

**Thank you for visiting
Sauceda Historic District.
We hope you enjoyed your stay.
But don't stop now.
Big Bend Ranch State Park
has even more to offer.**

EXPLORE!

Walking Guide to the
**Sauceda
Historic District**
Big Bend Ranch
State Park



PHOTO BY DOUG PORTER

*Early maps call this area Saucita—
named for the willows growing around
a spring that once flowed in the nearby
arroyo. Its name evolved to “Sauceda”
over time. One century ago, what we
now call the historic district looked
quite different: the buildings were
fewer and less refined than today.
Just fifty years ago, Saucedo was a
shipping hub with many pens and
corrals extending over several acres.*

The tract surrounding Saucedo was the second one settled by George A. Howard who originally occupied nearby uplands where he established the Chillicothe Ranch. He then purchased this site to form the Chillicothe-Saucita Ranch in 1905 and developed the core of the historic district's main building. Howard moved to Marfa and Gus, Gallie, and Graves Bogel—sons of the early Presidio County settler and rancher W.W. Bogel, who lived to the north on Alamito Creek—acquired the land by 1915.

The Bogel sons established their ranch headquarters here. They began running stock on the once rich grasslands of the surrounding plateau, turning later to raising sheep and goats. In the years before the widespread use of barbed wire, stone fences helped manage the livestock, and the fences stand today as reminders of the Bogels' enterprise. By 1923, the Chillicothe-Saucita Ranch exceeded 25,000 acres.

The Bogel brothers introduced their brides to this place and modified the complex to suit their growing families and ranching needs. Gus's wife, Maude, remembered seeing Saucedo Ranch for the first time, describing it as “beautiful, [with] a running creek just in back of the house—and beautiful cottonwood trees on both sides of the stream. There were several places where natural waterfalls and clear deep pools with beautiful maiden-hair ferns were growing around the falls.” World War I interrupted the ranch's calm when members of the Bogel family were called into military service. Drought and the Great Depression finished off many family ranches in the area, and by 1934 the brothers were forced to sell their ranch.

The Fowlkes family, also well known in far west Texas, bought the property and proceeded to put their mark on the place. They expanded the main house and filled it with family heirlooms, wedding gifts, and purchases.

The brothers, Edwin and Manny Fowlkes, raised sheep and goats, and acquired and leased land that increased the ranch to almost 300,000 acres. As you tour areas of the park, note evidence of extensive efforts to make the

ranch viable. Fowlkes' employees built long stretches of wire fences and built stone dams for water and erosion control; they laid hundreds of miles of pipelines, along with accompanying water storage and distribution facilities, in order to move water for stock to the far-flung reaches of the huge and rugged tract. But drought and a crash of the global wool market, combined with the family's ambitious ranch expansion, forced the Fowlkeses off the land.

Like many prosperous Texans during the 1950s, Midland oilman and lawyer Len G. (Tuffy) McCormick wanted a bigger ranch, so he bought one that was described as half the size of Rhode Island and among the 15 largest in the United States: he called it Big Bend Ranch and formed the Big Bend Ranch Corporation to manage it. Purchased in 1958 from banking institutions that held notes on the ranch, McCormick had it mapped (including pastures, roads, and waterlines), and he built the bunkhouse, pole barn and several outbuildings. He arranged for the upgrading of a river access road, which is now the scenic Camino del Rio, by granting an easement to the Texas Highway Department. But when an oilfield accident forced McCormick to liquidate his assets, the Ranch sold to his “silent” partner, Julian Sprague, a Massachusetts electronics executive. And when Sprague died not long after, his family leased the ranch to Robert O. Anderson's Lincoln Livestock Company of Roswell, New Mexico.

Anderson subsequently purchased the ranch in 1969 and became, as owner of the Diamond A Cattle Company, the largest private landholder in the United States. As a cattle operation, the Diamond A prospered during the 1970s. But when the oil business, which helped finance Diamond A, was in a recession during the early 1980s, something had to change. Anderson sold half-interest to Walter Mischer, then the owner of Lajitas Resort, to market Big Bend Ranch as a private hunting preserve. In order to accommodate this new function, the partners made considerable changes to what is today the historic district.

