year, the Old Spanish Trail Association counted 1,500 automobiles per day on the road west of the city.⁸ Two years later, a reporter counted 40 to 100 families per day, mostly from other parts of Texas, staying at the Brackenridge Park campgrounds during the summer months.⁹ Also in 1923, the tourist camp in Schulenburg (about halfway between San Antonio and Houston) reported that it had accommodated about 5,000 automobiles carrying over 18,000 tourists.¹⁰ By 1926, the completion of the Old Spanish Trail, a network of improved highways running from Jacksonville, FL to San Diego, CA, made it relatively easy for tourists to visit

² In an interesting sidelight on the city's tourist industry, it was common during the early 1920's for tourists to stay the entire winter. A 1925 newspaper article reported that San Antonio enjoyed a lively trade in winter rentals of furnished homes and apartments. It mentions that these rentals were long enough that the tenants brought their own furniture and took an interest in beautifying the rental properties' yards. "Winter Guests Fill Vacant Houses," *San Antonio Light*, 5 Oct. 1925, 1B. Also another article mentioned tourists taking 3-month leases. "The Tourist Will Go Where His Money Buys The Most," *San Antonio Express*, 9 Jul. 1922, 1C.

³ In the early 1920's most of these tourists came from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. "Spend \$60,000 This Year For Boosting City," *San Antonio Light*, 12 Aug. 1923, 12B.

⁴ F.R. Senor, "Providing a Home-Like Haven for the Tired World on Wheels: The Story of How San Antonio is Caring for the Stranger Within Her Gates," Forward Southwest Magazine December 1927, 8. (Held by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library.)

⁵ "Tourist Cash Helps S.A. Business", *San Antonio Light*, 17 Jul. 1938, Part 1, 9.

⁶ Belasco cites an estimate of 20,000 transcontinental automobile trips in 1920. Belasco, 72.

⁷ The name "Tin Can Tourist" came from the automobile tourist's practice of attaching an empty food can to their car's radiator as the symbol of their principle source of nourishment while on the road. In 1921, the Association had a nation-wide membership of 120,000. Furnas, J.C., Great Times: An Informal Social History of the United States 1914 - 1929, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974, 321. For an account of San Antonio's chapter of the organization, see "Tin Can Tourists Establish a Camp at Brackenridge Park", *San Antonio Express*, 7 August 1921, 4C.

"Tin Can Tourists Have Weiner Feast and Social Dance", *San Antonio Express*, 13 May 1923, 1C.

⁸ "Old Spanish Trail Will Soon Be a National Link", *San Antonio Express*, 3 July 1921, 1C.

⁹ "Tourists In Park Camp Don't Want It Moved To A New Location", *San Antonio Light*, 19 August 1923, 11B.

¹⁰ "Tourist Camps Are Asset To Community", *San Antonio Express*, 22 February 1925, 2C.

the Alamo City.¹¹ By 1935, 85 percent of vacation travel was by automobile.¹² Three years later, over 8,000 cars passed through the city on the way to the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico.¹³

In the automobile's early days, tourists often fulfilled their lodging and dining needs by setting up an impromptu camp at the edge of some farmer's field. This practice seems to have been common in South Texas during the early 1920's; descriptions of weekend Hill Country trips published in the automobile section of the *San Antonio Express* indicate that motorists camped wherever they liked without staying at a formal campground or asking the landowner's permission.¹⁴ Furthermore, the frequent camping equipment advertisements in the automobile sections of San Antonio's newspapers indicate the popularity of automobile camping.¹⁵

A combination of practical and cultural reasons prompted this practice. Perhaps most important of these was that hotels were concentrated in towns served by the railroads and the early tourists often ended their day far from such a town. Besides offering flexibility in itinerary, camping also allowed the traveler to avoid the tips, lodging, and parking fees associated with staying at a hotel. Another reason for camping was that it allowed the mostly middle class tourists to temporarily reject the comforts of modern life; James Belasco quotes the naturalist John Burroughs as saying that auto camping provided a welcome escape from modern luxuries and enduring the wet, cold, smoke, mosquitoes, black flies, and sleepless nights allowed the traveler to once more get in touch with naked reality.¹⁶ A third reason was that commercial hotels had an unsavory reputation due to their association with traveling salesmen. "The public lobby with its coterie of traveling salesmen was off limits to respectable unaccompanied women; many hotels provided separate ladies' entrances and waiting rooms. Women traveling with husbands remained at a discrete distance from the main desk, out of public view, while husbands registered."¹⁷

The growth in the number of automobile tourists soon put an end to impromptu camping because landowners objected to the damage caused by the growing number of campers. By 1921 the leaders of various towns had responded to the tourist's needs by setting up free municipally owned camps in the middle of

¹¹ Report of the Managing Director to the Old Spanish Trail Members, Old Spanish Trail Association, 1 Aug. 1926, 1. [available at the Daughters of the Texas Republic library]

¹² Belasco, 143.

¹³ "Tourist Cash Helps S.A. Business", *San Antonio Light*, 17 July 1938, Part 1, 9.

¹⁴ For example, see "This Beauty Spot, With Fine Camp Grounds, Lies at Edge of City", *San Antonio Express*, 14 August 1921, 1C.

¹⁵ For example, the San Antonio Tent and Awning Company offered a tent designed to form a lean-to on the side of a car. "Automobile Tourists' Tents", *San Antonio Express*, 2 July 1922, 5C.

¹⁶ Belasco, 31.

¹⁷ Belasco, 58

town.¹⁸ This allowed the authorities to control camping and also captured the dollars otherwise lost when tourists camped by the roadside.¹⁹

San Antonio's first facilities specifically designed to serve the automobile tourists were two primitive city-owned auto camps - one located next to the river on Josephine Street in Brackenridge Park and the other located five miles from downtown in Covington Park on Salado Creek.²⁰ These camps, which were apparently opened in 1920, did not charge a fee and allowed tourists to stay up to two weeks. Unlike the more elaborate camps in other cities however, the Brackenridge campsite offered only drinking water, lighting, and police protection. Only in 1925, did the city build a bathhouse with showers, put down gravel in the tent sites, and put in a sand-bathing beach on the river.²¹ These camps appear to have operated into the 1930's.

During the first half of the 1920's, the city's leaders seem to have exhibited an ambivalent attitude toward the automobile tourists.²² For example the local newspapers published glowing accounts of tourist facilities in other parts of the country, but stopped short of advocating that San Antonio establish similar camps.²³ Another example was the Women's Club's equivocal position on the Brackenridge camp; they clearly disliked it because they saw it as inconsistent with the park's intended use, but they also acknowledged that the camp was "a valuable asset to San Antonio and as an excellent advertisement."²⁴ Another example of the city's ambivalent attitude is the *San Antonio Light's* failure to directly defend the park. Instead, it adopted an indirect defense by publishing an article that showed that the campers were respectable middle-class people.²⁵

¹⁸ "1100 Tourist Camps In Texas", *San Antonio Express*, 10 May 1931, 10A.

