1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Moore's Crossing Historic District
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Roughly bounded by F.M. 973, old Burleson Road, and Onion Creek
CITY OR TOWN: Austin
VICINITY: N/A
STATE: Texas
CODE: TX
COUNTY: Travis
CODE: 453
ZIP CODE: 78724

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationwide statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register
   See continuation sheet.
   determined eligible for the National Register
   See continuation sheet.
   determined not eligible for the National Register
   removed from the National Register
   other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action

Linda McCullard
10/16/96
5. CLASSIFICATION

**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Private; Public-local

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** District

**NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:**

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<th>Noncontributing</th>
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**NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER:** 0

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** Historic and Architectural Resources of Southeast Travis County, Texas

6. FUNCTION OR USE

**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** Domestic; Commerce/Trade; Agriculture/Subsistence; Transportation

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** Domestic; Commerce/Trade; Agriculture/Subsistence; Transportation; Vacant/Not In Use

7. DESCRIPTION

**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** Queen Anne; Other: 1-part commercial block; Other: barn; Other: center passage; Other: vernacular

**MATERIALS:**

- **FOUNDATION:** Wood; Concrete
- **WALLS:** Wood; Asbestos
- **ROOF:** Wood; Metal
- **OTHER:** Metal; Concrete; Glass

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-20).
DESCRIPTION

The Moore's Crossing Historic District (see Map-38) encompasses 21 properties on approximately 10.83 acres in southeast Travis County. The district is adjacent to Onion Creek at the junction of Farm-to-Market Road 973 and old Burleson Road, strategically placed just east of the historic low-water ford across Onion Creek and a metal-truss bridge on old Burleson Road. The district comprises the core of the rural community of Moore's Crossing. The eastern portion includes 8.47 acres and contains most of the district's resources. The western section embraces both the 2.36-acre parcel with the remainder of the district's resources and the area containing the low water ford and metal truss bridge. No single style or building type defines the district's physical character; instead, the resources provide a cross-section of the kinds of buildings and structures that once were common in rural Travis County. Rapid growth, expansion and development in and around the City of Austin have greatly changed the physical and architectural character of similar rural communities in the area. These changes have contributed to the destruction or insensitive remodeling of historic resources similar to those that survive in the Moore's Crossing Historic District. The district's buildings are relatively modest in scale, display minimal, if any, amounts of stylistic ornamentation and thus are considered to be vernacular properties. The district's resources are categorized into one of five property type designations, which are defined in greater detail in the Historic and Architectural Resources of Southeast Travis County Multiple Property National Register Nomination. Examples within the district include Domestic Buildings; Domestic Auxiliary Buildings; Agricultural Properties; Commercial Buildings; Infrastructure. As is true in most rural areas, most of the buildings have been modified over the years and these changes reveal much about the prosperity (or lack thereof) of its residents and the health of the local economy. Most of the resources date from the early 20th century and only five properties were constructed after the end of the district's period of significance and are regarded as Noncontributing properties. Of 21 resources, the district includes 13 properties that are old enough and retain sufficient integrity to be classified as Contributing features. Two historic resources built during the district's period of significance has been so severely altered that their integrity has been compromised and are classified as Noncontributing.

SETTING

The Moore's Crossing Historic District is at the junction of F.M. 973 and old Burleson Road in the southeast portion of Travis County, Texas. Despite its proximity to the former Bergstrom Air Force Base about two miles northwest of the district, surrounding territory is strongly rural and agricultural in character. An exception is the sanitary landfill that the City of Austin maintains due south of the district, on the opposite side of old Burleson Road. Nearby properties are sparsely developed and contain mostly large, open fields and pasture lands with somewhat isolated houses and associated outbuildings. This pattern of development contrasts sharply to the clustering of buildings and structures comprising the Moore's Crossing Historic District. The area around the district is ripe for redevelopment, as the City of Austin proceeds with plans to convert the former military base into a municipal commercial airport. The City has acquired many properties as part of the airport conversion project, and private developers have targeted other nearby properties for residential development.

Onion Creek and a small tributary define the northern limits of the district, and even though these waterways are nearby, the district's terrain is relatively level with mostly overgrown grass fields. Just beyond the district's northern
boundary, the land drops off sharply to the channel of Onion Creek and a small tributary. Most of the property is open; however, barbed wire fences delineate property lines. Hackberry and juniper trees are dispersed throughout the district but many hackberry trees grow along fence lines. The district contains scattered concentrations of mechanical and electronic parts, motors, and vehicles, all related to what appears to have been a salvage or repair business. Circulation within the district is by means of unpaved paths across lawn and field areas between buildings. An unpaved parking lot borders the south and east sides of Resource No. 4 (Photo 6). A concrete driveway extends to the south side of the shed (Resource No. 11, Photo 13) behind the store (Resource No. 4, Photo 6). Separate unpaved driveways extend from old Burleson Road to Resource No. 1 (Photo 3) and Resource No. 8 (Photo 10).

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS DURING THE PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The district comprises the core of the community of Moore's Crossing which contained, at various times, a school, cotton gin, two blacksmith shops, a church, a mercantile establishment and a meat market, as well as dwellings, garages, cisterns, barns and storage sheds. Moore's Crossing developed slowly in the post-Civil War period as a rural commercial and social node that served the nearby tenant and yeoman farm operations that historically have prevailed in the surrounding areas. The community developed primarily because of its strategic location near a low-water crossing of Onion Creek. The waterway impeded travel in this part of the county when the modes and means of transportation were poor. Although the ford was an early node of activity, the area that comprises the historic district was largely undeveloped until the late 19th century. The 1896 U.S.G.S. map of Travis County (see Map-37) notes the Berry & Moore Bros. Store on the north bank (outside the district) of Onion Creek, and the only building extant in what is now the district is Resource No. 1 (Photo 3). The most intense development occurred during the first quarter of the 20th century in which several wood-frame buildings were constructed, most notably the store, Resource No. 4 (Photo 6). All pivotal elements in the district were in place by the early 1920s. A series of photographs (see Figures 7-17, 7-18) on file at the Austin History Center chronicle the physical character of Moore's Crossing during the early 20th century. The photographs show modest vernacular buildings fronting onto unpaved old Burleson Road. Fire later destroyed some of the buildings and others, such as the old meat market, were modified extensively in later years. Most new (post-1946) construction has been limited to small outbuildings that have a minimal impact on the district's overall historic character.

**GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The informal relationship of the resources in the district is its unifying spatial feature. This pattern is reflective of the district's incremental growth, as well as the long use and changing needs of the those living, working and visiting Moore's Crossing. While the informality of spatial relationships within the district resulted in scattered site development, two extant features—the store (Resource No. 4, Photo 6), and the bridge (Resource No. 13, Photo 15)—provide cohesion and identity for the district that sets it apart from the surrounding rural landscape. These resources are the largest and most physically dominant elements in the district, and mark its east and west edges, the directions from which travelers and customers approach. As public focal points, they face the thoroughfares and shelter the smaller, mostly private features of the district more closely associated with the daily lives and behind-the-scenes activities necessary for the function of the community. Residential buildings, in contrast, are set back from public thoroughfares and associated ancillary buildings are behind the dwellings.
All of the district’s buildings are 1-story wood-frame vernacular designs. Small in scale, they are distinguished by their plan form and roof shape rather than by architectural styling. Only Resource No. 1 and Resource No. 4 exhibit any stylistic detailing or architectural embellishment. Resource No. 1 is an L-plan house featuring decorative shingles applied to the gable ends and turned porch posts that reflect an influence of the Queen Anne style. This architectural expression was popular in the late 19th century throughout the United States and was often manifested as applied ornament to vernacular house forms. The store has a tall false front parapet that, while not a particular style, is nonetheless a distinctive architectural treatment. The false front is most often associated with boom towns and small, isolated rural communities of the post-Civil War era. Resource No. 5 (the meat market, Photo 7) originally had the same type of facade treatment but severe exterior modifications have removed this character-defining element and created a front gable building that is residential in form and scale. Other buildings in the district are wood-frame utilitarian constructions with front- or side-gable, or shed roof forms. Representative of building forms and materials common to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they chronicle the evolution of rural construction and local social change during that period.

The low-water ford and the metal-truss bridge descend to and soar above the water they cross, each representing their era’s solution to overcoming water barriers in transportation. A scraped area on the banks of Onion Creek, the ford is a low spot created to permit the approach of wagons, carriages and horses. The bridge, built almost directly above the ford is a multiple span, metal-truss bridge, designed by King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio. It is the district’s only resource associated with a formally trained designer. Resting on concrete footings, the bridge represents the technological progress of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It originally was part of the Congress Avenue Bridge over the Colorado River, but was dismantled to make way for another bridge at the same location. Building materials were salvaged and used later to construct the bridge at Moore’s Crossing. In its present configuration, the bridge is an example of double-intersection Pratt construction and has decorative brackets in the end posts.

Although demolition of some resources and changes to other resources within the district have occurred since their respective construction, and since the end of the period of significance (1946), the extant features are on their original sites (the reconstructed metal-truss bridge excluded) and their relation to each other and the adjacent highways and Onion Creek remain largely intact. Alterations to the district’s resources vary from feature to feature. Nearly all modifications to extant elements, and the demolition of the school, cotton gin and the church, reflect the changing economic status and social needs of the surrounding community and are considered evolutionary. The approximate former locations of the church and school, which are not included in the resource count, are noted on the district map (see Map-38). With the exception of Resource No. 5, alterations to the historic resources have minimally affected the historic character of the resources, both individually and collectively. The meat market (Resource No. 5, Photo 7) bares little resemblance to its original appearance. The removal of the false front parapet, the application of asbestos siding over the original board-and-batten finish, and the installation of different types of windows give the building a residential character. The only major changes made within the district and to the historic properties after the period of significance include the replacement of original wood-frame double-hung sash windows with aluminum-frame types on Resource Nos. 6, 10, and 11 (Photos 8, 12, and 13); the enclosure of the porch on Resource No. 6 and the construction of three storage sheds (Resource No. 14, Photo 16; Resource Nos. 15, and 16) about 1975. No exterior alterations are apparent on
CONCLUSION

The Moore's Crossing Historic District contains a high concentration of historic resources that comprise the heart of a small rural community in southeastern Travis County. With an old country store as its focal point, the district retains a variety of buildings and structures clustered near a historic ford across Onion Creek. Extant resources typify the kinds of buildings and structures found in small rural communities throughout Central Texas and are indicative of vernacular and folk architectural trends of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Except for the bridges and ford, the resources are wood-frame buildings small in scale and generally lack stylistic embellishment. Most of the buildings have been altered to some degree since their original construction, but the changes shed light on the physical evolution of buildings and the frugal and practical nature of the community and its residents. Some resources have been abandoned and are no longer in use. Although they have deteriorated with the passage of time, they still retain enough character-defining elements to contribute to the district's ability to convey a sense of the past. The district is further distinguished by the low percentage of post-1946 buildings within its confines. The dominate man-made features are Resource No. 4 (Photo 6), an old country store constructed or rebuilt in 1914; a nearby dwelling (Resource No. 1, Photo 3) that dates to about 1893; and the metal-truss bridge (Resource No. 13, Photo 15) across Onion Creek. All of the resources are clearly visible from public right-of-ways and have changed little since they were built or reconstructed.

