Enjoy YOUR STROLL THROUGH HELOTES

This 0.3–mile walking tour features 11 historically significant structures, starting at the Hileman/Riggs House (near the City parking lot) and ending at the Ross Barham House. A 12th structure, the Marnoch Homestead, is well worth seeing; however, because it is outside of the Old Town District, we suggest you drive.

Along the tour you will see examples of simple structures, primarily of wood and limestone, reminiscent of the German-influenced Hill Country style typical of the area.

In 1881, Arnold Gugger, a Swiss-American, founded downtown Helotes. He saw the potential of the area then known as "Helotes Crossing." Throughout the farming seasons and during cattle drives, travelers stopped to camp at the intersection of Bandera Road and Helotes Creek.

Downtown Helotes began with a homestead, general store, blacksmith shop, and saloon. A boarding house and dance hall followed. For several decades, the town center, surrounded by large farms and ranches, remained little more than a "cow town," a few buildings on either side of a dusty, packed earth road wide enough to accommodate cattle drives.

In 1992, the Texas Historical Commission awarded the town its first historical marker, recognizing Helotes as a historic settlement. A revitalization project was completed in 2010, and the MarketPlace at Old Town Helotes, which occurs the first Saturday of every month, brings in talented artisans and craftsmen, delectable food, and lively music.

The Historical Society chose properties that are at least 50 years old and have historical significance in Helotes history. Three of the buildings are Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks. The buildings are open to the public, except for those that are private residences.

About HELOTES, TEXAS

Helotes (pronounced hel-LO-tes), a town twenty miles northwest of downtown San Antonio, dates back to the 1850s. On Bandera Road (State Highway 16) between the towns of Bandera and San Antonio, Helotes became a stagecoach stop in the 1860s, with a post office established in 1873.

Home of the famous John T. Floore Country Store dance hall and the annual Cornyval Festival, Helotes is known as a place to "let down yer hair and kick up yer heels." This hill country town, incorporated in 1981, took its name from the ancient creek that meanders through town.

Helotes remained primarily rural until the late 20th century. With a population of about 10,000, Helotes still retains its small town appeal. In 2013, Bloomberg *Businessweek* named Helotes as the Best Small Town in Texas to Raise Kids.

Renowned as much for its citizens' independent spirit as for its hill country landscape, frontier history, and fun-lovin' attitude, Helotes is the quintessential Texas town.