¹⁹ Estimates of the economic impact ranged from \$2.00 to an optimistic \$11.72 per car per day for food and gas. Old Spanish Trail Will Soon Be A National Link", *San Antonio Express*, 3 July 1921, 1C. "Tourist Camps Are Asset To Community", *San Antonio Express*, 22 February 1925, 2C.

²⁰ "San Antonio Has Much To Offer Motor Tourists", *San Antonio Express*, 24 September 1922, 1C.

²¹ "Tourists Laud San Antonio Campsite", *San Antonio Light*, 10 July 1925, B1.

²² In contrast to San Antonio's primitive camps, Denver provided its visitors with showers, toilets, laundry facilities, a club house, a dance pavilion, a grocery store, and a barber shop. Lenonard, Stephen and Noel, Thomas, *Denver Mining Camp to Metropolis*, Niowt, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1990, 262 – 264.

²³ See for example: "Camping Grounds Important Asset", *San Antonio Express*, 26 March 1922, Part 4, 1; "The Tourist Will Go Where His Money Buys The Most", *San Antonio Express*, 9 July 1922, 1A; and "Modern Tourist Camps Become A Necessity", *San Antonio Express*, 28 October 1923, 4C.

²⁴ "Women Want Camp Yard In Park Moved", *San Antonio Light*, 5 August 1923, 6A.

²⁵ In putting the camp in a positive light, the newspaper just "happened" to interview a camper who was a doctor of divinity holding a pulpit in a Houston Baptist church. This apparently was designed to show the high moral standing of the campers and thus defuse the Woman's Club's objections. "Tourists In Park Camp Don't Want It Moved To A New Location", *San Antonio Light*, 19 August 1923, 11B.

A fourth example of the city's ambivalence was its failure to enforce the 1925 requirement for all motor tourists to register with the Bexar County auto license inspector.²⁶ This may have been in reaction to the influx in lower middle class tourism brought about by cheap automobiles.

By 1923, the free, municipally-run camps fell into disfavor throughout the country due to fears that the abundance of cheap used cars allowed laborers and clerks to get on the road. A survey done in this year by the San Antonio based Automotive Red Book noted that practically all of the towns in New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California charged a fee of \$0.25 - \$0.50 per day in order to both discourage "itinerant scissors sharpeners" and attract a better class of tourist.²⁷ This fee gave the traveler access to such amenities as primitive cabins, and communal showers, rest rooms, and cooking facilities that were not offered by the free camps. By 1926, Texas had 50 "pay camps" of which six were in San Antonio.²⁸ Five years later, in 1931, the number of free municipally run camps in Texas had dwindled to ten.²⁹

John Jakle terms such camps "**cabin camps**" and describes the typical cabin as a simple square or rectangular box topped by a gable roof.³⁰ Furnishings, if provided, usually consisted of only a bed, table, and chair. San Antonio's first cabin camps followed this practice and offered unfurnished cabins. Apparently guests were expected to supply their own sleeping bags or other bedding.³¹ In the typical camp, the owners arranged the cabins in rows, rows-on-rows, L, U, crescents, and/or clustered patterns. They provided a place to park by each cabin and communal cooking facilities, rest rooms, and showers. Cheapness of construction characterized the cabin camps. A cabin at Roosevelt Camp cost only \$100 to construct which was much less than the per room cost for the average house in the South Presa area.³²

²⁶ A city ordinance required tourists to sign a register maintained by the county auto license inspector. Upon signing, the inspector would give them a registration card. The article stated that this registration requirement was common in many cities, but gave no indication as to how it would be enforced or what the penalties would be. "Motor Tourists Asked To Register Here", *San Antonio Express*, 5 April 1925, 1C.

²⁷ "'Free' Tourist Camps Falling Into Disfavor", *San Antonio Express*, 14 October 1923, 7C.

²⁸ "Camp Men Form Body", *San Antonio Light*, 25 April 1926, Part 5, 1.

²⁹ "1100 Tourist Camps in Texas", *San Antonio Express*, 10 May 1931, 10A.

³⁰ Cabin camps offered primitive cabins with common cooking and sanitary facilities. Tourists either provided their own bedding or rented bedding from the camp's proprietor. Jakle, John A., Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rodgers, *The Motel In America* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996) 38.

³¹ "San Antonio Leads in Tourist Camps in Texas", *San Antonio Express*, 18 July 1926, 4C.

³² "Building Permits", *Commercial Recorder*, 24 July 1925, 2.

San Antonio got its first large privately owned cabin camp in 1925 when W.B. Speegle and W. L. Hovel moved 137 surplus buildings from the government vocational school near Woodlawn Lake to the site of the San Pedro Park Tourist Lodge located at 714 W. Myrtle St.³³ This pioneering tourist lodge featured a café, soda fountain, rest rooms, and 45 furnished and 110 unfurnished cottages.³⁴ Besides the San Pedro Park Tourist Lodge, 1925 saw the establishment of five other cabin camps (since demolished):³⁵

- Camp Alamo, 107 – 111 W. Jones St. (since demolished) along the banks of the San Antonio River. Camp was equipped with 25 cottages, a recreation hall, a community kitchen, showers, and restrooms.
- Camp Alta, W. Jones St. (since demolished) at E. Mulberry Ave. one-half mile from Brackenridge Park. Camp was equipped with 30 cottages (8 furnished), a store, showers, laundry, and lights.
- Lone Star Camp, Frio City Road, four miles from downtown and one mile from Kelly Field (current status unknown). Lone Star had 25 cottages (some furnished), showers, and a playground.
- Rest Haven Camp, on the Corpus Christi Road where the road crosses Salado Creek, ten miles from downtown (current status unknown). The camp featured six cottages (3 furnished), showers, a swimming pool, and a store.
- Roosevelt Camp, 514 Grove Ave. near Roosevelt Park (no longer in business, but some buildings remain). The camp was equipped with 20 cottages (“several furnished”), gas, water, lights, showers, restrooms, a community kitchen, and a store.

Two typical cabin camps from the 1930's still exist on S. Presa St. St. Elmo Court, located at 4214 S. Presa, consists of a row of six small cabins set so far back from the main highway as to be almost unnoticeable. In 2005, it appeared to be out of business. Johnson Courts, at 4302 S. Presa, consists of two



St. Elmo Court Circa 1933
(Abandoned in 2005)



Johnson Court Circa 1935
(Still Operating In 2005)

rows of 12 cabins forming a narrow “U” with a bungalow-style office at the base of the “U”. The cabins are very small, only about the size

³³ “Another Tourist Camp Is Planned for San Antonio”, *San Antonio Light*, 4 October 1925, Part 7, 2.

³⁴ Advertisement, “Now Open San Pedro Park Tourist Lodge”, *San Antonio Express*, 28 March 1926, 4A.

³⁵ “San Antonio Leads in Tourist Camps in Texas”, *San Antonio Express*, 18 July 1926, 4C.

of a large garden shed. Although its sign is faded and barely readable, Johnson Courts is still in business.