Of the 21 buildings and structures in the district 13, or 62 percent, retain their integrity and are classified as Contributing elements in fair to good condition. Some areas between the buildings at Moore's Crossing contain salvaged mechanical parts that appear to be part of an enterprise related to the economic use of the property and are representative of its evolution. The elements of the district retain their ability to convey a sense of time and place. Although Moore's Crossing currently plays only a minor economic role in the area, its physical relationship with the surrounding rural environment remains much as it was during the period of significance.

DEFINITION OF CATEGORIES

All resources are categorized as either Contributing or Noncontributing to the district's historic character. These classifications reflect the degree to which alterations to individual properties affect the area's overall historic integrity and its ability to convey a sense of time and place. Contributing properties are historic (pre-1946) resources that are deemed the most significant and appear much as they did during the district's period of significance. They need not be unaltered but must closely resemble their historic appearance. Contributing resources retain the majority of their original form, massing, scale, materials and character-defining architectural features. Noncontributing properties, on the other hand, include historic resources that have so severely altered that their historic integrity has been compromised. The removal of salient physical features or the application of a new and historically inappropriate type of siding are the kinds of changes that can diminish historic integrity and warrant a historic property's categorization as a Noncontributing element. The Noncontributing category also includes buildings and structures erected after the end of the district's period of significance (1946). They may be compatible in design, scale and materials but do not date from the time period in which the district achieved significance.
INVENTORY OF PROPERTIES

The following inventory identifies each resource in the district and indicates its classification as either a Contributing or Noncontributing property. The inventory also states the type of resource (building, structure or site), its approximate date of construction and property type designation, which is explained in greater detail in the Multiple-Property National Register Nomination, Historic and Architectural Resources in Southeastern Travis County, Texas. A brief description of each resource's salient physical features is also provided. The list is organized sequentially by Resource No. designation and corresponds to the district map (see Map-38).

Resource No. 1; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1893; Property Type: Domestic: Vernacular (L-Plan House); Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 1 (Photo 3) is a 1-story, wood-frame, single-family residence with modest amounts of Queen Anne stylistic features. The house has an L-shaped plan, wood siding, 4/4 wood sash windows and wood doors. Gable ends are embellished with fish scale shingles and boxed eaves. The 3-bay, partial-width porch has a standing-seam-metal roof supported on turned-wood posts. The house faces east and probably was erected about 1893. The house's exterior appears virtually unaltered and the only major exterior modification is the addition, or possible enclosure, of a rear porch. The house is in fair condition. Access to the interior was not available. Resource No. 1 survives as a good and relatively intact example of a common vernacular house type that prevailed throughout much of Texas during the late 19th and very early 20th centuries.

Resource No. 2; Resource Type: Structure; Date of Construction: ca. 1893 (possibly modified ca. 1935); Property Type: Domestic Auxiliary: Cistern; Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 2 (Photo 4) is a circular concrete-lined cistern directly behind (west) and closely associated with Resource No. 1. The cistern probably dates to the original construction of the house, but was modified later (possibly around 1935) with the construction of the concrete cistern enclosure. Although a utilitarian structure, the cistern represents a once-common building type of rural southeastern Travis County. Because it retains salient physical features, the cistern is categorized as a Contributing element in the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 3; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1893; Property Type: Domestic Auxiliary: Privy; Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 3 (Photo 5) is a small privy with wood siding and a wood door. The privy faces south and is northwest of Resource No. 5. The privy, which contains two seats, has been abandoned for many years and, despite its dilapidated state of repair, provides a good illustration of a building type that once was common in rural southeastern Travis County. The advent of indoor plumbing and septic tank systems has rendered such buildings expendable, and most have been demolished, abandoned or left to ruin. Resource No. 3 thus provides a tangible link to the district's period of significance and, because it appears to be virtually unaltered, is classified as a Contributing feature in the Moore's Crossing Historic District.
Resource No. 4; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1900; Property Type: Commercial; Category: Contributing.

The centerpiece of the Moore's Crossing community, Resource No. 4 (Photo 6) is a 1-story, wood-frame, commercial building with a rectangular plan and a pier-and-beam foundation that is sheltered by a poured concrete skirt wall. The building has wood-frame construction with wood siding. The store's most distinctive feature is the false front parapet that obscures the front-gabled roof and its standing-seam-metal cladding. A porch extends across the front (south) and east elevations and has chamfered wood columns and wood flooring. The double-hung windows have wood sashes. The primary elevation has centrally placed, double doors with panels. The entrance bay is flanked by double-hung, wood-sash windows. A gas pump and air and water hoses, installed in the early 1930s, are near the porch's southeast corner.

The exact date of construction is not known. However, the store existed in present configuration by about 1914, according to the historic photograph collection at the Austin History Center. Some local residents have stated that the building was constructed about 1900 and burned about 1914. The fire damaged the interior and was rebuilt and enlarged after the fire. However, a family member of a previous occupant stated that the building burned to the ground and a new one was constructed in its place. Regardless of which version is correct, the building has changed only minimally since the circa 1914 photograph (see Figure 7-20) was taken.

Resource No. 4 survives as a good and relatively intact example of a small country store from the early 20th century. Despite the reorientation of the primary entrance from the south to the east elevation, the building retains its basic form, massing and salient architectural features, such as the false front parapet and wraparound porch with chamfered columns. However, despite their abundance during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these country stores, which were the economic nucleus of rural communities, are becoming increasingly rare. While similar stores remain extant in southeast Travis County communities such as Elroy, they no longer operate, yet the Berry & Moore Bros. Store retains its historic function. It is significant as a tangible link to the Moore's Crossing community, which appears to have reached its peak of prosperity between the 1880s and 1920. The store is possibly the last remaining operational enterprise of its type in southeast Travis County and is the focal point of the extant buildings associated with Moore's Crossing. Alterations made to the store occurred during the district's period of significance and are considered evolutionary in nature. For these reasons, the store has been determined to be a Contributing feature of the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 5; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1910 (altered ca. 1950); Property Type: Commercial; Category: Noncontributing.

Resource No. 5 (Photo 7) is a 1-story frame building with a broad and steeply pitched front-gable roof. The building rests on a pier-and-beam foundation and features a rectangular plan. The asbestos siding, an alteration that compromises the building's integrity of materials, covers the original board-and-batten walls. Like most of other large buildings in the district, Resource No. 5 has a gable roof with standing-seam-metal cladding. The front faces east and has a small shed porch that is filled with a variety of appliances and machinery. The
Moore's Crossing Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

Resource No. 6; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1915; Property Type: Domestic: Vernacular; Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 6 (Photo 8) is 1-story, single-family dwelling with wood-frame construction, board-and-batten siding and a standing-seam-metal roof. The house, which rests on a pier-and-beam foundation, has long, narrow, 4/4, double-hung windows with wood and metal sashes. A full-width shed roof porch along the front of the house has been enclosed. The house is set back from old Burleson Road and faces west onto an unpaved driveway that extends from old Burleson Road. Resource No. 6 has been modified through several small additions and incompatible alterations to the windows, doors and siding. The additions have changed the original mass and form of the building somewhat, and the alterations have diminished the physical and architectural integrity of the house. However, despite the alterations, Resource No. 6 retains its ability to convey a sense of time and place and is therefore classified as a Contributing element. The only extant building associated with the house is a nearby shed (Resource No. 15) that appears to date from about 1975.

Resource No. 7; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1930; Property Type: Domestic: Auxiliary (Garage); Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 7 (Photo 9) is a wood-frame 1-car garage (Photo 11) with a front-gable roof. Distinguishing features include the standing-seam-metal roof, exposed rafter ends and board-and-batten siding. The garage, which is now used for storage purposes, appears to date from about 1930 and is northeast of Resource No. 1. A utilitarian building without stylistic embellishment, this garage is not unique nor is it architecturally distinctive; however, it is a good and relatively intact example of a common building type of the 1930s. The building also reflects the influence of the automobiles and the changes it brought to the social, cultural and physical character of rural southeastern Travis County. Resource No. 7 is classified as a...
Contributing feature in the Moore's Crossing Historic District because of its association with Resource No. 1 and its relatively unaltered state.

Resource No. 8; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1935; Property Type: Agricultural (Hen House/Storage); Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 8 (Photo 10) is a small wood-frame hen house with a side-gable roof. Facing south, the building is associated with the two dwellings on the property, Resource No. 1 and Resource No. 10. The hen house serves as a roost for chickens and other fowl and as storage for old farm implements. It is in poor condition, but appears unaltered. A utilitarian building without stylistic embellishment, this hen house represents a common type of outbuilding found in other parts of rural southeastern Travis County. Because of its association with the community of Moore's Crossing, and its relatively unaltered state, Resource No. 8 is classified as Contributing feature of the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 9; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1935; Property Type: Agricultural (Barn/Storage); Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 9 is a 1-story, wood-frame, side-gable roof barn with wood siding, and a wood door (Photo 11). This small barn is northwest of Resource No. 1 and immediately north of the Resource No. 10. The barn faces south and currently serves as storage. Built about 1935, it is in poor condition, but appears unaltered. A utilitarian building without stylistic embellishment, the barn is associated with the evolution of Moore's Crossing. Because of its associations with the district and its relatively unaltered state, the barn is classified as a Contributing feature of the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 10; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1950; Property Type: Domestic; (Vernacular); Category: Noncontributing.

Resource No. 10 (Photo 12) is a 1-story, single-family, wood-frame dwelling with a pier-and-beam foundation composed of concrete blocks. The house, which has a rectangular plan, faces south and has a low-pitched front-gable roof with standing-seam-metal cladding. The front has an off-center single-door entrance and paired aluminum-sash windows. Similar windows are on the other elevations. Louvered vents are at the apex of the gable on the front (south) elevation. This building is representative of modestly scaled domestic architecture of the mid-20th century. Although a date of construction is not known, the house was probably erected after 1946, the end of the district's period of significance, and therefore is classified as a Noncontributing element in the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 11; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1950; Property Type: Domestic Auxiliary: Shed; Category: Noncontributing.