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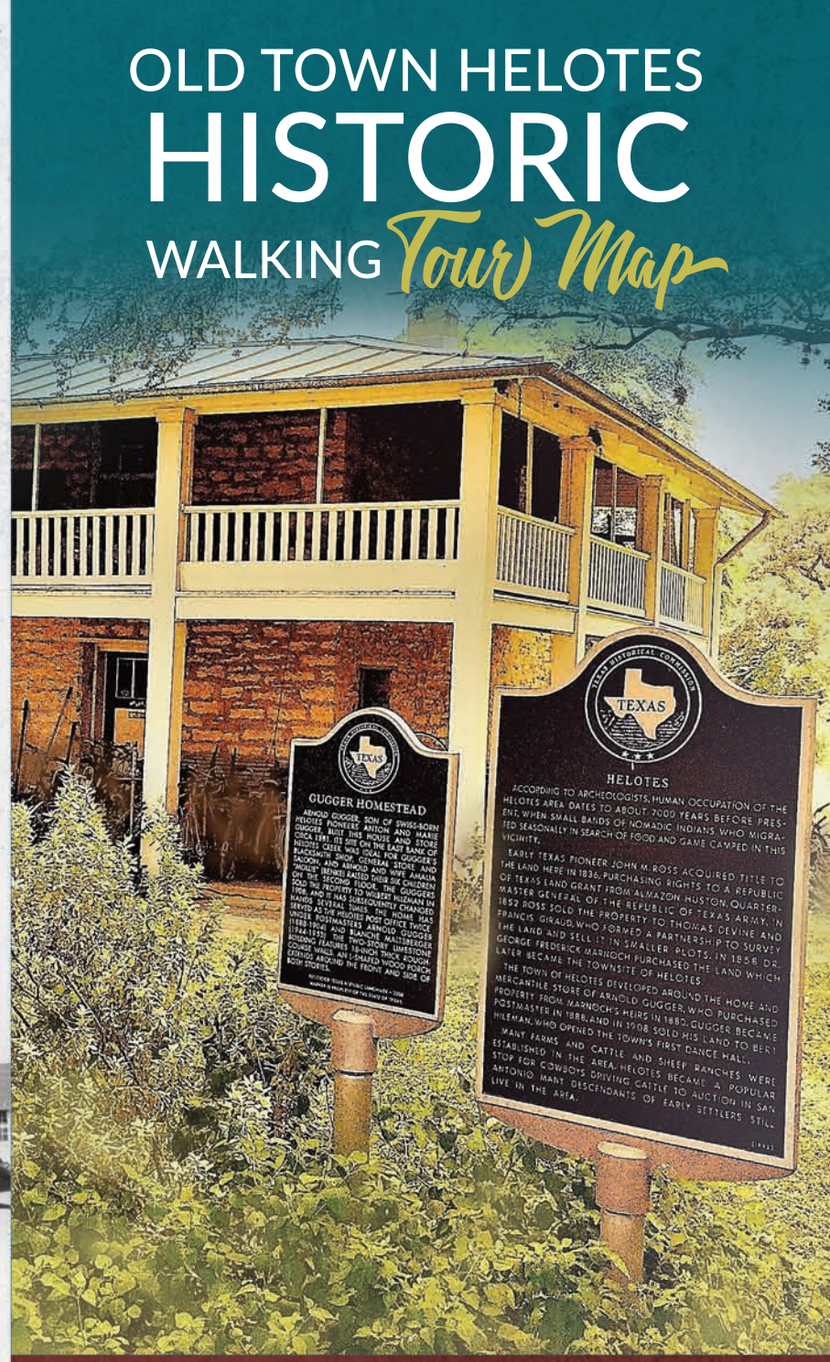
OLD TOWN HELOTES HISTORIC WALKING *Tour Map*



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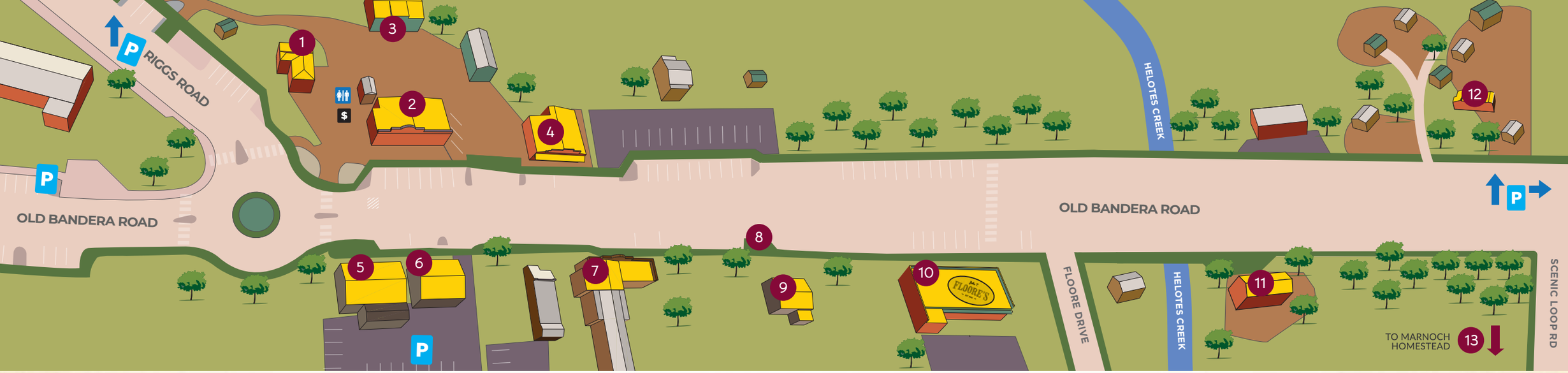