Almost as soon as San Antonio's first cabin camps opened, tourists demanded more civilized lodging. The secretary of the Texas Camp and Park Owners' Association predicted that this demand would mean that only those camps offering soft beds, private baths and other conveniences ("more than first-class camps") would survive in the marketplace.³⁶ Jakle terms these upgraded facilities "**cottage courts**".³⁷

Owners constructed cottage courts to closely resemble middle-class suburban houses and furnished the room units to provide travelers with all the amenities of the middle-class life. Entrepreneurs moved quickly to build cottage courts in San Antonio. In 1927 Lon Piper built Grande Courts the city's first "more than first class" facility near Brackenridge Park (demolished to make way for US 281). This cottage court offered 56 three-room and 30 four-room furnished lodging units with baths, and kitchens. Each cottage had a combination bedroom/living room, dining alcove, kitchen and bathroom. The main room was furnished with a Simmons day bed, which converted to a couch, several "comfortable" chairs, a bridge lamp, table, dresser, and rug. The dining alcove was described as "well furnished" and the kitchen was equipped with a range/oven, sink, and built-in cabinets. The bath had a shower and an "unusually large" closet. Each cottage came completely outfitted with silverware, cooking utensils, dishes, and bedding.³⁸ Except for their size and the combination living room/bedroom, these cottages did not differ significantly from the houses in the nearby middle class neighborhoods.

In 1928 Grande Courts was quickly followed by the equally well-appointed Angeles Courts (since demolished) located on Fredericksburg Road, and Beverly Lodges (since demolished) located on what is now Fort Sam Houston's golf course. (See the Attachments to this report for detailed descriptions of San Antonio's largest cottage courts.) By 1929, Texas had 50 "more than first class" facilities located in Galveston, El Paso, Van Horn, Corpus Christi, Brownsville, Junction, Waco, Midland, Amarillo, McAllen, Sweetwater, and San Antonio.³⁹

The cottage courts owners also sought to project the image of a suburban home by landscaping the open areas between the court and the highway and the areas adjacent to the cottages with lawns and flowerbeds.⁴⁰ In the larger courts, the owners also tried to create a sense of community (and generate additional

³⁶ "Tourist Camps Here To Stay", *San Antonio Express*, 1 May 1927, 3C.

³⁷ Jakle et. al., 41.

³⁸ "New Tourist Project Is Underway," *San Antonio Light*, 27 March 1927, Part 7, 3.

³⁹ "More Tourist Camps For Texas", *San Antonio Light*, 3 Mar. 1929, Part 5, 6.

⁴⁰ Jakle et. al., 43.

profits) with the surrounding neighborhood by providing retail facilities. The Beverly Lodge had a delicatessen, meat market, grocery, café, soda fountain, filling station, and a garage.⁴¹ Grande Courts also had an extensive shopping area. These commercial activities integrated the cottage court as a part of its neighborhood by serving both the tourists staying at the court and people from the neighborhood.



Cottage courts came in a number of configurations such as clusters of individual cottages, rows of cottages, cottages arranged in a narrow "U" to take advantage of a deep narrow lot, and cottages arranged in a wide "U" with the open side of the "U" facing the highway.⁴² San Antonio owners, however, seem to have almost universally preferred to lay out their courts in two parallel rows.⁴³ At first, cottage courts consisted of individual

cottages. One of San Antonio's few surviving examples of this type of lodging is the Ashby Court, located at 841 E. Ashby Pl. In the 1930's, the cottage courts evolved away from the individual cottage into continuous rows of cottage-parking space combinations linked wall to wall.⁴⁴ The Evans Motel, located at 3523 Roosevelt Ave., illustrates a variation of the continuous facade style. Here, the flat roof and bands of brick running horizontally along the walls give the visual impression that the room/parking space combinations are located in a single building; this variation somewhat resembles the motor courts that became popular after World War II.



Several tourist courts that date from the 30's, 40's and 50's, still exist on S. Presa St. and Roosevelt Ave. The best documented of these structures is the Rainbow Motel at 4822 S. Presa. Based on newspaper photographs taken when it originally opened in 1931, the current owners appear to have

⁴¹ "Great Tourist Space Demand", *San Antonio Light*, 5 Aug 1928, Part 7, 3.

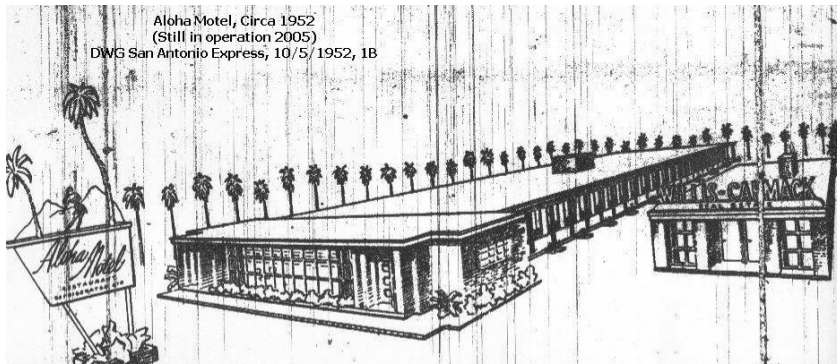
⁴² Jakle et. al., 37.

⁴³ This is based on review of the 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and visits to the city's few surviving cottage courts.

⁴⁴ Jakle, et. al., 43.

extensively remodeled it by removing the filling station and hiding the original Mission roofline under a sloping shingle roof. The motel was originally constructed as a "U"-shaped court containing 12 Mission style stucco cottages. Each cottage had a living room, bedroom, kitchen, and bath. Amenities included overstuffed furniture, a large dressing closet with a roll-away bed, a gas range, and an electric refrigerator. At the end of the north side of the "U" was a 2-story building that contained apartments on the second floor and a grocery and delicatessen on the ground floor. A Texaco filling station was situated beside the road between the arms of the "U".⁴⁵ The Presa St. location proved profitable enough for the owners to invest an additional \$15,000 in a 12 unit annex (since demolished) around the corner on Monticello Ave.⁴⁶

After World War II, prosperity, coupled with a favorable tax code and the growth in the number of automobiles, brought about a boom in the construction of **motor courts**, a new type of lodging facility.⁴⁷ Unlike the cottage court with its individual room units, the motor court consolidated all room units in a single one-story building. A long covered porch running down the side of the building both sheltered guests as they entered their rooms and enhanced the building's visual integration.⁴⁸ Motor courts were usually configured in simple rows, "L", "U", or "C" shapes. However, San Antonio motor court owners seemed to have preferred two facing rows of buildings. Inside, the rooms were equipped with brand-name furnishings such as Simmons mattresses. However, unlike the cottage courts, the rooms no longer included a kitchen due to the expense of construction and the lack of demand for cooking facilities.⁴⁹



Typical of the new motor courts was the Aloha Motel (still operating in 2005) built in 1952 at 1435 Austin Highway. Kay Alexander designed this "T" shaped building, which

contained 40 room units and a restaurant-lounge.⁵⁰ Joseph Carmack built the motel as a speculation and later sold it for \$300,000.⁵¹ He went on, in 1953, to

⁴⁵ "Rainbow Tourist Apartments Open", *San Antonio Express*, 13 Sept. 1931, 1C.