Individuals and groups involved in land conservation in Texas worked for many years before TPWD was able to purchase the ranch in 1988 from Hondo Corporation and Mr. and Mrs. Mischer.

COVER IMAGES

*Unidentified ranch hand with J.M. Fowlkes, Jr.
on Grey Boy at tack room, c. 1942.*

COURTESY OF THE FOWLKES FAMILY



*B.F. Hill and guide during a 1902 mineral
survey sponsored by the University of Texas's
Bureau of Economic Geology. The structure
was likely built by rancher Theo Barnhart in
the 1880s or by W.W. Bogel at the turn of the
20th century. The site is located west of the
nearby arroyo near Saucedo.*

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1. FOREMAN’S HOUSE

As the hub of daily operations for the Fowlkes Brothers and Diamond A Cattle Company, the foreman’s house sits on the location of the Bogels’ original stone carriage house expanded by the family into living quarters between 1917 and 1920. Graves and Mary Bogel moved into the enlarged space.

Adobe brick and plaster were added during the 1940s when Preston Fowlkes occupied the house as ranch foreman. Other foremen followed him and continued to live in the residence.

The exterior adobe walls surrounding the yard were added in the mid 1970s. In early 2008 the structure was renovated, and today it serves as the residence of the superintendent of the Saucedo Unit of Big Bend Ranch State Park.

2. THE APARTMENTS

These structures were built during the 1940s as a commissary, a residence for the *caporal* (field manager), a garage, a residence for the cook, and a kitchen and informal eating area for the ranch hands. Working cowboys and their families purchased food and equipment at the commissary. The kitchen could feed many of the cowboys who lived on the open range, and it also housed some of the hands when they gathered at the headquarters during roundups. The building now serves as staff apartments and storage.

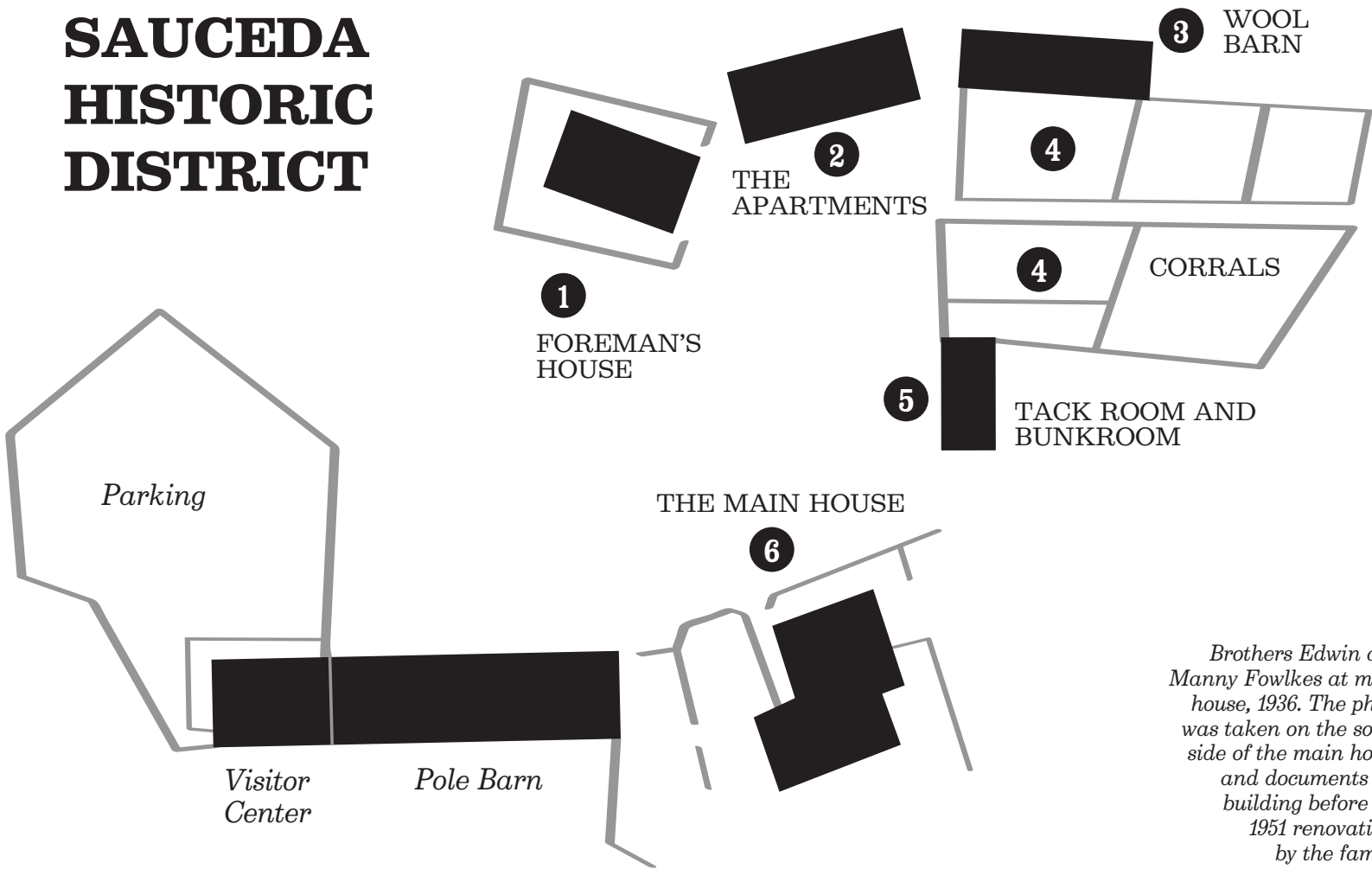
<i>Commis-sary</i>	<i>Dormitory</i>	<i>Carport and Shop</i>	<i>Kitchen</i>
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3. WOOL BARN

