

# Walking Guide to **La Sauceda Historic District**

## Big Bend Ranch State Park

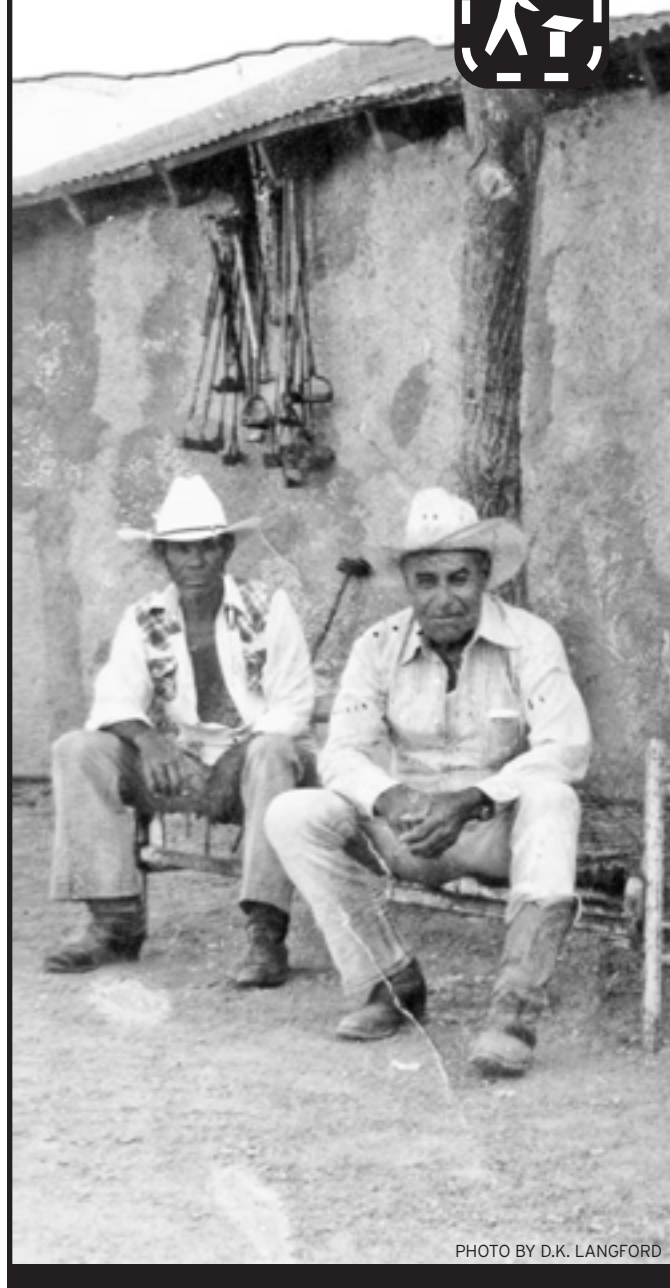


PHOTO BY D.K. LANGFORD

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

**EXPLORE!**



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## **WELCOME TO LA SAUCEDA HISTORIC DISTRICT**

*Formerly the headquarters for a series of privately owned ranches, La Sauceda today lies at the heart of Big Bend Ranch State Park. As you walk among the historic buildings, reflect on those who lived and worked here in days gone by. Their struggles and triumphs as ranchers live on at La Sauceda; the structures that remain help tell their stories.*

William Woodworth Bogel, a prominent Marfa rancher, arrived in Presidio County in 1884 with 1,200 sheep and settled along Alamito Creek with his wife Sarah and infant daughter, Jessie. Bogel started a branch of his ranching operations at La Sauceda in about 1894.

By the 1900s, the four Bogel brothers, Gus, Gallie, Graves and Edward, operated a Hereford cattle ranch here. At the time the Bogel Brothers purchased the property, an adobe house and a few outbuildings may have existed at La Sauceda.