Resource No. 11 (Photo 13) is a small wood-frame storage building that faces north and is between Resource No. 1 and Resource No. 4. With a rectangular plan and concrete-block, pier-and-beam foundation,
Resource No. 11 has wood siding and a low-pitched, standing-seam-metal gabled roof with exposed rafter ends. Despite its presumed use as a shed, the building has double-hung wood-sash windows with trim. This modest building is in good condition and appears virtually unaltered. Although it is compatible in scale, design and materials with other buildings in the district, Resource No. 11 appears to have been erected after the end of the district's period of significance and thus is classified as a Noncontributing element in the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 12; Resource Type: Site; Date of Construction: ca. 1845; Property Type: Low Water Ford; Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 12 is a low-water ford (Photo 14) on Onion Creek near the abandoned metal-truss bridge (Resource No. 13) on old Burleson Road. The ford is oriented roughly northwest/southeast and is marked by a scraped area on the banks of the creek, where earth was moved to allow the approach of wagons, carriages and horses. The site and nearby stream banks appear to be virtually intact with no significant alterations, and the surrounding area retains its rural character. West of the ford is Richard Moya County Park, a minimally developed recreational area where the stream channel remains in its natural state.

The ford proved to be the initial impetus for the early development of Moore's Crossing as a node of activity in southeastern Travis County. Area residents used the ford to cross Onion Creek with its sometimes deep channel that impeded overland traffic. As more settlers came to the region and the road network expanded, routes were selected to take advantage of low-water crossings such as the one at this site. Because of its influential role in the development of Moore's Crossing, Resource No. 12 is classified as a Contributing feature in the district.

Resource No. 13; Resource Type: Structure; Date of Construction: originally built - 1884, dismantled - 1908, reconstructed - 1915 and 1917; Property Type: Infrastructure: Bridge; Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 13 (Photo 15) is an abandoned metal-truss bridge that crosses Onion Creek about 100 feet upstream (west) from the old Berry & Moore Bros. Store (Resource No. 4) and other buildings that comprise the nucleus of the Moore's Crossing community. The bridge has six spans that rest on concrete footings. The bridge has an asphalt-covered deck oriented on roughly a northwest/southeast axis that is virtually above a historic low-water ford (Resource No. 12). This impressive metal structure is an example of a double intersection Pratt truss bridge that has inclined end posts with diagonals that extend across two panels. The bridge is further distinguished by the decorative brackets in the entrance bays at each end. The 1884 bridge originally was part of the Congress Avenue Bridge, designed by the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio. In 1908, the bridge was dismantled and placed in storage and a new bridge was constructed over the Colorado River. Moved to Onion Creek in 1915, the 1884 bridge provided the first high-water crossing of Onion Creek in this portion of Travis County and was a boon to local residents and travelers. Shortly after its placement, a severe flood washed away part of the footings and the bridge itself. Travis County workers repaired it but the bridge was subsequently damaged by another flood. Finally, in 1917, after two of the three spans that made up the 1915 bridge were washed away, the remaining spans of the bridge were recovered from storage and
attached to the remaining span. Footings were made sounder and the bridge survived subsequent flooding. Since that time, only minor repairs and the resurfacing of the deck have been undertaken. Though unused since 1994 following the rerouting of Burleson Road, the bridge retains a high degree of integrity, and since 1915 has been associated with, and contributed to, the development of Moore's Crossing. Resource No. 13 is a rare surviving late 19th century metal-truss bridge. Because of its strategic location on a locally important transportation route and its contribution to the economic life of Moore's Crossing during the peak of its prosperity, the bridge is a Contributing feature of the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 14; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1975; Property Type: Domestic Auxiliary: Shed; Category: Noncontributing.

Resource No. 14 (Photo 16) is a 1-story, frame, storage shed that faces south and is northwest of Resource No. 1 and immediately north of Resource No. 10. The shed has a rectangular plan and a front-gable roof with corrugated-sheet-metal covering. The walls feature plywood panels and aluminum-frame windows. The building is in poor condition, but appears unaltered. A utilitarian building without stylistic embellishment, this shed was built about 1975 and is not unique or architecturally distinctive. It was not built during the district's period of significance and is not architecturally distinctive or rare; therefore, Resource No. 14 is considered a Noncontributing element in the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 15; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1975; Property Type: Domestic Auxiliary: Shed; Category: Noncontributing.

Resource No. 15 is a 1-story storage shed constructed of wood framing and sheathed with plywood. The building, which is northwest of, and associated with, Resource No. 6, rests on a pier-and-beam foundation and has a rectangular plan. Built about 1975, the shed faces south and appears unaltered. It is a utilitarian building without stylistic embellishment and is not unique or architecturally distinctive. Because it was built after the district's period of significance and is not architecturally distinctive or rare, Resource No. 15 is categorized as a Noncontributing feature in the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 16; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1975; Property Type: Domestic Auxiliary: Shed; Category: Noncontributing.

Resource No. 16 is very similar Resource No. 15. It is a 1-story frame storage shed with plywood exterior walls and a shed roof; however, Resource No. 16 is built directly on the ground. The building is behind (north) of the residence designated as Resource No. 6 and was erected about 1975. Because it postdates the district's period of significance, Resource no. 16 is categorized as a Noncontributing property in the Moore's Crossing Historic District.
Resource No. 17; Resource Type: Structure; Date of Construction: ca. 1935; Property Type: Infrastructure: Bridge; Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 17 is a concrete bridge with metal railings and crosses Onion Creek on Farm-to-Market Road 973. Although its date of construction is not known, deeds on file at the Travis County Courthouse make reference to it as a landmark in a 1935 land transaction involving an adjoining property. The bridge is relatively small, especially when compared to the old metal-truss bridge (Resource No. 13) to the west; nevertheless, the concrete bridge fulfilled a similar mission. It contributed to the expanding road network and helped to improve vehicular transportation in southeastern Travis County. The bridge was constructed during the district's period of significance and has been changed only minimally. Therefore, Resource No. 17 is classified as Contributing feature in the Moore's Crossing Historic District.

Resource No. 18; Resource Type: Site; Date of Construction: ca. 1909 (razed c. 1925); Property Type: Agricultural: Cotton Gin; Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 18 marks the site of a cotton gin that once served the community of Moore's Crossing and nearby residents. Little physical remains of the gin survive. The most prominent feature is a large concrete foundation about 70 centimeters in height. Identified and recorded by archaeologists (41TV1640), the gin site also includes "two small platforms, one of concrete and one of limestone..." and "the levelled remains of four concrete posts that were probably the foundation of an additional structure" (Hicks & Company 1994:83).

The cotton gin at Moore's Crossing had its inception in 1909 when John B. Moore sold 4.06 acres to W.T. Caswell for the nominal fee of $1 "...for the purposes of establishing erecting and maintaining a first class cotton gin... so long as the said premises are used for the running of such cotton gin and for cotton gin purposes only...," (Travis County Deed Records, 29 November 1909, Vol. 239, p. 508-509). The deed stipulated that the land, which included a half acre tract once used for the Moore School, would revert back to J.B. Moore if the gin ceased operation. W.T. Caswell, a local cotton seed oil manufacturer, owned several other cotton gins in southeast Travis County under similar terms in addition to the one at Moore's Crossing, which was in full operation by 1910. Like other community leaders in the area, J.B. Moore sought to bring Caswell's gin to Moore's Crossing to boost the local economy and increase sales at his own business. Local operators maintained the gin and farmers brought their cotton to the facilities to be processed. After 1915, when Travis County workers installed the metal-truss bridge over Onion Creek, the gin was more accessible to farmers who lived across Onion Creek. The gin probably continued to operate until 1925 or 1926 when Caswell abandoned it due to a decrease in cotton production in Travis County. The 4.06-acre tract was eventually returned to J.B. Moore, who in turn sold it to Franz Kretzschmer in 1937. Subsequent owners subdivided the lot into smaller portions, but a 2.36-acre lot that contains the gin site is currently owned by Mrs. Rosailia Verna Moore.
Resource No. 19; Resource Type: Structure; Date of Construction: ca. 1920s; Property Type: Domestic Auxiliary: Well; Category: Contributing.

Resource No. 19 is a well that archaeologists identified while undertaking a survey of the area in 1994. The well is on the same parcel as an old gin site (Resource No. 18) and an altered historic house (Resource No. 19) and is associated one or both resources.

Resource No. 20; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1920s; Property Type: Domestic: Vernacular Category: Noncontributing.

Resource No. 20 (Photo 17) is a small 1-story dwelling that is set back from old Burleson Road and accessible by way of an unpaved gravel road. The building has a pier-and-beam foundation, wood frame construction and gable roof. The exterior is presently sheathed with a stone veneer and presumably covers some type of wood siding. The windows are double hung with wood sashes. On the west side of the house is a 2-car garage that originally may have been detached and free-standing, but is now joined to the house by a connecting hallway. The house, which appears on a ca. 1936 aerial photograph of the area, is severely altered. The original massing has been changed, and the application of the stone veneer has compromised the building's integrity of materials. For these reasons the house detracts from the district's historic character and is classified as a Noncontributing feature.

Resource No. 21; Resource Type: Building; Date of Construction: ca. 1970; Property Type: Domestic: Mobile Home; Category: Noncontributing.

Resource No. 21 is a single-wide aluminum mobile home that postdates the district's period of significance. It detracts from the district historic character and is classified as a Noncontributing feature.
Moore's Crossing Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

FIGURE 7-17
Moore's Crossing, ca. 1910
Courtesy Austin History Center (Photo ID Pica 14359)
FIGURE 7-18
Moore's Crossing, ca. 1910
Courtesy Austin History Center (Photo ID Pica 14360)
FIGURE 7-19
Resource No. 4, Berry & Moore Bros. Store, before reconstruction of east porch, ca. 1910
Courtesy Austin History Center (Photo ID Pica 14357)
Moore's Crossing Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

FIGURE 7-20
Resource No. 4, Berry & Moore Bros. Store, after reconstruction of east porch, ca. 1914
Courtesy Austin History Center (Photo ID Pica 14358)
8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

_x_ A  PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.

___ B  PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.

_x_ C  PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.