⁴⁶ "Tourist Court Annex Finished on Monticello", *San Antonio Express*, 6 Mar. 1932, 1C.

⁴⁷ Jakle et. al., 45.

⁴⁸ Jakel et. al., 43.

⁴⁹ Jakel et. a., 41.

⁵⁰ Drawing Caption, *San Antonio Express*, 5 Oct. 1952, 10B.

⁵¹ "Aloha Motel Sold For \$300,000", *San Antonio Express*, 5 Jul. 1953, 6A.

build the Belvedere Motel, also designed by Kay Alexander, at 1970 Austin Highway.⁵² These two motels were part of a building boom that resulted in 23 motor courts being built between the 1000 and 2000 blocks of Austin Highway.⁵³



A large sign along side the highway was one of the most prominent features of the new motor courts. These signs served two purposes: to call attention to the low sprawling building and to advertise the services offered. Typical of such signs is the one erected by the

TV Motel at 718 W. Old Highway 90. The large white sign both calls the traveler's attention to the rather inconspicuous building set back from the highway and also advertises in neon that it is completely air conditioned (100% Refrig. Air). There is no need for the sign to advertise the other great post-war lodging innovation, the **motel**, "TV Motel," assures the traveler that their room would come complete with a television.

Another example is the Ranch Motel (circa 1951) located at 3101 Broadway. Here, the large neon sign calls attention to a building that would be otherwise lost in the roadside clutter. The smaller sign advertising kitchenettes may be a more recent addition that reflects the motel's conversion into a quasi apartment house. On the other hand, it may also be original because the Ranch Motel is located near Fort Sam Houston and may have temporarily housed military families waiting to move into Army quarters on base.



The post war boom in motel construction also led to the construction of **motor inns**, a larger and more luxurious form of the motor court, located downtown and near airports. The typical motor inn was a two or three story building arranged around a courtyard and a swimming pool. Unlike the motor court, the motor inn offered more public spaces,

⁵² "Carmack To Open New Motor Hotel", *San Antonio Express*, 14 Apr. 1954, 8G.

⁵³ Information compiled from city directories.

dinning rooms and large guest rooms with double beds.⁵⁴

San Antonio had only a few motor inns, one of which is the Downtowner Motel (now a Day's Inn) designed by Phil Shoop. The Downtowner consists of two buildings separated by Houston Street. One, an L-shaped two story building containing 48 guest rooms occupies the corner of Houston and Bowie Streets. The other, a simple two story rectangular block containing 32 guest rooms, occupies the corner of Starr and Bowie Streets. The Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows that each building had its own office and swimming pool.⁵⁵ Sometime in the recent past, the owners gave the buildings a more up-to-date look by adding a modern metal roof and removing the 1960's era pumpkin-colored doors and aqua porcelain façade panels.

When it was built in 1960 the Downtowner offered more extensive facilities than the average motor court. Its coffee shop offered an extensive menu that featured items ranging from pecan waffles to filet mignon and provided service to both the guest rooms and to poolside tables. The swimming pool was 1960s state of the art with an under water speaker system which broadcast music for the entertainment of swimmers. Palm trees surrounded the swimming pool and the front of the motel. Each guest room had a double bed equipped with foam rubber mattresses, a thick carpet, and a 21-inch television with remote control.⁵⁶

In the mid 1960s, the HemisFair drew the national motel chains to San Antonio.



The La Quinta, located at the corner of Vance Jackson and the IH-10 frontage road, is a typical example of these chain motels. The advent of the national chains had several impacts on the local lodging industry. The first was that the chains' national advertising put the locally owned motels at a disadvantage in attracting customers. National advertising,

coupled with stays at other locations of a chain, meant that tourists would automatically gravitate to one of the chains rather than searching for a place to stay at the end of a long day's drive. They knew that by staying at a chain they would not be at the mercy of "mom and pop's" notions of cleanliness and furnishing, but could expect a clean room with all the standard amenities. The second impact was that the chain motels were much larger than the 20 – 40 unit "mom and pop" owned motels of the 1950's. The average size of motels built for

⁵⁴ Jakle, et. al., 49.

⁵⁵ Sandborn map, 1967, Vol. 1A, Sheet 39A.

⁵⁶ "Downtowner Motel, 900 E. Houston, Near The Alamo, Invites Public," *San Antonio Light*, 3 Jul. 1960, 6B.

HemisFair was 63 rooms.⁵⁷ Four of these new motels, the downtown and airport La Quinta, the Rodeway Inn, and the Sheraton Motor Inn, had over 100 rooms.⁵⁸ The third impact was that the national chains abandoned San Antonio's traditional gateways, such as Austin Highway, for locations along the Interstate highways. Of the 19 national chain motels in the city in 1975, only three were located on Austin Highway, once the prime lodging location at the city's northern gateway. The remaining 16 were located on the North Pan American Highway (4), the South Pan American Highway (1), IH 10 (3), Loop 410 (2), I35 North (2), and within a mile of downtown (4).

Prior to the coming of the Interstates, most of San Antonio's motels were located either near Brackenridge Park or on one of the city's gateways. These gateways were located on Fredericksburg Road, Austin Highway, and Presa Street and Roosevelt Avenue. Fredericksburg Road gave access to the city to traffic coming east from El Paso and points west on the Old Spanish Trail Highway. Austin Highway, as its name implies, gave access to traffic traveling south from Austin and Dallas. Presa Street and Roosevelt Avenue gave access to traffic coming from both the east and south. Highway US 90 (part of the Old Spanish Trail) was the major route to Houston to the east and US 281 (Roosevelt Avenue) gave access to the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico. After the coming of the Interstates, however, most of the largest and most modern motels were located near a freeway exit.

From the earliest days of the automobile, tourism had an important place in San Antonio's economy. The city's efforts to cater to the motor tourist started as a place to pitch a tent in two city parks. From there, lodging facilities quickly evolved into large cottage courts that provided tourists with lodgings comparable to a well equipped apartment. Construction of such large projects came to an end when the Depression cut off the investment. However, this lack of investment capital, did not stop the explosion in the number of small "mom and pop" owned tourist courts built at San Antonio's gateways during the 1930's. Some of these courts consisted of primitive cabins while others consisted of 10 or 15 well furnished rooms equipped with tile baths and kitchens. The prosperity that followed World War II brought about a boom in the construction of motor courts. Generally, these had more rooms than their predecessors of the 1930's and 1940's and integrated all guest rooms under one roof. A few years later, in the mid 1960's, HemisFair brought the national chain motels to San Antonio; in the 14 years between 1961 and 1975, 18 chain motels were built in the city. One of these chains, La Quinta, got its start in San Antonio by building a 138-

⁵⁷ During the period 1966 – 1968, the city saw an investment of \$14 million in 23 projects with 1,464 rooms "HemisFair Housing Outlook Hopeful", *San Antonio Express*, 25 Feb. 1968, 2C.