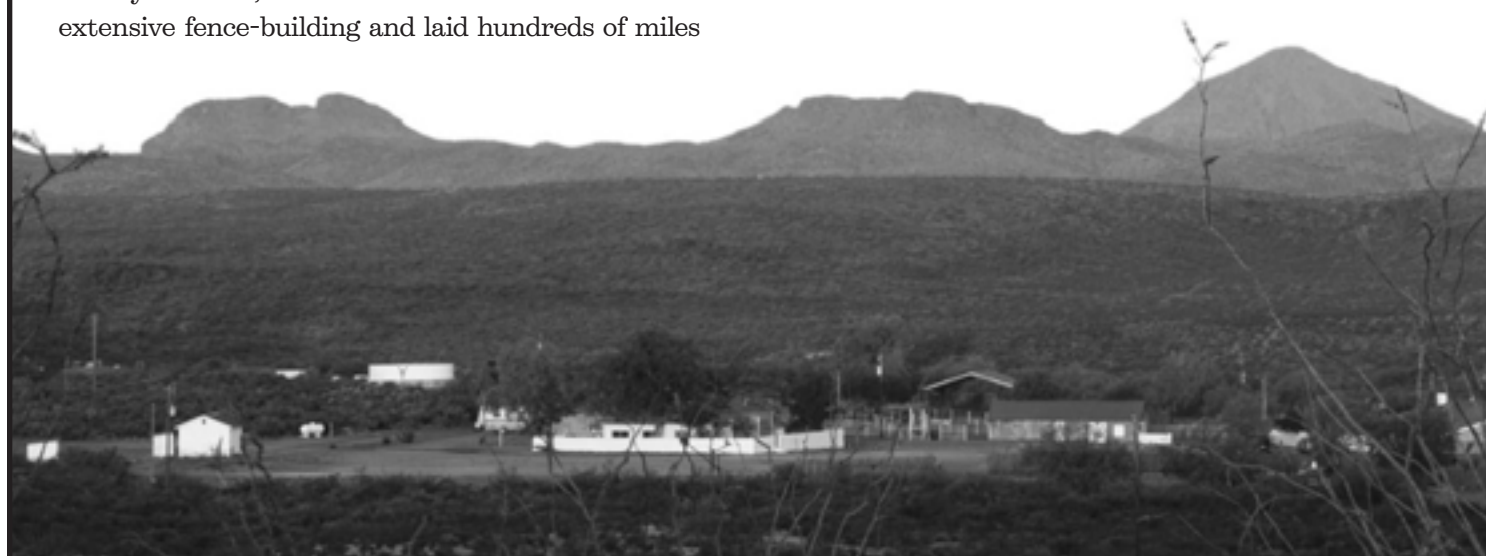
Gus's wife Maude described the Sauceda Ranch as "having a beautiful running creek with cottonwood trees just in back of the house, several natural waterfalls and deep pools of water near the headquarters." Gallie and Graves left the ranch to serve in World War I, while older brother Gus remained to run the ranch. Sadly, drought, coupled with the Great Depression in the 1930s, forced many ranchers, including the Bogels, to lose their land.

Two more prominent West Texas brothers, Edwin and Mannie Fowlkes, bought the Bogels' property in the early 1930s. The Fowlkes drove 500 angora goats onto their new ranch. By 1940, they had added cattle from Mexico. With the acquisition of nearby ranches, the Fowlkes brothers undertook extensive fence-building and laid hundreds of miles

of pipelines to water their stock from springs. Another drought struck, but the Fowlkes continued borrowing money and buying land. By the 1950s, however, they were heavily in debt and sold their ranch of 500 sections.

Len G. (Tuffy) McCormick, a former professional football player, Midland oilman and lawyer, bought the ranch in 1958. The purchase included 17,000 sheep, 4,500 angora goats, 147 mules and 35 horses. The ranch, described as half the size of Rhode Island, was listed as one of the 15 largest in the United States. McCormick planned extensive improvements, but his plan failed and he soon sold out.