___ D  PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Agriculture, Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Exploration/Settlement

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1846-1946

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1846, 1893, 1909, 1914, 1915, 1942

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-21 through 8-34).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see Multiple Property Documentation Form, Historic and Architectural Resources of Southeast Travis County, Texas, Section I).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

x State historic preservation office (Texas Historical Commission)

- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University

x Other -- Specify Repository: Austin History Center
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings, structures, and sites that comprise the Moore's Crossing Historic District are the surviving remnants of a southeast Travis County agricultural community that provided goods and services to area farmers and offered religious, educational, and social activities for local residents with no direct access to urban amenities. Moore's Crossing Historic District has a period of locally significant development dating from 1846 to 1946. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A, in the areas of Agriculture, Commerce, and Exploration/Settlement, with emphasis on historic settlement patterns. In addition, it is eligible under Criterion C, in the area of Community Planning and Development, with an emphasis on the evolution of the community over time. The Moore's Crossing Historic District relates to the historic context, Rural Development and Building Traditions in Southeastern Travis County, as an example of a community whose pioneers and later farmers established their homes in close proximity to natural resources and viable transportation routes. Occupation of the area surrounding Moore's Crossing was the result of area residents' need for an accessible creek ford and relief from flood waters. Documentation shows that the Onion Creek ford was an important crossing point for pioneers at least as early as 1846. Before the United States government successfully dammed the Colorado River in 1938, Onion Creek flooded regularly and people at Moore's Crossing often found bridges impassable and roads mired in mud. Commercial and agricultural services established at Moore's Crossing after the Civil War made the community a focal point for lower Onion Creek farmers and their families. The mercantile, blacksmith shop, meat market, and cotton gin relate Moore's Crossing to this historic context as examples of the post-reconstruction trend that forced whites in rural areas to establish self-sufficient communities to serve needs no longer provided by a slave economy. Despite the loss of highly cultivated farmland to Bergstrom Air Force Base during World War II, the decrease in number of farm families living in the area, and the advent of better roads to Austin for supplies, Moore's Crossing adapted to changing economic and agricultural demands until 1946. The district currently contains 21 extant resources. Contributing properties include a store—the nucleus of this once thriving community—two houses, a garage, two wells, a privy, a hen house, a small barn, the remains of cotton gin, an iron truss bridge, a concrete bridge, and the site of the Onion Creek ford. The resources in the Moore's Crossing Historic District are a reminder of the vibrant rural community that once existed near the lower Onion Creek ford.

EARLY SETTLEMENT IN THE MOORE'S CROSSING AREA: 1846 - 1865

Prior to 1846, most of southeast Travis County, particularly the lower Onion Creek area, remained virtually unexplored by non-native peoples. Most early land grant holders, like Santiago del Valle and José Antonio Navarro, never lived in the area as they considered it too dangerous and uncivilized for prolonged habitation. Few roads led into the area and those that did exist were often unusable due to their poor condition during flood seasons. Lack of good roads prevented potential settlers from utilizing valuable natural resources on Onion Creek such as the low water ford near Moore's Crossing (Resource No. 12, Photo 14). Although early travelers may have used the Onion Creek ford to reach other parts of the county, no permanent occupation of the area occurred until 1846 when William S. Wallace purchased a 555-acre parcel on Onion Creek from John Caldwell. More detailed information about Wallace, his family, and the subsequent history of southeast Travis County is in the historic context, Rural Development and Building Traditions in Southeastern Travis County.
Unlike most previous southeast Travis County land owners, Wallace actually lived on the farm he established on Onion Creek. Wallace probably moved into the area after a new road was laid out in 1846. The road extended from Stone's Ferry on the west side of the Colorado River to "intercept the ridge road near the Onion Creek crossing," (Barkley, 1963: 265). The road was a local issue as early as 1840, when citizens of Comanche, a small trading post on the south side of the Colorado River, requested one "on the east side of the Colorado River touching widow Burleson's (Moore's Crossing today) to the Colorado River and cross near the 'upper corner of the Comanche tract through the town, and to intersect the Bastrop Road on the west side of the river above Captain Simpson's,' " (Barkley, 1963: 265).

The new road opened southeast Travis County for settlement. With a good road to facilitate the journey between his homestead and larger centers of trade and commerce, Wallace probably found the Moore's Crossing area amenable due to its proximity to Onion Creek. The creek provided a ready water source and a ford. The ford was particularly important because it allowed Wallace and his neighbors access to one another before any bridges were built. After Wallace and his family settled near the future site of Moore's Crossing, more people moved to the area. Although no dense settlement occurred around the ford during the antebellum period, settlers probably found the Moore's Crossing area favorable for farming because of its important natural amenities. Onion Creek water allowed land owners to maintain independent plantations and large farms, worked by slave labor. Land owners and their slave work crews may have used the ford to obtain supplies from Austin and other small communities and to work in adjoining fields on the other side of the creek. Thomas F. McKinney, another southeast Travis County land owner, lived several miles west of Moore's Crossing in the 1850s. McKinney's slaves quarried limestone from the creek bluffs to build the McKinney house and several other buildings on the property. They also used the creek's resources to build a water-powered mill. Like residents of the Moore's Crossing vicinity, a low water crossing on Onion Creek was the only means the McKinneys could use to access a road leading from their house. Lower Onion Creek residents continued to live on self-sufficient farms and plantations until the end of the Civil War. The link between these early land owners and future residents of the community of Moore's Crossing is their use of the ford as a means of traveling to other parts of the county, particularly to Austin, which by 1845 was both the county seat and state capital.

Robert James and Martha Jane Moore: 1866 - 1880

The genesis of a clustered settlement at Moore's Crossing occurred soon after the Civil War when Robert James (R.J.) Moore purchased land William S. Wallace once owned. The Moore family was among the first settlers in Travis County (then Bastrop County). R.J. Moore's grandfather, Nathaniel Moore, came to Texas in 1821 and in 1832, brought his family to Gilliland Creek near present day Webberville. There Nathaniel Moore and his son, Thomas A. Moore, established Moore's Fort, a fortified village designed to protect its inhabitants from native incursion. R.J. Moore, son of Thomas A. and Mary (Williams) Moore, was born in a tent on Gilliland Creek in 1833. In 1853, R.J. Moore married Martha Jane Burleson, daughter of John Burleson, a Travis County land owner and brother of General Edward Burleson, the noted Indian fighter. R.J. and Martha Jane Moore lived at Moore's Fort until 1854 when they moved to Lampasas County and engaged in farming and stockraising until after the Civil War (Lewis Publishing Company, 1893: 319-322).

After his service to the Confederacy, R.J. Moore returned to Lampasas County to find his stock scattered and farm in disrepair. Since they probably had few remaining prospects in Lampasas County, Moore and the family removed to Travis County in 1866, rejoining their relatives. On September 5, 1868, R.J. and Martha Jane Moore purchased 654 acres of William Wallace's land from Wallace's daughter, Mary E. Wallace Cooper and her husband, C.C. Cooper, for
$1,000 (Travis County Deed Records, Book S, Page 265). After R.J. and Martha Jane Moore purchased the property, they took up residence in a house built by William Wallace, northeast of the present day Moore's Crossing area (still extant but outside the Moore's Crossing Historic District). The sixth of their nine children was born there in 1869 (Lewis Publishing Company, 1893: 319-322).

In the years immediately following the Moore's purchase of the Wallace parcel, R.J. Moore mortgaged most of the acreage to various trustees, except for a 200-acre homestead that included the Wallace house. According to ad valorem tax records for 1880, R.J. Moore owned a total of 200 acres: 18 acres on the José Antonio Navarro land grant, 11 1/2 acres on the Jonathan Bittick survey, and 170 1/2 acres on the Noel M. Bain survey (Travis County Tax Rolls, Austin History Center, Reel 1227-03, 1880-1887). Moore's 200-acre homestead tract contained the low water crossing on Onion Creek that became an integral part of the Moore's Crossing community.

LATE 19TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT AT MOORE'S CROSSING: 1881 - 1899

Of the Moore's nine children, three were of school age on February 22, 1881, when Robert and Martha Jane Moore donated a half acre out of their homestead tract to Travis County, "with the sole condition that the same shall always be used for school purposes," (Travis County Deed Records, Book 48, Pages 573-574). The school, built on the edge of Onion Creek, is the first known non-residential building at Moore's Crossing. During the 1880s, settlement in the Moore's Crossing area was still fairly sparse and the Moores did not have many close neighbors. It is possible that the school was built so that the Moore children would be able to attend school near their home. Apparently, this was a common practice in rural areas. "Homes were formerly widely separated, and perhaps only one family was taught literacy in that school," (Lohry, 1957: 2). Between 1880 and 1900, many small communities sponsored schools among their first community buildings. "The territory was at one time like all other rural sections - dotted with small schools - the Devotion School at Jones Crossing, the Bell Moore School at Moores Crossing, the Cloud School (later called Norwood School), the Dry Creek School, Pilot Knob School, Elroy School, Colorado School, and many others," (Lohry, 1957: 1). R.J. and Martha Jane Moore may have recognized the important role Moore's Crossing might have in the development of the lower Onion Creek area.

Moore's Crossing was not the local hub of the agricultural community south of Onion Creek until sometime between 1891 and 1893 when the Berry & Moore Brothers established their store. As more people came into the area in the 1880s and 1890s, neighbors had more interaction with one another. Moore's Crossing was a natural location for a settlement owing to increased traffic at the creek ford. "People became neighborly; since they lived along the creeks their natural meeting places were near the crossings," (Lohry, 1957: 2). After the Civil War, people living in rural areas had to form small communities where a variety of goods and services were available. Lower Onion Creek residents no longer lived on insular plantations where all of their economic and social needs were provided. After Berry & Moore Bros. Store opened, the store and the school became the center of the lower Onion Creek area.

R.J. Moore, his son, Andrew Bell (A.B.) Moore, and neighbor, T.M. Berry, initially established the mercantile firm of Berry & Moore Brothers in 1890 or 1891 (Travis County Deed Records, 3 October 1891, Vol. 94, p. 339-343). A.B. Moore and his brother, John Burleson (J.B.) Moore, and their sister Rebecca's husband, George Berry, took over the company a few years later and built the store in late 1892 or 1893 (Lewis Publishing Company, 1893: 319-322; Travis County Deed Records, 3 October 1891, Book 94, p. 339-343). In 1893, the first record of the business' assets appears in
the Travis County tax rolls. That year, Berry & Moore Brothers accounted for one vehicle ($25), some tools and machinery ($100), 12 horses ($420), five cows ($25), one mule ($200), store merchandise ($1,000), and 200 acres of land on the del Valle land grant ($2,500) (Travis County Tax Rolls, 1893, Reel 1227-03, Page 35, Line 1).

Since Berry & Moore Brothers listed 200 acres on the del Valle grant among their assets, it is reasonable to assume that they built store on that property. However, that assumption puts the store in a different place than its current location. In 1888, A.B. Moore owned 228 acres on the del Valle grant, (Travis County Tax Rolls, 1888, Reel 1227-04, Page 133, Line 36). He maintained ownership of at least 200 acres of this tract, on the northwest side of Onion Creek, for the rest of his life. George Berry also owned 200 acres of land on the del Valle grant, west of A.B. Moore (Schutze, 1898-1899). An 1896 U.S.G.S. map for the Austin Quadrangle and a Travis County road map surveyed in 1898 both confirm that the Berry & Moore Bros. Store was originally on the north side of Onion Creek on the del Valle grant, across the creek from the current store. However, it is impossible to know, owing to the uncertainty of individual boundary lines, whether the store was on A.B. Moore's or George Berry's property. Tax rolls for 1894 show that Berry & Moore Brothers also possessed a 50-acre tract on the del Valle grant. In addition, the firm owned 150 acres on the A. Kincheloe survey, (Travis County Tax Rolls, 1893, Reel 1227-05, 1893-1898, Page 32, Line 5-7). By 1895, the firm had also acquired several town lots in Austin (Travis County Tax Rolls, 1895, Reel 1227-05, 1893-1898, Page 37, Line 25).