Constructed during the 1940s, the barn stored wool. At their most productive period, in 1955, the Fowlkes Brothers sold more than 200,000 pounds of wool—“the largest wool clip in the state of Texas.” The Fowlkeses eventually adapted the barn’s interior by building wooden stalls for their riding horses and milk cows.

The barn now stands empty, awaiting work that will help preserve it.

SAUCEDA HISTORIC DISTRICT



4. CORRALS

While stone and wood often formed early corrals, the ones you see are constructed of pipe. Anderson’s Diamond A Cattle Company built most of these corrals.

5. TACK ROOM AND BUNKROOM

Modified by the Fowlkeses and their workers during the late 1930s or early 1940s, this building housed the tack room and also functioned as a bunkroom. Having changed little during the past 70 years, the tack room serves its original purpose; the bunkroom now functions as storage.

Gus Bogel at tack room, c. 1925. The photo was taken at the southeast corner of the tack room before the structure was plastered by the Fowlkes family who updated this and other buildings.



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6. THE MAIN HOUSE

Although the exact date of the house’s construction is unknown, the first recorded landowner, George A. Howard, probably built a structure in this area between 1905 and 1908. It may have been the core of either the main house or the foreman’s house. We do know that when the Bogel brothers acquired the property, they lived with their families in a structure believed to have been already standing on the property.

When Gus and Maude Bogel lived here, the house had only two bedrooms, a bathroom, and one fire-place located in the living room. The kitchen’s large wood burning range heated most of the house. Armchairs of upholstered leather and a large oak table furnished the living room where the Bogels played cards and listened to the phonograph.



COURTESY OF THE FOWLKES FAMILY

When Manny and Patricia Stewart Fowlkes occu-pied the house in the late 1930s, they filled it with furnishings that Patricia’s father, Maco Stewart, provided as a wedding gift. The couple had six children and expanded the main house during 1950 and 1951 to make room for the large family. They also installed colorful Mexican tile inside and outside and they erected a white picket fence. The grounds embraced a large garden behind the house and a side area for killing and dressing beef and lamb.

During the mid 1970s, Robert Anderson planted palm trees and encircled the house and yard with low adobe walls. When used as a hunting lodge during the 1980s, the house emphasized leisured outdoor living: screens enclosed the porch; colorful tiles from Chihuahua City covered the porch floor; and a grape arbor provided shade and decoration on the east side of the house.