Julian Sprague, a Massachusetts electronics executive, purchased the property from McCormick. His family subsequently leased the ranch to Robert O. Anderson's Lincoln Livestock Company of Roswell, New Mexico, in 1962. This company became the Diamond A Cattle Company and continued more land acquisition. Anderson operated the growing ranch primarily as a yearling operation, with calves purchased in the fall and carried on the ranch for six months before being moved to a fattening yard. Packaged hunting programs supplemented the ranching income. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department purchased the ranch in 1988.



# 1. FOREMAN'S HOUSE



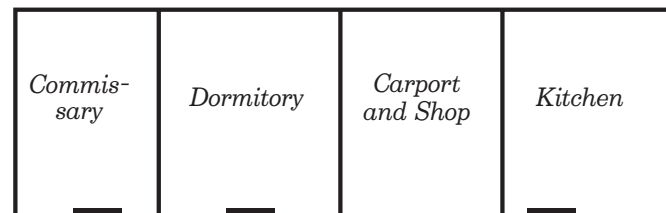
Gus Bogel  
COURTESY MARFA PUBLIC LIBRARY

The foreman's house was the nucleus of day-to-day operations for the Fowlkes Brothers and Diamond A Cattle Company. The current foreman's house sits on the location of a carriage house that was converted into a home for the Graves Bogel family some time between

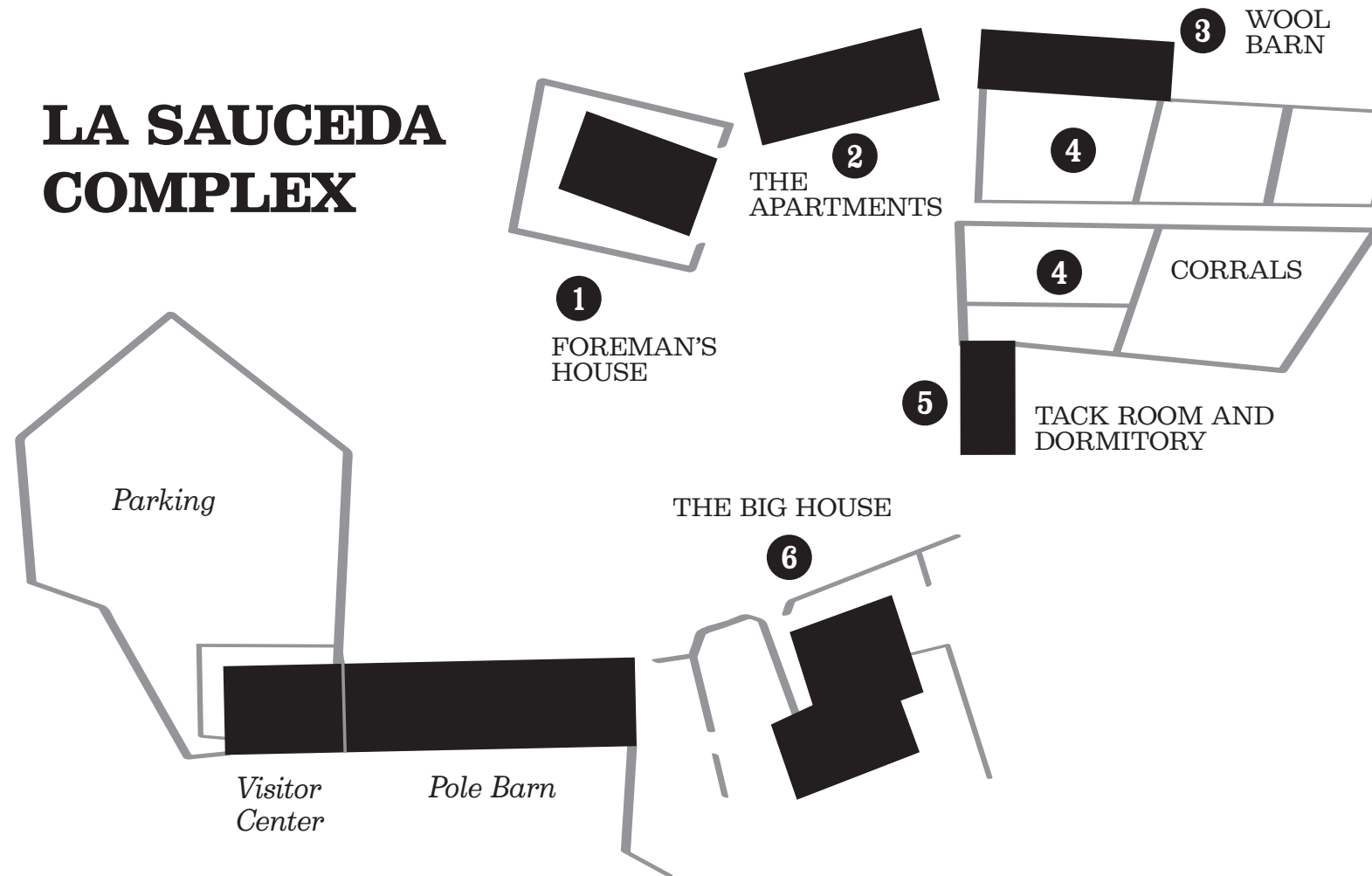
1917 and 1920. The doors of the carriage house were closed up with rock, and a mason built a big fireplace. Rebuilt out of adobe bricks and plaster during the 1940s, the present-day house was used as a residence for Preston Fowlkes, who came to work on the ranch as a foreman during World War II. At least four other ranch foremen lived in the house thereafter. In early 2008 the structure was repaired, and today the "foreman's house" is home to the Big Bend Ranch State Park superintendent.