Although the amount of merchandise and livestock that the business owned did not fluctuate much during this period, the property listed for taxation seems to vary based upon what each partner owned in a particular year. Perhaps this was an attempt to consolidate each partner's assets so they would have to pay less individual tax, but it is impossible to know the reason for this decision. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Berry & Moore Bros. Store was originally in a different location.

The partnership of A.B. Moore, J.B. Moore, and George Berry provided economic opportunity. Prior to establishing their business, all three men farmed and raised livestock. A.B. Moore, who appears to have been the principal partner of the firm, was also a local cotton buyer (Lewis Publishing Company, 1893: 319-322). The store gave these men a regular source of income that was more stable than any money earned from crop and livestock sales. The store probably helped stimulate the economy at Moore's Crossing, making it possible for other businesses to form. The 1896 U.S.G.S. map (see Map-37) indicates that, besides the store, three additional buildings once existed on the northwest side of the Onion Creek ford. Given their proximity to the road, these three buildings may also have been local businesses. In addition to general merchandise needs, residents may have also required a blacksmith, a butcher, or a carpenter. J.R. Hamilton was a blacksmith in the area in 1894 and may have worked at Moore's Crossing (Schutze, 1894-1895).

At the turn of the century, the Moore's Crossing area had a much larger network of roads surrounding it than in previous years. As more people moved to the Moore's Crossing area after the Civil War, they built roads near their homes that led not only to Austin, but to other areas of regional importance. Whereas most southeast Travis County roads shown on the 1896 U.S.G.S. map traversed long distances, leaving large tracts of farmland inaccessible except by overland transport, the roads near Moore's Crossing were numerous and allowed local residents many avenues to reach area businesses, the school, and the Onion Creek ford. The map shows that people often carved out irregular routes to gain the easiest access to these natural and commercial resources. Farmers in the lower Onion Creek area "were more dependent on the stores for some of the necessary supplies...there were paths for mules or horses to travel to the store or school," (Lohry, 1957: 2).
EARLY 20TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT AT MOORE'S CROSSING: 1900 - 1909

By 1894, R.J. Moore was in poor health and could no longer live on his Onion Creek farm. While he and Martha Jane moved to south Austin to be closer to their physician, their children continued to live at Moore's Crossing and operate the store. R.J. Moore died in south Austin in 1901. Martha Jane Moore lived another 27 years, dying in Austin on May 3, 1928 (Moore's Crossing Files, Austin History Center). On December 22, 1900, probably in an attempt to organize his affairs, R.J. Moore sold his 200-acre homestead on the Navarro, Bain, and Bittick surveys to his son, J.B. Moore, for $8,000 (Travis County Deed Records, 22 December 1901, Volume 176, Page 22). J.B. Moore made payments to his mother for six years after the date of sale. She acknowledged the cancellation of his debt on September 24, 1921 (Travis County Deed Records, 24 September 1921, Volume 333, Page 139-140).

The Berry & Moore Bros. Store (Resource No. 4, Photo 6) was probably rebuilt at its present location sometime between 1900 and 1910. This is the most plausible explanation for its appearance on the southeast side of the creek ford. Historic photographs show the store and several other businesses at the store's present location around 1910. Architectural form and construction of the wood frame 1-part commercial building indicate that it was probably built about 1900 (see Figure 7-19). It is unknown why the store was moved to a different location. However, annual creek flooding probably made the former location unsuitable since land on the northwest side of the creek ford was at a much lower elevation. Farms north of Moore's Crossing always had a flooding problem,

Onion Creek...was up to forty-five feet, nine feet less than the high rise of 1869...the farms of Mr. Moore and Mr. Jones were also partly underwater...up to a late hour yesterday evening, the San Antonio and Luling stages had not reached the city, and no doubt the impossibility of crossing Onion detained them, (Austin American, 3 May 1880).

It is possible that floods destroyed or damaged the store on April 7, 1900. The 1900 flood broke through and washed away a masonry dam on the Colorado built in 1893. The high waters upstream probably flooded Onion Creek and destroyed much of property in the Moore's Crossing area. At that time, J.B. Moore was the only merchant in the family, as A.B. Moore apparently left the business by that date (Schutze, 1898: n.p.). Since his father sold him 200 acres of land on higher ground, J.B. Moore probably decided to rebuild the store on this property, which was not prone to flooding. By rebuilding the store to higher ground, J.B. Moore protected his investments from natural disaster and better served the economic needs of the community.

J.B. Moore may or may not have operated the store during the early years of his ownership of the R.B. Moore property. During this period, it is possible that he lived in the Wallace house, vacated by his parents. However, Moore might have lived in a substantial dwelling (Resource No. 1, Photo 3) built on the bank of Onion Creek, north of the present location of the store. The 1-story wood frame L-plan single family residence was built around 1893 while the store was still on the opposite side of Onion Creek. Architectural form and ornamentation of the house suggest an 1890s date of construction. Consequently, it is the oldest surviving building at Moore's Crossing today. Although later managers of the store did indeed reside in the house, research has not identified the original builder and occupant of the house. If J.B. Moore was the initial occupant of the house, he may have decided to move the store closer to his place of residence.
Associated with the house is a concrete cistern (Resource No. 2, Photo 4), which is west of the house, and a 1-story, wood frame, 2-seat privy (Resource No. 3, Photo 5). The cistern was a valuable addition to the property. The soil in the lower Onion Creek area, Houston Black Clay, extended 500 feet under the earth's surface, and made building a cistern extremely difficult. The owner of the L-plan house probably built it in order to have a clean water source if the creek were ever contaminated. During times of drought, water often became an article of commerce at and Onion Creek was the only water source in a seven mile radius of Moore's Crossing. Although most farmers in southeast Travis County had cisterns, they had to rely on the generosity of Onion Creek land owners when their wells also went dry. "One farmer on Onion Creek put up a windmill and tank to pump water from the stream and sold water to his neighbors," (Wehrwein, 1916: 14). The privy was built some distance from the house (adjacent to the ca. 1910 meat market). Because of the proximity of Onion Creek to the house, the privy was probably placed away from this water source, and the cistern, to better protect the water supply and prevent disease.

By 1900, Moore's Crossing was a fairly large community with a diverse racial and ethnic population. The 1900 Census indicates that the enumeration district including Moore's Crossing had 346 households, with 144 African American families and 154 white families (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1900). Of the white families in the district, particularly at Moore's Crossing, many were of German and Swedish origin. Although African American and white families lived in close proximity to one another in the Moore's Crossing area, there was great social and economic disparity among them. While African Americans mainly rented their farms, more than half of the whites in the area owned their property.

People in this sizable community were dependent on the Moore's Crossing facilities for supplies and services, particularly the families who rented since they were less likely to have the means to travel to Austin. By the turn of the century, several stores existed in southeast Travis County, such as those in Elroy, Del Valle, Bluff Springs. Although many were only a few miles from larger centers of commerce, they served nearby residents often confined to a small area of the county by flooded creeks and impassable roads. Lack of effective transportation and the extensive amount of time required to travel to larger centers of commerce made communities like Moore's Crossing very popular.

You know, they used to have stores here pretty close to each other, about every three or four miles apart. You'd have a store and a blacksmith shop, something like that. And you could walk back and forth. When it would rain you could hardly even walk. It was muddy (Ybarra, 1 July 1993).

The wooden bridges in southeast Travis County were frequently in bad repair or completely washed out. Moore's Crossing, which was in the vicinity of Del Valle, a larger commercial center that boasted a store, several other businesses, and the area post office, was often the only place people could go for supplies during flood seasons. "People had to have some place to go when it rained," (Ybarra, 1 July 1993).

Like the store, the school served the community in a variety of ways. It functioned as a haven for passing travelers who were unable to ford the creek. Around 1900, a boy named Vance and his family attempted to cross Onion Creek and later wrote this account: "When we got to Onion Creek, the creek was out of [its] banks (had been raining, but not raining that day). We couldn't cross the creek so we spent the night in the old Moore schoolhouse, which was on the bank of the creek," (Vance, c. 1900, Austin History Center Files).
Between 1900 and 1904, the school also functioned as a church, a common usage in many rural communities. The first recorded religious services at Moore's Crossing were held in a pecan grove on the northwest side of the creek and later, in the school.

The first revival, of which we have any record,...was held when G.W. Stewart was pastor [of Onion Creek Baptist Church] in the year 1900. Brother R.C. McCullough was visiting preacher, and the meetings were held in the Bell Moore Pecan Grove [so named for Andrew Bell Moore] on Onion Creek. Sixteen people were baptized, and the church began to reconsider a meeting place of its own. The Church broke no traditions by relocating in the center of the Community. They moved from Devotion School to Moores School House [also known as Bell Moore School] where they stayed until they decided Cloud School House was a better location. They always held their protracted meetings in the grove. During those meetings, they had 'dinner on the ground and preaching all day.' Brother McCullough became their pastor in 1902 and by 1904 the present building was ready to worship in...During the time the church was building the meeting house, a revival was held in which one hundred dollars were given to missions (Lohry, 1957: 7).

According to this account, the Moore school was used alternately as a church until 1904. There is some mention in various records that Moore's Crossing also supported a Methodist congregation that may have used the school as its meeting place.

By 1905, the school was of little use to Travis County. Area residents made few improvements to the building, built almost 25 years before, and only a small number of pupils attended the school. After 1900, the Travis County Board of Education began a rural school consolidation program that combined and closed many schools not worthy of funding. Consolidation in southeast Travis County provided school buildings, teachers, large classes, and grading and classification for pupils (Travis County Superintendent, 1905: 31). The Moore School was looked upon with distaste as a relic of the area's past.

The Moore School is on the very edge of the district, on the very edge, indeed, of the bank of Onion Creek, which marks the boundary line. Meetings were held last year to agitate the building of a new schoolhouse near the center of the district and a special tax carried for that purpose, which, however, was defeated by a few opponents, on account of defective election returns. So, school will continue to be kept in a hulk of a house by the side of the creek The children will continue to shiver in the cold when the board shutters are opened to let in the light or to ruin their eyes in the semi-darkness when the shutters are closed to keep out the cold. Such a state of affairs is a shame on such a prosperous community (Travis County Superintendent, 1905: 63).

