EAST TEXAS COLLOQUY

(Help the Editor name this section)

Lee Lawrence, P. O. Box 180, Tyler, is interested in Trammel’s Trace.

The Handbook of Texas II, 793, say the Trace was sometimes described as an early Indian trail, and sometimes as a horse path and was used by Nicholas Trammel as early as 1813. According to this account the trail began near Conway, Arkansas, crossed the Red River at Tulton, entered Bowie County, Texas, crossed the Sulphur River at Epperson’s Ferry, passed near Hughes Springs, crossed Cypress Bayou near Jefferson, passed near Marshall, crossed the Sabine River near Tatum, and continued to Nacogdoches. John Terry, of Jefferson, says that Nicholas Trammel was sometimes known as Nathaniel Casper Trammel. Terry also believes the trail continued from Nacogdoches to a bayou east of Galveston Bay and that Jean Lafitte or some of his followers often used the trail in their illicit trade. Terry tells of an alleged attack on Trammel and some of Lafitte’s men by a detachment of Spanish Cavalry, and to save their contraband, Trammel ordered a fortune in gold and silver, which had been taken from a Spanish merchant in Galveston Bay, dumped into Hendricks Lake which is near Marshall.

Terry mentions a number of surveys the trail passed through in Harrison, and Marion counties, but says there is much confusion in regard to the exact route it followed in these two counties. A Boy Scout troop in Jefferson is making plans to mark the exact route in Marion County.

The Rusk County Historical Society is also attempting to locate the route followed by Trammel’s Trace in Rusk County.

Professor John Duncan, Texas A & M University, questions the location of the present little log replica of the San Francisco de los Tejas Mission. “The present site,” he says, “is devoid of historical feeling—no possible view of a cemetery, a spring, or objects of antiquity.”

Dr. Llerena Friend, of the Texas History Center, the University of Texas, says that apparently all are agreed that the original site was not used when the mission was re-established in 1716. She cites the Houston Chronicle of July 5, 1935, which has an article and a picture of the dignitaries present for the dedication of the replica of the first mission in Texas. According to Father Foik, of the Centennial Historical Board, a piece of seventeenth century cannon found in 1928 on the farm of G. A. Moore led to an investigation. Dr. Albert Woldert published an article in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume XXXVIII about the site. Bishop Byrne, Miss Adina de Zavala of the Texas Historical and Landmarks Association, and R. Woldert of Tyler seem to have been chiefly responsible for the location of the site of the present building. Judge A. A. Aldrich, of Crockett, was Master of Ceremonies for the dedication occasion, on July
4, 1935. The present building, as Professor Duncan says, is not on either of the original sites.

The Houston Enterprise of July 14, 1935, says the Civilian Conservation Corps created the park and built the mission replica.

The Houston Chronicle for February 19, 1961, says the site became a state park in 1956. Until that time the site had been managed by the Texas Forest Service of Texas A & M University.

John W. Wilkins, 220 Reading Avenue, Texarkana, Texas, is copying tombstone inscriptions and gathering other information on the old families of Gregg and upper Rusk Counties. He has already copied most of the older stones in southern Gregg County and many in the northern part of the county.

He will share information with anyone who is interested. When the work is completed, Wilkins plans to mimeograph copies of the tombstone inscriptions for libraries and others who are interested.