

The Bandera PROPHECY

February 5, 2021

Today in Texas history

Commission Established to Plan Central National Road

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On Feb. 5, 1844, the Texas Congress established a five-man commission to oversee the construction of the Central National Road. The road was to begin on the bank of the Trinity River in Dallas County and run to the south bank of the Red River in the northwest corner of Red River County, opposite the mouth of the Kiamachi River.

The proposed terminus was the head of navigation on the Red River. To the north and east the Central National Road connected with the military road to Fort Gibson and old roads joining the Jonesborough area to settlements in Arkansas. At its southern terminus it connected with the road opened in 1840 between Austin and Preston Bend on the Red River, in effect making an international highway between St. Louis and San Antonio.

The international role that Congress may have visualized for the road was never fulfilled, however, because the general westward population shift voided its centrality and necessitated other roads.

The Central National Road was the second such ambitious roadbuilding effort of the Republic of Texas, after the National Road authorized in 1839. Previous to the republic, the Old San Antonio Road and the La Bahía Road were the principal Texas roads.

After the republic, the burgeoning railroad and cattle-trailing industries joined roadbuilding between population centers to turn a vast, trackless land into a vast land laced with tracks.