The community abandoned the school in 1909 and returned the property to J.B. Moore, the owner of R.J. Moore's 200-acre homestead tract. The 1/2-acre parcel was "...for school purposes and so used for a time but afterwards abandoned, hence reverting back to the original owner and vendors which was afterwards acquired with all rights by Jno. B. Moore," (Travis County Deed Records, 27 November 1909, Vol. 238, p. 405-406). Area children went to Dry Creek School on McAngus Road after the demise of the Moore School (Heine, 13 February 1996).
THE HEIGHT OF ACTIVITY AT MOORE'S CROSSING: 1910 - 1928

In 1909, J.B. Moore sold 4.06 acres, including the 1/2-acre school tract, to W.T. Caswell for the nominal fee of $1 "...for the purpose of establishing erecting and maintaining a first class cotton gin...so long as the said premises are used for the running of such cotton gin and for cotton gin purposes only..." (Travis County Deed Records, 29 November 1909, Vol. 239, p. 508-509). The property would revert back to J.B. Moore if the gin ceased operation. Caswell, an Austin cotton seed oil manufacturer, maintained several other gins in southeast Travis County. By 1920, he owned gins at Bluff Springs, Manor, and Pilot Knob.

The gin at Moore's Crossing was in full operation by 1910, and many lower Onion Creek farmers brought their cotton there (Resource No. 18). The majority of the farming population in the Moore's Crossing area raised cotton before any other crop. Soils in the Onion Creek area, Houston Black Clay and Yazoo Loam, were the best in Travis County for raising cotton. Of 404 farmers in southeast Travis County surveyed in 1910, 65 percent grew cotton, 26 percent raised corn, and the rest grew cane and various other crops. The 1910 U.S. Agricultural Census showed that cotton represented 71 percent of the total crop in Travis County, followed only by corn, at 21 percent, and cane and other crops, at 7.7 percent. Before Caswell built a gin at Moore's Crossing, local farmers probably took their cotton to gins at Pilot Knob or Elroy, which may have been difficult given periodically poor road conditions. J.B. Moore probably sold the land to Caswell because he knew there was a demand for a local gin. He also realized the store would profit from increased traffic at Moore's Crossing and encouraged Caswell to build the gin by offering the land for the nominal fee of $1 (Wehrwein, 1916: 10, 105, 110).

By 1910, the community also boasted a blacksmith shop and a meat market (Resource No. 5, Photo 7; see Figures 7-17, 7-18). It is possible that Moore's Crossing also had a livery stable and feed store, but they were probably contained in the blacksmith shop (Michalk, 8 February 1996). Very little information exists regarding inception of these additional businesses. The meat market, particularly, remains a mystery. Historic photographs reveal only that it was established in 1910. The exterior of the building has been drastically altered, but it is still without indoor plumbing. It is possible that these other businesses were originally at the store's former location on the opposite side of Onion Creek. Moore's Crossing also continued to support one or two church congregations, but their meeting place is unknown.

Moore's Crossing was clearly in its heyday in 1910. In addition to white and African American farmers and sharecroppers who used the businesses at Moore's Crossing, a growing number of Hispanic laborers moved to the lower Onion Creek area. Between 1910 and 1920, southeast Travis County experienced a large influx of Mexican and Mexican American farm workers. Most were tenant farmers and sharecroppers and did not have means to travel to Austin for supplies, blacksmith services, and butchered meat. Groups of Mexican farm workers probably used the gin at Moore's Crossing as well. Numbers of Mexican immigrants in the Moore's Crossing area continued to grow after 1910, possibly as a result of the Mexican Revolution. With this inexpensive labor force, many white owners began to rent their farms to tenant families and leave the area. Consequently, the demographics of the lower Onion Creek area changed dramatically after 1910.

Apparently, J.B. Moore rented his store to a manager, A.L. Sanders, in 1910 or 1911. Sanders married at Moore's Crossing in 1911 and he and his bride lived in the house behind the store until 1923 when they moved to Colton (Pilot Knob) and established their own store (Tri-City Star, 12 June 1976). In 1913, the blacksmith shop and the store
caught fire and the blacksmith shop burned to the ground. Although the Sanders family lost almost all of their possessions, the store itself was salvaged and rebuilt (Tri-City Star, 12 June 1976; Moore's Crossing Photo Files, Austin History Center). During the reconstruction, the store was altered to its current appearance which is larger than its original form and includes a porch on the east side (see Figure 7-20). Since a need still existed for a blacksmith, another smith built a shop on the bank of the creek, between the gin and the store. The new shop may have been on the creek bank so that nearby water could douse any future forge fires. John Joseph Sternnadel, an Austrian blacksmith, worked in the shop soon after it was built (Heine, 13 February 1996). Sternnadel and his partner, Charles Engler, a farmer who lived up the hill from Moore's Crossing on the Elroy Road, built cotton choppers, plow equipment, and shod horses and mules. Engler was one of the most prosperous cotton farmers at Moore's Crossing. Like Sternnadel, he moved to the area around 1913 and proceeded to invent many of the new farm tools that Sternnadel manufactured. Today, a 1-story wood frame front gable dwelling (Resource No. 6, Photo 8), probably built around 1915, lies near the site of the second blacksmith shop. It is possible that Sternnadel and his family lived there and operated a blacksmith shop nearby.

In 1914 or 1915, a heavy flood washed away the wooden bridge at the crossing. In 1915, residents of the area took up a collection and had an iron truss bridge installed where the wooden bridge once stood. The iron truss bridge that spanned Moore's Crossing was originally part of a six span bridge on the Colorado River at Congress Avenue in Austin. The King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio, designed the bridge in 1884. After the great flood of 1900 washed away the approach to the Congress Avenue bridge, Travis County officials replaced it with a concrete bridge in 1910. The iron truss bridge was dismantled and put in storage. The County used three spans of the bridge at Moore's Crossing in 1915, but the same year, the spans washed away in a flood. The current bridge (Resource No. 13, Photo 15), built from the remaining spans, was completed at Moore's Crossing in 1922 (Texas Historical Commission, 1980).

The new, improved bridge made Moore's Crossing more accessible to area residents than ever before. Farmers and laborers with large loads of cotton brought their wagons directly over the bridge to the gin on the creek bank. However, after 1915, fewer farmers used the gin as a result of efforts by federal and local governments to diversify crops. In the summer of 1914, with the beginning of European involvement in World War I, there was a need for the southern United States to produce more food crops, rather than cotton, for world export. Cotton prices dropped dramatically in 1914 because the European buyers required food for newly mobilized troops and horses. Whereas farmers primarily raised only cotton, corn, and cane in Travis County in 1914, some farmers began to grow sudan grass, milo maize, and hay in addition to their regular crops in 1915 (Wehrwein, 1916: 110). Farmers also planted more fruit orchards and vegetable gardens as pressure to diversify increased. Although cotton remained the main crop in Travis County until World War II, it was never overwhelmingly dominant after 1915. The gin at Moore's Crossing continued to operate until 1925 or 1926 when Caswell abandoned it due to a decrease in the volume of cotton processed there (Travis County Deed Records, 17 November 1937, Vol. 578, p. 20). About this time, two gins were operating a few miles away at Pilot Knob. It is possible that Moore's Crossing's cotton customers preferred the facilities at Pilot Knob. Some local residents who remember the Moore's Crossing gin state that it was disassembled and moved to Lockhart (Michalk, 8 February 1996). During the 1920s, after the gin was dismantled, a resident of Moore's Crossing built a front-gable dwelling on the former gin site (Resource No. 20, Photo 17). The builder and owner of the house are unknown. The house, which is severely altered, is accompanied by a well which may or may not date to the construction of the house (Resource No 19). No information was recovered regarding the well, but it is possible that it dates to operation of the cotton gin or school. The demise of the gin had a negative effect on the economy at Moore's Crossing. Without farmers bringing their cotton to the
In 1886, Moore's Crossing resumed its status as a small commercial center, that provided dry goods, farm products, and blacksmith services.

During the 1920s, the Berry & Moore Bros. Store primarily catered to sharecroppers and tenant farmers as most of the established white owners in the area had rented their farms to tenants and moved away. "By 1920, more than three quarters of the farmers of the [Blackland Prairie] region worked land owned by other people," (Sharpless, 1996: n.p.). The white owners who remained in the area were mainly of German and Swedish descent and worked their own farms until World War II. Sometime after 1910, J.B. Moore moved to Fairview Park in south Austin. Local residents remember "old man Moore" leaving the area around 1920 and Travis County rural route directories have no listing for Moore in 1920 (Ybarra, 1 July 1993; Bush, 1920). The Moore family also maintained a house at 1221 Canterbury Street in east Austin, which was probably the residence purchased by R.J. Moore when he moved to Austin before his death in 1901 (Morrison & Fourmy, 1897-1908). Although J.B. Moore continued to oversee his business and land holdings at Moore's Crossing, it is doubtful that he ever resided in the area again. Only a few of R.J. and Martha Jane Moore's descendants remained in the Moore's Crossing area after 1920. J.B. Moore died in Austin in 1939. The Sanders family, who rented the Berry & Moore Bros. Store, moved to Pilot Knob in 1923 and soon afterwards J.B. Moore rented the store to Ben Morgan, about whom little is known (Austin American, 10 August 1925). Morgan remained at the store until sometime after 1925 and in the late 1920s or early 1930s, Moore rented the store to J.B. and Alma Stolle Smith. The Smiths may have been related to the Moores through Naomi Smith, wife of A.B. Moore. About 1930, the Smiths, who probably lived in the L-plan house, built a 1-story wood frame single car garage (Resource No. 7, Photo 9) east of their dwelling. The garage documents the evolution of the fortunes of Moore's Crossing residents to the point where discretionary income was available to purchase an automobile and construct a garage to house it. The garage is also significant because it shows the influence of the automobile as a means of transportation in this somewhat isolated rural community. The extensive road network in the Moore's Crossing vicinity made it feasible to drive and own a car. The construction of the bridge probably made travel to and from Moore's Crossing much easier by automobile. Automobiles also allowed rural residents to travel to Del Valle and Austin to obtain more than just necessary supplies.