# 2. THE APARTMENTS

During the 1940s the apartments were constructed. Individual rooms included the commissary, dormitory, carport/garage and kitchen. The commissary supplied food and equipment for more than 100 cowboys and their families while they were employed on the ranch. The kitchen helped feed many cowboys who lived on the open range.



# LA SAUCEDA COMPLEX



# 3. WOOL BARN

The wool barn was built during the 1940s to store wool. Today, however, it is empty and the walls are unstable. In 1955 over 200,000 pounds of wool were sold on the ranch by the Fowlkes Brothers. Eldest daughter Marian Fowlkes recalled, "This sale was the largest wool clip in the state of Texas." During that prosperous time, the Fowlkeses owned at least 80,000 head of sheep, 3,000 head of cattle, and about 10,000 angora goats, controlling one of the largest ranches in Texas.

# 4. CORRALS

Corrals help control and hold many ranch animals. In the past many corrals were made of stone and wood. Most of the pipe corrals you see today were installed during the tenure of Robert O. Anderson's Diamond A Cattle Company.

# 5. TACK ROOM AND DORMITORY

The tack room and dormitory were also built during the Fowlkes era. Since 1944 these rooms have changed little.



Diamond A Cattle Company vaqueros, 1978. Ruben Hernandez, far right, reports that there were three beds inside the building and at least one outside.



2008

1958

COURTESY FOWLKES FAMILY

# 6. "THE BIG HOUSE"

The exact date of original construction of the main house is unknown; however, George A. Howard filed proof of occupancy on November 9, 1908. He presumably built the house sometime between then and 1905, when he purchased the section. Howard sold the home to Gus and Graves Bogel. Both the Gus Bogel and Graves Bogel families lived together in the house for awhile. When things started to get crowded, the former carriage house (now known as the foreman's house) was converted into a home for the Graves Bogel family.

During the Bogel occupancy, the ranch house had two bedrooms and one bathroom. There was only one fireplace, located in the living room. The kitchen's large wood-burning range heated the entire house. Big lounge chairs and a large oak table graced the living room, where the Bogel family played cards and listened to the phonograph.

In the 1940s, Mannie and Patricia Fowlkes occupied the house with their six children. In 1950-1951, Mannie and Patricia expanded the main house and brought in a craftsman to install Mexican tile. A white picket fence was also installed. The Fowlkeses had a large garden behind the house and an area for killing and dressing beef and lamb.