OLD TOWN HELOTES HISTORIC WALKING *Tour Map*

1 **HILEMAN BOARDING HOUSE,** *1912*
Riggs Residence, 1920s-1960s
14359 Riggs Rd

Built originally in a Victorian style with an L-shaped two-story porch by entrepreneur Wilbert Hileman (1873-1956), the house's façade was changed by second owners James & Kate Riggs using local limestone.

2 **RIGGS GROCERY STORY,** *1920s-1930s*
ORIGINAL FLOORE COUNTRY STORE, *1942-1952*
14391 Old Bandera Rd
James Riggs (1879-1964) built the original grocery store; he and wife Kate Niernberg (1879-1946) ran the store. He sold the business to John T. Floore (1898-1975), who renamed it Floore Country Store.

3 **TERRY RESIDENCE,** *1950s*
14359 Old Bandera Rd
Riggs built this rock house as a residence for his nephew Martin Terry (1920-2000) and his family for the convenience of living near the grocery store, which Terry managed after Floore ended his lease.

4 **HILEMAN'S HALL,** *1912* • **HELOTES MERCANTILE,** *1916*
Helotes Inn Dance Hall, 1920s-1950s
14405 Old Bandera Rd
Hileman was the first to see the potential of Helotes as a dance and music venue. This building housed the first dance hall in Helotes.

5 **RIGGS GARAGE & GAS STATION,** *1931*
14392 Old Bandera Rd

This was the first full service gas station in Helotes.

6 **RESIDENCE/CARPENTRY SHOP,** *1930s*
14396 Old Bandera Rd
Riggs commissioned several building projects in the twenties and thirties, but there were few places for workers in Helotes to stay. Riggs built this cabin for his carpenter.

7 **HELOTES GENERAL STORE,** *1881*
14436 Old Bandera Rd
Arnold Gugger (1855-1928) built this general store, also called Gugger's General Store, using locally quarried limestone. He and his wife, Amalia Benke (1861-1921), were the proprietors.

8 **HISTORIC SETTLEMENT MARKER,** *1992*
Texas Historic Landmark
14464 Old Bandera Rd

9 **GUGGER HOMESTEAD,** *1881*
Texas Historic Landmark
14464 Old Bandera Rd

Gugger built this two-story limestone homestead for his family. The original stairway was outside, but was removed when one was installed inside in the 1940s.

10 **JOHN T. FLOORE COUNTRY STORE,** *1952*
Texas Historic Landmark • National Register of Historic Places
14492 Old Bandera Rd
Floore Country Store, founded in 1942 as a grocery store across the street, moved to this building in 1952 after the dance hall was completed. The building has been a dance hall and music venue continuously since it opened.

11 **ROSS BARHAM COTTAGE,** *1925*
14698 Old Bandera Rd
Ross Barham (1895-1983), an early entrepreneur and amateur archaeologist, built this flat roof rock cottage as a residence. A private residence since 1925, it is reminiscent of the cottages being built at the time at Scenic Loop Playground, now Grey Forest.

12 **ROSS BARHAM HOUSE,** *1950*
14743 Old Bandera Rd
This quaint rock house was initially built as a residence. Barham erected the fountain by the house using some of his fossil and rock discoveries.

13 **MARNOCH HOMESTEAD,** *1859*
Texas Historic Landmark
15350 Scenic Loop Rd

This homestead, a half-mile from the intersection of Bandera Rd, is the oldest residence in Helotes. Dr. George Frederick Marnoch (1802-1870) commissioned prominent San Antonio architect John M. Fries to build the unique home. It is a private residence.