

**SAN ANTONIO'S SPANISH MISSIONS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF  
MEMORY, 1718-2015**

A Dissertation

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the five extant missions in San Antonio, Texas over the course of nearly three hundred years. While the time period may seem overly ambitious, the geographic territory is highly concentrated, covering just a few miles. San Antonio holds the largest concentration of colonial Spanish architecture in the United States. In July, 2015, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) granted World Heritage Status to the missions. This distinguished designation includes Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo), Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción, Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, Mission San Juan Capistrano, and Mission San Francisco de la Espada.

Because detailed information on the design and construction of the missions has yet to be found, speculation and romantic myths have grown up around the missions. These romantic myths were the basis for Anglo collective memories, particularly after the 1836 Battle of the Alamo. This dissertation examines the origins of the missions as the sources of some of these myths and memories. Advances in both print capitalism and transportation brought San Antonio's missions to the attention of the traveling public. From the late nineteenth century into the present day these fantasies have been used to market San Antonio to tourists as a romantic and exotic destination. Additionally, other groups besides Anglos have their own collective memories related to the missions. For the local Tejano, Mexican-American, and Native American populations, the missions have served as sacred space, homes, and communities for three

hundred years. Although the memories of ethnic minorities have been muted for many years, the Anglo veneer in San Antonio is not deep. Scratching the surface quickly reveals a deeper, more complex heritage. Collective memories are often divorced from historical reality, and the myths at the missions exemplify this. Conversely, the myths and memories of the missions also brought national interest and much-needed repairs and restorations, keeping this Spanish legacy relevant for future generations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A dissertation is a curious thing: one person receives a degree for doing the research and writing the manuscript while others remain anonymous. When this manuscript is accepted and entered into the Texas A&M University repository for digital dissertations, only one name will be listed as author. But in reality, there are many family, friends, and colleagues who have collaborated, encouraged, and contributed to the completion of this work. Their contributions appear as sources, ideas, suggestions, and questions; as well as encouragement, faith, tears, hugs, jokes, laughter, good food and drink, joyous times, quiet times, and distance when I needed the space to think and write. To all of you who have shared this journey with me, I am profoundly grateful.

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I hold as dogma that for historians, libraries are equivalent to laboratories. Therefore, I want to offer a note of thanks to the wonderful professional librarians and staff of the following libraries: the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library (although its original location on the Alamo premises is now closed but it is a treasure for anyone doing research on Texas history, not just the Alamo), the San Antonio Public Library (especially the Texana Department), Bro. Ed Loch at the Catholic Archives of San

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To my darling wife, Pixey, mere words cannot describe my gratitude for all the sacrifices you made. I did not intend for you to be a “Ph.D. widow” for such a long time. You read much more of this dissertation than either of us intended for you to do. You kept our household stocked with the necessities of life, kept the bills paid, and all the other mundane and mind-numbing chores that modern life demands. You put aside too many vacations, you went on too many conference trips by yourself, and spent too many evenings alone because I was reading for class, or writing, or was out of town on research. I know this will never suffice, but I thank you from the depths of my soul. Maybe now we can get back to evening walks around the neighborhood, bike rides, and being a couple once again.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE TEXAS MISSIONS: STILL LIVING IN THE PAST?

Like most passionate nations Texas has its own private history based on, but not limited by, facts. –John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*

Through numerous historical and popular cultural references, people in many parts of the world are familiar with the phrase, “Remember the Alamo!” Whether these people know *why* they are implored to remember the Alamo, or even whether or not it is worth remembering, can be debated. Similarly, while the Alamo and its peculiar shaped façade are well known in Texas and beyond, few are aware that the Alamo originated as Mission San Antonio de Valero in 1718 or that this building was not the first mission Spain founded in territory now called Texas. Nor was this mission the largest or most ornate in Texas; that honor falls to Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, founded just two years later and only a few miles downriver from San Antonio de Valero. However, Mission San Antonio was the first in this region that eventually saw four additional missions founded within a concentrated area. Nonetheless, Texas, as so many

seem to understand it today based on collective memories, begins here at San Antonio de Valero, then a remote outpost on an imperial frontier.