The most extraordinary event ever to occur in the vicinity of Moore's Crossing in the 20th century was the unsolved triple murder of the Engler family on the evening of Saturday, August 8, 1925. That evening, an unknown assailant shot Mr. and Mrs. Charles Engler while they were sleeping in their bed and then proceeded to brutally rape and murder their 25-year-old daughter, Emma. On Sunday morning, John Sterndal and his 14-year-old son, Bohamel, went to the Engler farm to go over the weekly account from the blacksmith business at Moore's Crossing. When it seemed that no one was home in the morning, Sterndal and his son returned in the evening. Bohamel Sterndal found the dead bodies and the father and son immediately reported the information to the authorities. The Engler murders immediately captured the attention of the Moore's Crossing community. The situation at Moore's Crossing and Del Valle was volatile and for a time residents of the area threatened mob violence toward potential murderers. However, their anger subsided when it became clear that no killer would be found. Farmers and their families from all over southeast Travis County went to the Engler's funeral. "The most brutal murder ever committed in Travis County," has remained in the local lore of area residents to the present (Austin American, 10 August 1925).
J.B. Moore and his wife Elizabeth, whom he married late in life, maintained the 200-acre homestead tract at Moore's Crossing until 1935 when Banker's Life, an Iowa financial institution, foreclosed on it (Travis County Deed Records, 23 May 1935, Vol. 525, p. 97). Moore mortgaged the 200-acre tract on October 15, 1929, and was unable to repay his debt after the stock market crashed at the end of October 1929. After the bank repossessed the land, J.B. and Alma Smith bought 8.47 acres of the original tract on January 16, 1936 for $1,500 (Travis County Deed Records, 16 January 1936, Vol. 535, p. 491). The Smiths did not receive the 4.06 acre tract conveyed to W.T. Caswell by J.B. Moore. When the gin site reverted to J.B. Moore, he sold it to Franz Kretzschmer in 1937 (Travis County Deed Records, 17 November 1937, Vol. 578, p. 20). After 1937, the 4.06-acre tract was always resold separately from the 8.47-acre tract. The Smith's land on the Bittick survey contained the Berry & Moore Bros. Store and the other buildings currently included in the Moore's Crossing Historic District. The Smiths operated the store and renamed it "Smith Grocery" (Michalk, 8 February 1996). The Smiths also lived in the house behind the store previously occupied by the Sanders family. It is not known whether the store continued to operate during the months that the bank possessed the property.

During the Smith's tenure, several buildings were added at Moore's Crossing. They built a ca. 1935 1-story wood frame hen house (Resource No. 8, Photo 10), and a ca. 1935 1-story wood frame front gable barn (Resource No. 9, Photo 11). Like other local farmers, stockraisers, and business people in the area, the Smiths raised chickens for their own consumption and built barns and sheds to store agricultural implements used to tend a private garden, if not a working farm. During the mid-1930s, the United States government constructed a second bridge over the Onion Creek backwash at Moore's Crossing. East of the L-plan house, the concrete bridge (Resource No. 17) was one of many Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects undertaken in Travis County to improve rural bridges and roadways. With one bridge spanning Onion Creek and other crossing the backwash next to the L-plan house, Moore's Crossing was even more accessible to automobile traffic and resistant to destructive flood waters.

Moore's Crossing remained a commercial hub of the lower Onion Creek area during the Depression by adapting to the changing needs of the local population. While many farm owners conceded defeat to economic hardship, the families who persevered were most frequently of German and Swedish descent. Descendants of the Stolle, Eilers, Ollie, Reinhardt, and Kieke families still live in southeast Travis County today and maintain ties to their rural heritage. Conversely, the New Deal farm subsidy programs discouraged farmers from hiring tenants and sharecroppers and thus, the African American and Hispanic tenant population dropped temporarily during this period. The store at Moore's Crossing continued to serve the main grocery needs of the area population before the Colorado River was successfully dammed in 1938. When the lower Onion Creek area was no longer flood prone, the store operated in a smaller capacity, as a secondary source for groceries and supplies. "We bought a lot of things because you couldn't get to town all the time. You know, we didn't have an electric icebox for a long time," (Smith, June 1993).

The blacksmith shop probably remained in operation until the mid to late 1930s. Since many farmers in the area did not acquire tractors until 1935 or 1940, a need for a blacksmith to provide shoes for mules and horses and repair farm equipment still existed (Heine Interview, 13 February 1996). Locally, rural agricultural practices remained much as they had in the 19th century until the beginning of World War II, and most blacksmith shops in southeast Travis County were functioning until construction began on Bergstrom Air Force Base. "Until 1906 or 7, nothing was riding. All the tools we used on the farm were walking. In 1912, we bought the first riding planter...Then, about 1940, most people began to buy
tractors," (Ybarra, 1 July 1993). About 1935 or 1940, southeast Travis County farmers also began to produce more sudan grass and milo maize than cotton, corn, or sorghum cane. Generations of cotton farming had stripped the land of valuable nutrients and gradually produced lower annual crop yields. In addition, more grain crops were needed for newly mobilized troops prior to World War II. Sorghum cane, in particular, was not in demand since farmers used it primarily as feed for plow mules.

BERGSTROM AIR FORCE BASE AND WORLD WAR II: 1940 - 1946

The outbreak of World War II greatly changed the face of southeast Travis County and impacted community nodes like Moore's Crossing. Before America's entry in the war, U.S. military officials examined likely places throughout the country to build training bases to accommodate the large numbers of troops once mobilization began. In November 1941, one week before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, U.S. Army officers came to Austin and indicated to the Chamber of Commerce than they wished to secure 3,000 acres in the Del Valle area for an air base. Construction on Del Valle Army Air Base began in May 1942 and ended in September 1942. The U.S. Army renamed it Bergstrom Army Air Base in 1943 in honor of Captain John A.E. Bergstrom, son of local farm family, who was killed in action in 1941. The construction of Bergstrom Army Air Base (later Bergstrom Air Force Base) changed much of the rural landscape of southeast Travis County. The buildings and runways at the base replaced many 19th and early 20th century homes and businesses in the Del Valle area. Government land acquisition included hundreds of acres of agricultural land. Many residents left southeast Travis County after the City of Austin bought their property. With the air base in the area, roads were built that gave local residents and base personnel new avenues to Austin for supplies. As a result, the store at Moore's Crossing had fewer customers. The church, which appeared in aerial photographs of Moore's Crossing from 1937 and 1940, probably had a much smaller congregation as well (Aerial Photographs, Austin History Center, 1937, 1940).

After World War II, the rural lifeways of southeast Travis County changed forever. Many sons of local farmers, like Captain John A.E. Bergstrom, joined the war effort. The young men who grew up on area farms learned other skills during their military careers and did not return to the farms after the war. After older men who worked their farms retired, they leased their farms to other individuals or companies who ran large farming operations. Since African Americans rarely owned their own farms in this area before the war, few returned after 1945, finding some opportunity elsewhere. As a result of farm leasing, sharecropping diminished and the only farm work available for non-owners was day labor. Mexican and Mexican American workers filled this niche and after World War II, they constituted the majority of the farm population in southeast Travis County. A few farm owners of German and Swedish descent remained in the area as well (Kieke, 13 September 1995).

Despite the loss of a strictly agrarian lifestyle in the Moore's Crossing area, the Smiths continued to operate the store, and other families still made their homes around the old creek ford. Although routes to Austin and Del Valle were more accessible and cars widely used, Moore's Crossing remained a focal point for the surrounding community. During the late 1940s or 1950s, the Smiths built a 1-story wood frame front gable dwelling (Resource No. 10, Photo 12) and a 1-story wood frame side gable shed (Resource No. 11, Photo 13). Both buildings are Noncontributing due to their age and alterations. However, these additional buildings might represent a trend among rural residents to build extra dwellings and storage buildings to accommodate relatives and friends living with them as an extended family. The Smiths may have housed additional relatives on their property after World War II. In 1973, the Smiths sold the 8.47 acre parcel of
land containing the store, L-plan house, and all of the other buildings, to Ruben and Emily Michalk (Travis County Deed Records, 3 January 1973, Vol. 4534, p. 493). About 1975, the Michalks added a small 1-story wood frame front gable shed (Resource No. 14, Photo 16) between the barn and hen house, and a small plywood covered storage shed (Resource No. 15), and a larger 1-story plywood shed (Resource No. 16) near the ca. 1915 dwelling. The Michalks still run the store, which is the only operational rural mercantile in southeast Travis County today. In 1979, Mrs. Rosailia Verna Moore received 2.36 acres of the 4.06-acre gin site from her husband, Joseph Neil Moore (Travis County Deed Records, 29 January 1979, Volume 6518, Page 982). A previous owner subdivided the lot before the Moores, who are not descendants of the original Moore's Crossing family, bought it in 1967. After Joseph and Rosailia Moore bought the property, they placed a single-wide mobile home on the western portion of the yard (Resource No. 21). Mrs. Moore currently occupies the preexisting 1920s dwelling (Resource No. 20, Photo 17).

Until it was closed as a possible safety hazard, the metal-truss bridge over Onion Creek was used continuously by motorists and pedestrians. A traffic survey taken in 1974 showed that an average of 490 vehicles crossed the bridge every day (Austin American Statesman, 24 March 1976). Before Burleson Road was expanded in the late 1980s to intersect with F.M. 973, on the north side of Onion Creek, the Moore's Crossing Bridge provided the only means of transportation across the creek. However, even though the iron girders were sound, the wood on the bridge was beginning to decay. On January 8, 1980, the Moore's Crossing Bridge was closed to traffic because gravel trucks from nearby quarries and other heavy vehicles ignored the bridge's six ton weight limit. Today, the bridge remains closed to all traffic, but the Travis County Department of Transportation and Natural Resources has plans to reopen the bridge to pedestrians and bicyclists. In 1994, the Texas Department of Transportation provided $500,000 for enhancement of the Moore's Crossing Bridge. Although a contract for the restoration is still pending, work will include rust removal, new timber, safety fencing, and an inspection by a structural engineer. The bridge will be a centerpiece for the lower Onion Creek hike and bike trail in Richard Moya Park (Click, 8 May 1996).

CONCLUSION

The buildings and structures in the district reveal much about community and development patterns in southeast Travis County of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These resources show the strategic significance of the old ford at Onion Creek and the role it played in the evolution of the road network and settlement in southeast Travis County. With the advent of permanent Anglo American settlement in the region, major waterways such as Onion Creek impeded traffic and contributed to more dispersed patterns of settlement. Fords, such as the one in the historic district, became strategic nodes of activity because they enabled local residents accessibility to land on either side of the waterways. As early as 1846, county commissioner's minutes include references to Moore's Crossing. Property near the ford became attractive for development, and the emerging road network deliberately passed through such locations. Owners of the original Berry & Moore Bros. Store recognized the strategic significance of the crossing and established a mercantile store on the north bank of Onion Creek in the 1890s. They subsequently relocated the store to the south side of the crossing, where a school, church, blacksmith shop, meat market and cotton gin were erected later. As further evidence of the importance of Moore's Crossing, Travis County Commissioners salvaged parts of the old Congress Avenue bridge to construct a new bridge over Onion Creek at Moore's Crossing. Though the bridge enabled residents to travel to Austin more easily, the bridge also ensured a regular source of traffic and thus enabled Moore's Crossing to remain a hub of activity in southeast Travis County.
Although the physical remains of the other historic commercial enterprises at Moore's Crossing have either been abandoned and dismantled (the gin), burned (the blacksmith shop), or severely altered (the meat market), the surviving resources are relatively intact and remain tangible links to the area's 19th and early 20th century history. Several buildings at Moore's Crossing have been demolished and some resources, like the bridge and the ford, are no longer in use, the extant resources still retain their historic relationships to one another and convey a strong sense of time and place. The juxtaposition of older resources such as the creek ford and more recent additions to the community like the c. 1950 dwelling, show that settlement continued at Moore's Crossing until the end of the historic period. The resources that remain from the period of significance are an excellent representation of some of the property types present in 19th and early 20th century farming communities. The absence of the cotton gin, school, and second blacksmith shop, and alterations to existing buildings illustrate the evolution of the community and reflect economic, social, and agricultural changes in the area. Sixteen resources in the Moore's Crossing Historic District date to a period of significance that spans a century, from the early beginnings of Texas statehood to the end of World War II. The resources at Moore's Crossing are part of the historic fabric of southeast Travis County. They relate to events and trends dating from the settlement of a wilderness to the demise of 19th century farming techniques and lifeways during World War II. As southeast Travis County continues to become more urban, communities like Moore's Crossing will become increasingly important as tangible links to the area's rural past. Paved roads, modern housing developments, and commercial enterprises already cover a vast amount of the formerly pastoral landscape, and most families in the area no longer live on traditional farms. Moore's Crossing will never again be a thriving economic center and will never need the businesses that were once integral to the community. It remains unknown whether the store, the only resource still serving the public, will continue to be a viable business, serving the modern needs of the local population.
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: 10.83 acres