⁵⁸ The Sheraton is shown on the 1967 Sanborn map, Vol 5E, Sheet 536. The information on the La Quintas and the Rodeway Inn came from "3 New Motels Planned In S.A.", *San Antonio Express*, 15 Jun. 1967, 3D.

room motel in 1967 at 1001 E. Commerce. Today, the national chains make up over one-half of San Antonio's motels and generally have more rooms than the locally owned motels.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Based on count of motels listed in the 2005 telephone book.

Attachment 1 – Grande Courts, 755 E. Mulberry Avenue

Grande Courts, built in 1927, was the first of San Antonio's large tourist courts. It covered over 7 acres and had 56 three-room, 30 four-room cottages, 52 single rooms located in a two-story hotel annex, 29 "cabin camps", and a tent camping area. It also provided both the tourists staying at the Courts and the surrounding neighborhood with a "community center" [strip mall] that included a service station, barber shop, tailor, grocery, drug store, and restaurant.⁶⁰ The complex, designed by L.L. Eldridge, was built in three phases. The initial phase, in 1927, included 77 cottages, the service station, stores, and the restaurant.⁶¹ The second phase, in 1928, constructed the hotel annex and club house.⁶² The third phase, in 1929, added nine cottages along St. Mary's St.⁶³

Mr. Lon P. Piper and 60 other stockholders invested over \$300,000 in building Grande Courts.⁶⁴ Before entering the hospitality industry, Mr. Piper, a native of Austin, was the president of the Valley Bridge Company which had constructed a bridge across the Rio Grande connecting Hidalgo, TX to Reynosa, Mexico. Before assuming the presidency of the bridge company, he spent 10 years with the Internal Revenue Bureau, eventually rising to the rank of Chief Field Deputy for the First District of Texas.⁶⁵ After he built Grande Courts, Mr. Piper went on to build a similar tourist courts in Corpus Christi, TX and near Canon City, CO. The Canon City facility accommodated tourists visiting the Royal Gorge suspension bridge which Mr. Piper and other Texas investors built as a tourist attraction at the 1,000 foot deep canyon of the Arkansas River.⁶⁶

The available evidence seems to indicate that Grande Courts proved profitable for its investors. In the December 1927 issue of Forward Southwest Magazine, Mr. Piper states that 8,000 tourists stayed at Grande Courts in the past four months and that he expected 4,000 families (16,000 people) to stay during the next four months.⁶⁷ The tourist traffic seemed promising enough for the investors to spend \$50,000 in building a hotel annex in 1928 and \$40,000 in building nine additional four-room cottages in 1929.⁶⁸ Despite the Depression, Grande Courts seems to have remained profitable; a building permit taken out in

⁶⁰ Senor, F.R., "Providing a Home-Like Haven for the Tired World on Wheels: The Story of How San Antonio is Caring for the Stranger Within Her Gates," Forward Southwest Magazine December 1927, 8. (Held by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library)

⁶¹ "Grande Courts New Project," *San Antonio Express*, 20 Mar. 1927, 2A.

⁶² "\$50,000 Annex to Grande Courts," *San Antonio Express*, 29 Jul. 1928, 2C.

⁶³ "New Projects Encourage Tourists", *San Antonio Light*, 1 Sept. 1929, Part 7, 2.

⁶⁴ Senor.

⁶⁵ "Tourist Bungalow Hotel Will Be Established At Western Entrance To Branckenridge Park This Spring," *San Antonio Express*, 13 March 1927, 1A.

⁶⁶ "New Projects Encourage Tourists"

⁶⁷ Senor.

⁶⁸ "New Projects Encourage Tourists"

1941 reveals that business was good enough that the company had \$5,400 to spend on improvements.⁶⁹

Except for a small triangular plot at the corner of E. Mulberry Ave. and St. Mary's St., the McAllister Freeway (US 281) now covers the former location of Grande Courts. Grande Courts occupied two plots, one on the north and one on the south side of the 700 block of E. Mulberry Ave. To the north, it covered seven acres, formerly the site of the county poor farm, purchased from C.C. Bell, a Grande Courts stockholder.⁷⁰ This site took up almost the entire city block bounded by Alvin Ave. to the north, St. Mary's Street (formally Jones St.) to the east, E. Mulberry Ave. to the south, and Alameda Ave. (now covered by US 281) to the west.⁷¹

On the north side of E. Mulberry, 21 four-room and 56 three-room cottages, built in 1927, formed a rectangle of eleven rows of seven cottages.⁷² These rows ran on a north/south axis perpendicular to E. Mulberry. An archway connected each cottage to its neighbor in the row, giving the appearance of a continuous façade. Newspaper articles termed the cottages' architectural style as "Spanish Mediterranean" and stated that they were constructed of grey buff stucco given a "mission" texture.⁷³ A postcard and newspaper photographs show that the cottages were flat-roofed one-storey structures with a Mission style parapet over the archway connecting the units.⁷⁴ Each row of cottages was separated from the next by access roads for automobiles and landscaping. At 755 E. Mulberry, between the eighth and ninth rows of cottages, a narrow building with a two-story Mission-style bell tower housed the court's office.⁷⁵

The three-room cottages consisted of a combination bedroom/living room, dining alcove, kitchen and bathroom. The main room was furnished with a Simmons day bed which converted to a couch, several "comfortable" chairs, a bridge lamp, table, dresser, and rug. The dining alcove was described as "well furnished" and the kitchen was equipped with a range/oven, sink, and built-in cabinets. The bath had a hot and cold shower and an "unusually large" closet. Grande Courts provided each cottage with all of the necessary silverware, cooking utensils, dishes, and bedding. The four-room cottages differed from the three-room by having a bedroom separate from the living room and an electric refrigerator in the kitchen.⁷⁶ In 1927, the three-room cottages rented for \$2.50 per night,

⁶⁹ Building Permit 2236, *Commercial Recorder*, 2 Jan. 1941, 2.

⁷⁰ "Landmark To Pass," *San Antonio Express*, 3 Apr. 1927, 3A.

⁷¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol 5E, Sheet 504

⁷² Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

⁷³ "Grande Courts New Project"

⁷⁴ Photograph, *San Antonio Light*, 3 Apr. 1927, Part 7, 1. Also postcard reproduced in "Grande Courts Was a Popular Stop For Tourists," *San Antonio Express-News*, 23 Jan. 2005, 5H.

⁷⁵ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

⁷⁶ "New Tourist Project Is Underway," *San Antonio Light*, 27 March 1927, Part 7, 3.

