

# Beautification Department

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## Developing the Plans

The beautification work along the Old Spanish Trail was organized by southern women at New Orleans in 1923 at the Old Spanish Trail convention. This was the first organized movement in a national way for roadside protection and beautification. At this gathering the women emphasized the principle that while the men would build the roads the women should lead in developing their beauties and attractions. Since then long trips over the Old Spanish Trail have been made by groups of these women. Individual members of the Board have made trips thru many states and thru Europe studying conditions in the interest of this work.

## The Headquarters Section

Mrs. A. C. Seiser, Chairman.

One of the first practical steps was to adopt the 30-mi. road from San Antonio to Boerne, Texas, as a special Headquarters Section. The women recognized this would give them practical experience and qualify them better for leadership to the other localities. The Headquarters Section is scenically capable of beautiful development but it had the usual collection of advertising signs and crude roadside buildings; in places the road was too narrow, some curves were sharp and other conditions were unfavorable to nice development. The first necessary step was a wider right-of-way. All agreed one hundred feet was the minimum to be secured and experience sustains this conclusion.

Widening the right-of-way to 100 ft. has now been in progress for three years and has cost the combined effort of the women and the San Antonio civic organizations. Fences are being put back and the State is following along with improvements. Property owners are slow giving the needed right-of-way and this emphasizes the importance of getting a proper right-of-way before property improvements become too settled.

The Bexar-Kendall county gateway, costing \$1000, has been constructed of native stone columns and buttresses according to an architect's design. The road clearance between the columns is 40 ft. Where possible the State Highway Department prefers 50 ft. to 60 ft. The other counties thru West Texas are planning similar stone gateways at their county lines.

A rugged, shaded tract on the Balcones Creek was donated for a wayside park; this is being improved with