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-35)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-35 through 10-36)

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Amy Dase and Mary Dillman, THC Historians)

NAME/TITLE: Terri Myers, Project Director; Sara E. Kirtland, Associate Historian; Diane E. Williams, Architectural Historian; David Moore, Historian


STREET & NUMBER: 1414 West Sixth Street  TELEPHONE: 512-478-8014

CITY OR TOWN: Austin  STATE: TX  ZIP CODE: 78703

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet Map-37 through Map-39)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-40)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: A list of property owners is on file at the Texas Historical Commission

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 12276  TELEPHONE: 512-463-6006

CITY OR TOWN: Austin  STATE: TX  ZIP CODE: 78711-2276
Moore's Crossing Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

Section 10  Page 35

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Moore's Crossing Historic District consists of a tract of land encompassing approximately 10.83 acres roughly bounded by the public right-of-way on Old Burleson Road to the south, Farm-to-Market 973 to the east, Onion Creek to the north, and the iron truss bridge and earthen scar (Resources 12 and 13) to the west (see Map-38). The boundaries include all of Parcel 1 (containing only Resources 1-17), described as "8.47 acres of land out of the JONATHAN BITTICK 236 ACRE SURVEY, Patent No. 907, Volume 12, Abstract No. 54, said 8.47 acres being out of the Southwest part of a 200 acre (less 4.06 acres conveyed to W.T. Caswell) as conveyed by ROBERT J. MOORE and wife, to JOHN B. MOORE, as per Deed of Record in Volume 176, Page 22, of the Travis County Deed Records," and all of Parcel 2 (containing only Resources 18-21) described as "$[a]ll of that certain tract of land out of the Jonathan Bittick Survey #50 in Travis County, Texas, being that same tract of land as conveyed to Jetton Nations, as recorded in Volume 2503, Page 1, of the Deed Records of Travis County, Texas, said tract being a portion of that certain tract of land as conveyed to Robert B. Moseley, as recorded in Volume 1143, Page 310, of Deed Records of Travis County, Texas," as well as a small parcel of land containing only Resources 12 and 13 at the intersection of Old Burleson Road and Onion Creek that includes portions of four parcels of land in Richard Moya Travis County Park (03-3121-04060000, 03-3121-06080000, 03-3121-06090000, and 03-3121-04020000).

As shown in the district map (see Map-38), beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of F.M. 973 and Old Burleson Road, proceed west along the north line of Old Burleson Road until reaching the south footings of the iron truss bridge on the south side of Onion Creek. Then proceed southwest along the south side of the footings of the iron truss bridge and an earthen scar about 100 yards west of the iron truss bridge on the southwest embankment of Onion Creek. At the southwest corner of the earthen scar, proceed northwest across Onion Creek to the northwest corner of the earthen scar at the opposite embankment. Then proceed northeast along the north side of the earthen scar and the iron truss bridge until reaching the northeast footings of the iron truss bridge. Then proceed southeast to the south bank of Onion Creek. Following the south bank of Onion Creek, proceed east until reaching the west line of F.M. 973. Following the west line of F.M. 973, proceed south until reaching the northwest corner of the intersection of F.M. 973 and Old Burleson Road, the point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries encompass an area known historically as Moore's Crossing and no other areas in the immediate vicinity contain such a high concentration of historic resources. Onion Creek forms the north boundary of the district, and Old Burleson Road and Farm-to-Market Road 973 define the district's south and east boundaries. All buildings and structures comprising Moore's Crossing are within this area delineated by the waterway and the two roads. Both Onion Creek and the newly rerouted Burleson Road just beyond the creek serve as physical barriers that distinguish the district from its surroundings. A sanitary landfill is immediately south of the district and because the land has been heavily disturbed, this property no longer conveys any sense of its past and was excluded from the district. East of the district is farmland that retains its rural character; however, land-use patterns in this area are exclusively agricultural in nature and contrasts to the varied uses and clustering of buildings and structures within Moore's Crossing.
All resources, except for the metal-truss bridge and the ford (Resources 12 and 13), are within the 10.83 acre tract comprised of an 8.47-acre parcel and a 2.36-acre parcel. Although the 8.47-acre parcel, at the northwest corner of the intersection of old Burleson Road and F.M. 973, contains most of the district's resources, the 2.36 acre parcel was also part of the original community of Moore's Crossing. Situated between the 8.47-acre parcel and the metal-truss bridge, the 2.36 acre parcel was the site of a cotton gin, school, and a church. Although these buildings are no longer extant, small remnants of the concrete gin foundation are on the lot in addition to a 1920s dwelling and a historic well. Although exact locations of the no longer extant resources are unknown, the 2.36-acre parcel contains two Contributing resources and has a direct link to the history of Moore's Crossing. Archeological investigations in the future may yield more information about the early 20th century history of the district. The boundaries extend beyond these two tracts only at the intersection of Old Burleson Road and Onion Creek in order to include two Contributing resources, the iron truss bridge and the ford (now marked by an earthen scar at the banks of Onion Creek) both of which played vital parts in the access and transportation of goods and people through Moore’s Crossing during its history.
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 37

Moore's Crossing Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

1896 U.S.G.S. Map of Austin and Travis County
Location of Moore & Berry's Store circled
MOORE'S CROSSING HISTORIC DISTRICT
showing location of resources and district boundaries

Map not to scale
MOORE'S CROSSING HISTORIC DISTRICT
showing camera angles in relation to resources
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 40

Moore's Crossing Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

PHOTO INVENTORY
Moore's Crossing Historic District
Area roughly bounded by F.M. 973, old Burleson Road, and Onion Creek
Austin, Travis County, Texas
Diane E. Williams - Photographer
February and March, 1996
Original negatives on file with the Texas Historical Commission
Camera angles in relation to resources shown in Map-39

Photo 1 - Southwest view of Moore's Crossing Historic District, camera facing northeast

Photo 2 - South view of Moore's Crossing Historic District, camera facing north

Photo 3 - Southeast oblique of Resource No. 1 (Contributing), camera facing northwest

Photo 4 - Northeast view of Resource No. 2 (Contributing), camera facing southwest

Photo 5 - Northeast oblique of Resource No. 3 (Contributing), camera facing southwest

Photo 6 - South elevation of Resource No. 4 (Contributing), camera facing north

Photo 7 - Northeast oblique Resource No. 5 (Noncontributing), camera facing southwest

Photo 8 - Southwest oblique Resource No. 6 (Contributing), camera facing northeast

Photo 9 - Southwest oblique of Resource No. 7 (Contributing), camera facing northeast

Photo 10 - Southeast oblique of Resource No. 8 (Contributing), camera facing northwest

Photo 11 - Southeast oblique of Resource No. 9 (Contributing), camera facing northwest

Photo 12 - Southeast oblique of Resource No. 10 (Noncontributing), camera facing northwest

Photo 13 - Southwest oblique of Resource No. 11 (Noncontributing), camera facing northeast

Photo 14 - Northeast view of ford Resource No. 12 (Contributing), camera facing southwest

Photo 15 - Northeast view of Resource No. 13 (Contributing), camera facing southwest

Photo 16 - Southwest oblique of Resource No. 14 (Noncontributing), camera facing northeast

Photo 17 - Southwest view of Resource No. 20 (Noncontributing), camera facing northeast
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Moore's Crossing Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME: Southeast Travis County MPS

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Travis

DATE RECEIVED: 9/09/96  DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/24/96
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/10/96  DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/24/96
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 96001091

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N  DATA PROBLEM: N  LANDSCAPE: N  LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N  PDIL: N  PERIOD: N  PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N  SAMPLE: N  SLR DRAFT: N  NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT  DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS: The well-documented rural landscape represents the evolution and history of rural life and the community of Moore's Crossing. The historic district retains a substantial number of the historic resources that formed Moore's Crossing, including a late 19th century residence, a 1910 commercial building, the historic man-made river ford, a late 19th century metal-truss bridge (put in place in the 20th century), and numerous rural features and outbuildings. Many of these resources are surviving types of vernacular (rural) architecture and are typically of SE Travis County.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A+B

REVIEWER Linda McCullard  DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE 343-9544  DATE 10/10/96

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N  see attached SLR Y/N
DOCUMENTATION ISSUES--DISCUSSION SHEET

State Name: TX  County Name: Travis  Resource Name: Moore's Crossing  H.D.

Reference No.: 96001091  Multiple Name:  Listed Date: 

Section of Nomination:  
- Classification  
- State/Agency Certification  
- Function  

See Page  Paragraph  

Solution: ________________________________

NR Staff: ______________________  Date: ______________________

Data Collector's Explanation of Problem:  

Overall Integrity of District

Strengths of the contributing resources and overall coherence of the rural landscape outweigh the number of non-contributing buildings (many of which are minor sheds or altered historical buildings). Area overall retains its historic identity as a rural area crossing and late 19th century early 20th century agricultural settlement.

Data Collector: Beall  Date: ______________________

Resolution in Data Base: 

in a rapidly suburbanizing region outside Austin, excellent research is reflected and successful in bringing together the history of the valuable resources that make up district.

D.B. Corrected: ______________________  Date: ______________________
Moores Crossing H.D.

Austin, Travis Co., Texas

Photograph 1 of 17
RESOURCE I
MOORE'S CROSSING  H.D.
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 3 of 17
RESOURCE 3

MOORE'S CROSSING H.D.

AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 5 of 17
RESOURCE 4
MOORE'S CROSSING, H.D.
AUSTIN, TRANS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 6 OF 17
RESOURCE 5
MOORE'S CROSSING H.D.
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 7 of 17
RESOURCE 6
MOORE'S CROSSING H. D.
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 8 OF 17
RESOURCE 14
MOORE'S CROSSING H.D.
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 16 of 17