\$15.00 per week, and \$40.00 per month. The four-room cottages rented for \$4.00 per night, \$20.00 per week, and \$50.00 per month.⁷⁷

Four garages, with a capacity of 44 automobiles, stood to the north of these cottages. At the north end of the garages was a shed outfitted with gas plates, showers, and toilets for the use of the occupants of the tent camp area and the 29 "cabin camps" located at the corner of Alvin Ave. and Alameda St.⁷⁸ The cabin camps accommodated 120 persons and rented for \$1.00 per night in 1927.⁷⁹

Along St. Mary's St. stood a crescent-shaped row of nine four-room cottages completed in 1929. This was planned as the first phase of a group of 17 cottages, but the last 8 cottages were never built. These cottages were equipped with circulating ice water, ceiling fans, electric refrigerators, roll-away beds, a built-in radio, and a tub. Each of the nine cottages had an 18 x 16 foot combination living room/bedroom, an 11 x 16 foot bedroom, a dining alcove, a kitchen, and a bathroom.⁸⁰

A one-story restaurant building stood just to the south of this row of cottages, on the northwest corner of E. Mulberry and St. Mary's. This building had a roughly triangle-shaped footprint with frontages on both E. Mulberry and St. Mary's.⁸¹ Originally, the restaurant was supposed to be part of a strip mall that would have extended north from Mulberry St. along St. Mary's, but for some reason, this never came about and nine cottages were later built on the strip mall site.⁸² Grande Courts owned the restaurant building and leased it to the Siam Brothers, proprietors of the Queen Candy Company. The restaurant specialized in steak and chicken dinners and offered lighter fare at an adjoining lunch counter. Its dining room had cream walls, a red tile floor, blue velvet drapes, mahogany woodwork and ten booths along the windows.⁸³ The restaurant was converted into apartments and then, sometime in the 1950's or 1960's, was torn down to make way for a swimming pool.⁸⁴

On the south side of E. Mulberry, the annex to Grande Courts occupied a plot 84 feet deep that included the southwest corner of E. Mulberry and St. Mary's and extended 330 feet west along E. Mulberry. The annex cost \$50,000 and consisted of 13 two-story hotel buildings, each having four single rooms equipped with showers. These buildings were arranged in a rectangle around an

⁷⁷ Senor

⁷⁸ "New Tourist Project Is Underway"

⁷⁹ Senor

⁸⁰ "New Projects Encourage Tourists"

⁸¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

⁸² "Grande Courts New Project"

⁸³ "Grande Courts Inn Presents Pleasing Ensemble," *San Antonio Express*, 4 Sept. 1927, A3.

⁸⁴ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

open area that contained a 17 x 53 foot club house that was surrounded by a pond. As with the cottages, the hotel buildings were of Spanish Mediterranean architecture and built of gray buff stucco. Each building was connected to the next with an arch and a balcony on the second floor. A service station stood on the southwest corner of Saint Mary's and E. Mulberry and a retail area containing a drug store, grocery, barber shop, and tailor occupied the area between the service station and the hotel annex.⁸⁵

The need for living quarters for the families of army personnel stationed at Fort Sam Houston during World War Two probably led to the decline of Grande Courts from a first-class tourist facility. During the war, the clubhouse and restaurant were converted into apartments. After the war, Grande Courts suffered a further decline as Trinity University used it to relieve overcrowding in the University's dormitories.⁸⁶ Grande Court's final demise came with the decision to build the McAllister Freeway (US 281) in the early 1960's. In order to impact Brackenridge Park as little as possible, the freeway's designers decided to route it through Grande Courts and the adjacent commercial and residential properties. The cottages were probably torn down sometime after 1967 and the site remained a wasteland until the mid 1970's when highway department resolved the controversy concerning the Freeway's route past the Park and the University of the Incarnate Word. By 1975, only the stores and apartments at the intersection of St. Mary's and E. Mulberry were all that remained of the Grande Courts. The remaining buildings were torn down sometime in 1976.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ "\$50,000 Annex To Grande Courts"

⁸⁶ "Grande Courts Was A Popular San Antonio Stop For Tourists," *San Antonio Express-News*, 23 Jan. 2005, 5H.

⁸⁷ Harmes, Joe, "Look What They've Done To My Bar, Ma," *River City Times Entertainment Guide*, 8 Dec. 1975, No Page Reference. (Held by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library in the Grande Court folder)

Attachment 2 – Angles Courts, 2424 Fredericksburg Road

In April 1928, Granville W. Smith and H.D. King invested \$150,000 in constructing the 52 unit Angeles Court just north of the city limit in the town of Los Angeles Heights (now part of San Antonio).⁸⁸ This location was reasonably near the downtown business district and offered some relief from the summer's heat due to its elevation of 274 feet above downtown.⁸⁹ The project, which was built by Allen and Allen, covered the entire city block bounded by San Francisco St. to the north, Angeles Dr. to the east, Los Angeles St. (now Ridgewood Ct.) to the south and Fredericksburg Rd. to the west. Its location allowed Angles Courts to capture the traffic coming into the city from El Paso and points west on the Old Spanish Trail.

Originally, the owners intended it to be a dual use apartment house and tourist court; the first newspaper report termed the project as a "family and bachelor apartment project" and reported that the Ray Mackey Realty Company was leasing the apartments on a long term basis.⁹⁰ However, the owners must have changed their minds and decided to concentrate on the tourist trade because, in August, the *San Antonio Light* quoted them as saying that the court was designed "to meet the needs of those who want the furnishings and services of a modern hotel and at the same time enjoy the comforts of a home."⁹¹

Angeles Courts was laid out in five rows of three buildings running perpendicular to Fredericksburg Rd with a large lawn separated the buildings from the busy highway. Each building contained 10 or 12 apartments with adjoining garages and were constructed in the Mission style popular for tourist courts during the 1920's and 1930's. Hard-surfaced driveways and landscaped lawns separated the rows of buildings. Unlike Grande Courts, Angeles Courts did not have own retail area. In 1928, when the court was built, the nearest grocery store was located about a mile south on Fredericksburg Rd. at Ashby Pl.

The buildings contained 52 one, two, and three-room units. The one-room units had a tile shower bath while the larger units had a tub. The two and three-room units offered a "well equipped kitchen" and a dinette in addition to the bedroom. Each living and bedroom had a southern exposure and all units came complete with telephones, maid and porter service, bedding and towels, dishes, and

⁸⁸ "Fredericksburg Road Receives \$150,000 Apartment Building", *San Antonio Light*, 1 Apr 1928, Part 7, 1.

⁸⁹ "Angeles Court, 52-Apartment Tourist Project is completed", *San Antonio Light*, 5 August 1928, Part 7, 5.

⁹⁰ "Fredericksburg Road Receives \$150,000 Apartment Building", *San Antonio Light*, 1 Apr 1928, Part 7, 1.

⁹¹ "Angeles Court, 52-Apartment Tourist Project is completed", *San Antonio Light*, 5 August 1928, Part 7, 5.

kitchen utensils. In the 1960's, C.A. Stewart, the motel's last owner, added 70 rooms, including 25 rooms moved from the Royal Motel on Grayson St.

In the 1940's Angeles Courts began to go down hill and it eventually became a haven for prostitutes and drug users. By 1995, the motel, now called the \$3 Motel, had deteriorated to the point that the city closed it due to code violations. It was torn down sometime in the late summer or fall of 1995. Since the owner had no money to demolish the motel himself, the city may have had Army National Guard demolish the buildings under the "Weed and Seed" program which was designed to rid urban areas of vacant buildings used as drug havens⁹². O'Reilly's Auto Parts now occupies the site.

⁹² "Crumbling Motel to be Fenced as Wrecker's Ball Looms Large", *San Antonio Express-News*, 19 Jul 1995, 1B.

