

## **Gypsies***(continued from page 1)*

Rumania and roughly one million deaths in Hiltler's death camps. They are reviled and cursed almost everywhere they go. The persecution continues to this day, and is especially severe in eastern Europe since the fall of communism.

On the 1890 map of Austin, the northern edge of the city was 29th Street. Guadalupe was the road leading to the "State Lunatic Asylum", and the area where Hyde Park is today was the Capital City Fairgrounds. On this fairground was a race track where horse races were held. Prof. Ian Hancock of the U.T. Linguistics Department and president of the International Roma Federation and representative at the United Nations for Gypsies worldwide, states that the Roma in the U.S. at that time were British Roma and were frequently associated with racetracks as owners of race horses. He points to Epsom Downs near London and the Epsom Downs area in Houston which formerly sported a

race track and still has a Romani community today. He says that the fact that Gypsy Grove was outside of town and next to the fairgrounds would fit the pattern. He further states that the Romani women would have engaged in fortune telling.

There are about 150 Roma living in the Austin area today. Most keep their ethnicity secret out of fear of persecution and a desire to protect their culture. Their beliefs are inherited from the Indian caste system, and they limit their contacts with the Gadge (non-Rom). It is not uncommon for Romani families to pull their children out of public schools to avoid "contamination" with Gadge values which they believe promote drug use, low morals, and violence. Some fathers, with great ceremony, arrange marriages for their children, with the girl's family getting a bride price. Many Roma live a "schizophrenic" existence. At home they are a Rom, outside they try to "pass" as Gadge.

About 1890 Hyde Park was established and the fairgrounds and race track disappeared.