Attachment 3 – Beverly Lodges, Austin Road at Burr Road

In May 1928, Hamilton-McDowell Inc. invested \$500,000 in constructing Beverly Lodges on the northeast corner of Austin (now Harry Wurzbach Road) and Burr Roads.⁹³ U.H. Wagner was the contractor and Kelwood Co. was the architect of the project.⁹⁴ This site was located on the top of a hill that offered access to unobstructed sea breezes and overlooked the Salado Creek valley. The site is now part of the Fort Sam Houston Golf Course.

Beverly Lodges was planned to have an eventual total of 156 buildings with about 500 rooms. However, since the project was not mentioned in the San Antonio papers after 1928, the Depression may have scuttled this ambitious plan. The first phase, opened in August 1928, consisted of 26 lodge buildings and a retail area. Each of the lodge buildings contained two, three, or four apartments of three or four rooms. The apartments were completely separated from each other allowing privacy and ventilation on four sides. These buildings were constructed in the popular Mission style and had concrete frames, stucco exterior walls, plaster interior walls, and natural cedar log trimmings.⁹⁵ Each apartment had a living room, bedroom, kitchen, and dining room. The bedroom was equipped with a "40-pound" Simmons mattress, dresser, and closet. The bathroom opened off the bedroom and included a shower with concrete walls. The kitchen was equipped with a sink and a four-burner gas range complete with a broiling and baking compartment.

The retail area included a delicatessen, meat market, grocery, café, soda fountain, filling station, and a garage. The owners had plans to provide a swimming pool, tennis courts, and a playground and also planned to construct a dancing pavilion on the roof of the garage building. It is not known if these plans were ever realized.

The Army apparently torn down Beverly Lodges sometime during the 1950's to make way for the Fort Sam Houston Golf Course.

⁹³ Hamilton-McDowell, Inc. was a San Antonio firm. Hobart K. McDowell was president, U.H. Wagner was vice president, and E.G. Hamilton secretary/treasurer. "Great Tourist Space Demand Reported", *San Antonio Light*, 5 August 1928, Part 7, 3.

⁹⁴ "\$500,000 Tourist Project Austin-Burr Roads Gets Underway" [drawing caption], *San Antonio Light*, 5 August 1928, Part 7, 2.

⁹⁵ "Great Tourist Space Demand Reported", *San Antonio Light*, 5 August 1928, Part 7, 3.

Attachment 4 – Other Tourist Lodges and Motels

1927 – Hot Wells Tourist Camp, 5700 S. Presa St.

Charles Dubose and John C. Kirkwood bought the Hot Wells Sanitarium for \$100,000 and plan to build 75 three and four room cottages. "Second Major Camp In Year", *San Antonio Express*, 27 Nov. 1927, 1A.

The Hot Wells Tourist Park Company spent \$65,000 to construct 50 three and four-room bungalows, a swimming pool and bath house. The bungalows were of French architecture and scattered around the 30-acre park. Each bungalow rented from \$2.00 to \$5.00 per night and had one or two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bath. The company also spent \$35,000 on the grounds. "S.A. Businessmen Put \$260,000 in Hot Wells Tourist Park", *San Antonio Light*, 12 May 1929, Part 7, 4.

In 1930, Dr. T.M. Levland leased the 30-year-old Hot Wells Hotel for use as a sanitarium. The tourist park continued to operate on the sanitarium's grounds. "Hot Wells Hotel Building Leased", *San Antonio Express*, 7 Dec. 1930, 1C.

Sanborn Insurance Map, Vol 6, 627

1931 – Steve's Place, Castroville Road.

In 1931, three rock cottages were built at Steve's Place, located 7 miles from the city on the Castroville Rd. "Rock Tourist Apartments Added To Camp", *San Antonio Express*, 15 Mar. 1931, 9C. Article includes photo.

1931 – Mira Flores, Southwest Corner Broadway and Hildebrand Ave.

Matt A. Berry and Associates planned to invest \$210,000 in constructing a 50 room tourist lodge on the southwest corner of Broadway and Hildebrand Ave. The site was the location of the Urrutla Sanitarium and had a frontage of 651 feet on Broadway and 800 feet on Hildebrand Ave. Mira Flores was to have had 50 2, 3, and 4-room units and a shopping area that included a gas station, drug store, chain grocery store, café, market, bakery, tailor shop, and beauty shop. N. Straus Nayfach designed the project. There is no evidence that the tourist lodge was ever built.

"Mira Flores Plan Is Elaborate", *San Antonio Light*, 27 Sept. 1931, Part 7, 1.

"Project Progresses", *San Antonio Express*, 27 Sept. 1931, 2C.

"Attractive Entrance" [drawing caption], *San Antonio Express*, 4 Oct. 1931, 2C.

1931 – Rainbow Tourist Court, 4740 S. Presa St.

K.C. Hurt and F.B. Blanchard invested \$35,000 in constructing Rainbow Courts at 4740 S. Presa St. Rainbow Courts included 12 Mission style stucco cottages in a “U” shaped court. Each cottage had a living room, bedroom, kitchen, and bath. Amenities included overstuffed furniture, a large dressing closet with a roll-away bed, a gas range, and an electric refrigerator. The court also had a 2-story building at the end of the north arm of the “U”. This building contained apartments on the second floor and a grocery and delicatessen on the ground floor. A Texico filling station was situated beside the road between the arms of the “U”.

In 1932, J.C. Hunt invested another \$15,000 in building a 12- unit annex at 110 Monticello, which is located around the corner from the Presa St. location. The court was set up in a “U” shaped configuration.

Rainbow Tourist Courts still exist although they appear to have been extensively renovated. The two-story building originally used as a store still remains, but the lodging units appear to have been constructed within the last 30 years. The filling station and the Monticello St. annex no longer exist.

“Tourist Courts Work Progresses Rapidly”, *San Antonio Express*, 2 Aug. 1931, 1C.
“Rainbow Tourist Apartments Open”, *San Antonio Express*, 13 Sept. 1931, 1C.
Article includes photo. Photo caption, *San Antonio Light*, 13 Sept. 1931, Part 7, 8.

“Tourist Court Annex Finished on Monticello”, *San Antonio Express*, 6 Mar. 1932, 1C. Article includes photo.

Sanborn Insurance Map, Vol 6, Sheet 625

1932 - Lone Star Camp, 100 Jones Ave.

E.J. Jud and Charles J. Ormond sold the camp to V.L. Smith for \$25,000. The camp is on a triangular-shaped site, fronting 250 feet on Jones and 250 feet deep that extended along the San Antonio River to the Jones Avenue bridge. It included 29 cottages, an office, and the manager’s living quarters. The cottages were of frame construction and had an attached shelter for an automobile.

“Jones Avenue Tourist Camp Project Sold”, *San Antonio Express*, 29 May 1932, 1C.

Sanborn Insurance Map, Vol. 2, 218

1941 – Koronado Kourts, 1031 Austin Highway

R.W. Cole and H.M. Hennett, who owned tourist courts in Joplin, MO and Corpus Christi, opened the Koronado Kourts on Austin Highway. Koronado Kourts included 20 buildings containing 45 single and double suites. A typical unit was 11 x 14 feet and had a tile bath. Each suite was equipped with a set of double bunk beds for children, chairs, a night stand, a dresser, and a writing desk.

In 1953, Harry E. and Richard W. Cole, the motel's owners, invested \$93,000 in adding 31 suite units. Each suite contained sleeping and lounge areas separated by a semi-private decorative screen. The new addition was air conditioned with an exterior of handmade Mexican brick. Kay Alexander was the architect.

The 1967 insurance map shows this motel as the Western Sun Motel. It still existed as of 2005.

"Koronado Kourts on Austin Highway to be Formally Opened Sunday For Inspection", *San Antonio Express*, 16 Feb. 1941, 1C.

Drawing caption, *San Antonio Express*, 29 Nov. 1953, 8B.

Sanborn Insurance Map, Vol 5E (1967), Sheet 563

1949 – Skyline Motel, 1401 Austin Highway

Adair A. Thomas sold the 18-unit motel for \$100,000. The new owner intended to construct 15 additional units to form a "U". All of the units were connected by a covered porch.

"Motel Sale Brings \$100,000", *San Antonio Express*, 13 Mar. 1949, 1C.

Sanborn Insurance Map, Vol 5E (1967), Sheet 536

1950 – Town & Country Lodge?, 7000 block San Pedro

M.L. Clayton invested \$150,000 constructing a 23-unit air conditioned motel. This was only one of three motels in the country built around a central hall. Each unit had both an exterior entrance and an interior entrance off the hall.

"Novel Motor Hotel Under Construction", *San Antonio Express*, 9 Apr. 1950, 3A.

1950 – Rio Ladro, 1100 N. St. Mary's

Bert and Gorman Silen started construction of a 30-unit motel. The site was south of 5th St. and between N. St. Mary's St. and the San Antonio River. The "L"-shaped building had a two story and a one story wing. Clarence Rinard was the architect. The two story wing contained the manager's apartment, lounge,

office, and coffee shop. The motel offered complete hotel service including a free continental breakfast served in the room.

In 1953, the owners commissioned Clarence Rinard to design a 24-room addition to the motel. In addition to the guest rooms, the expansion enlarged the coffee shop and added a manager's apartment to the "T"-shaped structure.

An office building now occupies the site of the motel.

"Site Work Started on Drive-In Hotel", *San Antonio Express*, 5 Nov. 1950, 4B.
Drawing Caption, *San Antonio Express*, 4 Oct. 1953, 6B.
Sanborn Insurance Map, Vol 1A, Sheet 27A

1952 – Aloha Motel, 1435 Austin Highway

Col. Joseph Carmack constructed an air conditioned 40-unit motel at 1435 Austin Highway. The motel, designed by Kay Alexander, featured tile floors, hickory furniture, kitchenettes in all units, a cocktail lounge, and a coffee shop. It was constructed of light-aggregate concrete veneered with brick. An office building containing six units was also constructed as part of the project.

In 1953, Col. Carmack sold the motel to J. Cooper of Minneapolis for \$300,000. The new owner converted the office building to 3 luxury suites.

"Carmack Building 40-Unit Austin Hwy. Tourist Court", *San Antonio Express*, 27 Jan. 1952, 1A. This article includes a drawing.
Drawing caption, *San Antonio Express*, 5 Oct. 1952, 10B.
"Aloha Motel Sold For \$300,000", *San Antonio Express*, 5 Jul. 1953, 6A.
Not shown on Insurance Map.

1952 – El Tejas Motel, 2727 Roosevelt Ave.

Doug Van Buren and Roger L. Roberts invested \$100,000 in constructing the 19-unit El Tejas Motel. All of the motel's units were air conditioned and decorated in a Mexican motif. The motel was situated on US 281 and had access to S. Flores St. by a new thoroughfare built by the owners between US 281 and Mission Road.

"South Side Gets Fine Tourist Court", *San Antonio Express*, 17 Feb. 1952, 3A.

1952 – Unnamed Motel, Old US 90 near Lackland entrance

In April 1952, construction started on a 40-unit, air conditioned motel located on a bluff overlooking Leon Creek valley. This building, designed by Addis E.

Noonan Associates, was built of concrete block and had colored cement tile floors. It included a café and filling station.

Drawing Caption. *San Antonio Express*, 27 Apr. 1952, 1A.

1953 – Terminal Motel, 1505 S. Zarzamora St.

The Grothues Brothers invested \$100,000 in constructing a 22-unit motel opposite the Produce Terminal Market. All units were air conditioned and 11 have kitchens. This motel no longer exists.

Photo Caption, *San Antonio Express*, 22 Feb. 1953, 10A.

1953 – Casa Linda, 3215 Broadway

Dr. Hector Urrutia invested \$300,000 in building a 36-unit motel with a 250 foot frontage on Broadway. The motel, designed by Kay Alexander, was built of brick with wrought iron trim. All units were air conditioned.

"36-Unit, \$300,000 Motel", *San Antonio Express*, 19 Jul. 1953, 3B.

1953 – Belvedere Motor Hotel, 1970 Austin Highway

Developer Col. Joseph Cormack constructed a 47-unit motel on a 2.5 acre site. Kay Alexander designed the "T"-shaped, one-story building constructed of dusty rose rainbow stone. All units were air conditioned. Rooms were 15 x 22 feet. with tile baths and a private dressing room.

Drawing Caption, *San Antonio Express*, 22 Nov. 1953, 4B.

"Carmack to Open New Motor Hotel", *San Antonio Express*, 14 Apr. 1954, 8G.

1954 – Park Mo-Tel, 3617 Broadway

Col. and Mrs. J.H. Lapham invested \$125,000 in constructing a 21-room air conditioned annex. Addis E. Noonan Associates designed the 8,000 square foot annex which was built of Mexican brick and stucco on tile.

Drawing Caption, *San Antonio Express*, 17 Jan. 1954, 8G.

1954 – Krosh-Al Motel, 530 Military Drive S.E.

The motel's name is a combination of the owner's Christian name and his wife's nickname Kroshka. Kay Alexander designed the, \$250,000, two-story motel. It has a swimming pool and New Orleans type wrought-iron grillwork.

"South Side Luxury Motel Slates Formal Opening", *San Antonio Express*, 17 Oct. 1954, 10B.

1958 – Wayfarer Motor Hotel, 601 E. Elmira St.

The Caltex Corporation invested \$500,000 to build the Wayfarer Motor Hotel, a 70-unit motel, at 601 E. Elmira. A television station now occupies the site.

"Wayfarer Motor Hotel Due to Open Sept 1 on Elmira", *San Antonio Light*, 6 July 1958.

1960 – Downtowner Motel, 900 E. Houston

Phil Lloyd Shoop designed the two-story motel located one block east of the Alamo. The motel featured a swimming pool equipped with underwater speakers broadcasting music to the swimmers.

"Downtowner Motel, 900 E. Houston, Near the Alamo, Invites Public", *San Antonio Light*, 3 Jul. 1960, 6B.