The genesis of this project actually began as an extension of my photography hobby. Around 2002, I changed from using a 35mm camera to a 4x5 large format camera. Large format photography seems particularly archaic in today's world of snapping "selfies" with one's cell phone and sharing them instantly with family and friends around the world. Instead, large format uses an older camera design harkening back to the nineteenth century (a wooden or metal frame mounted on a stationary tripod, leather bellows, focusing with one's head under a dark cloth, images recorded on film, and processed in a darkroom). These are the cameras and techniques most associated with twentieth century master photographers such as Ansel Adams and Edward Weston. The negatives my cameras produce are 4 inches by 5 inches and capture an incredible amount of detail. The bellows of the camera allow the lens plane and the film plane to move independently from each other which makes it particularly well-suited for taking pictures of architecture. Since I felt I needed a project to give some direction as I learned the myriad steps of making an image, I chose to photograph the Spanish-era missions of San Antonio, Texas.

As I wandered around these old church buildings looking for interesting patterns of light and shadow ("*chiaroscuro*" is the artistic term), curious scenes to catch my eye, and places to set up my tripod, I was puzzled by some of the statuary and symbols decorating the buildings. Similarly, I marveled at the droves of tourists lined up (even in

miserably hot and humid weather) to visit the Alamo. Not being a native Texan, I never visited the Alamo as an elementary or middle school student and thus was not taught at an impressionable age to revere the site as a sacred shrine, or memorize William Barret Travis' "Victory or Death" letter, as many of my native Texan family and friends were. Nor am I Roman Catholic, so crucifixes graphically portraying Christ's suffering for humanity (in my Protestant experience, the cross is empty to signify the Resurrection), the innumerable depictions of the Virgin Mary (especially as the Virgin of Guadalupe), and other images of unfamiliar saints were again, quite foreign to me. As an intellectually curious person working in higher education and surrounded by a community of scholars, I began reading as much as I could find on San Antonio's five extant missions hoping to make better, more-informed images of the churches. However, I quickly became dissatisfied with much of the literature, both popular and scholarly, on the topic. The popular literature lionized the Anglo defenders of the Alamo and the mission priests beyond the level of credulity and offered little explanation in terms of design and décor. Conversely, the scholarly works I found ignored some of my questions on art and architectural meaning, or demonized the popular heroes, or if focused on the people, ignored their connections to the missions.

While I did find some books that to a limited extent adequately explained the décor, origins, and original functions of the colonial Spanish missions of San Antonio, I still had questions that remained unanswered. "What happened to these churches after they ceased to be used as missions for the Native Americans?" and "if the missions were such dismal failures as much of the scholarly literature suggested, forgotten about and

neglected, why then do millions of tourists visit these missions each year?” And the big question, “Why do these missions persist and what do these missions mean for us today?” Ultimately, I posit the meaning comes from collective memories, inspired by the architectural, religious, and cultural elements of the old Spanish missions which were used from the nineteenth-century into the present to market San Antonio as a romantic and exotic tourist destination. The persistence of physical remains as well as the romantic images of the missions, some of which are visual, others of which are textual descriptions, fed the creation of collective memories in the minds of (mostly Anglo and upper middle class) consumers which in turn informed the creation of a particular national, Anglo-American identity. From the mid-nineteenth century up to the modern day, the images and descriptions of San Antonio’s missions reached a wide audience as travel narratives and advertisements promoting tourist travel appearing in major newspapers and magazines and circulated through much of the United States (and some from the United Kingdom as well). Many of the travel narratives were written by outsiders, non-Texans, who visited the region and published accounts of their experiences. Conversely, many of the advertisements were written by Texan boosters hoping to lure tourists, immigrants, and capital to the state. Taken together, these sources constitute a rich archive with much to say about the formation of collective memories and identity. A second, related question this dissertation intends to explore is to what effect this influx of tourists with romanticized notions had on the local populations for whom the mission churches continue to serve as sacred space and houses of worship.

Texas was, and still is a frontier or in contemporary academic jargon, a “border.” It is not a frontier in the sense of Frederick Jackson Turner’s frontier of virgin land and democratic promise whose closure marked the *fin-de-siècle*.<sup>1</sup> I am instead referring to ideas proffered by distinguished historians Patricia Nelson Limerick and David J. Weber who defined the frontier more as a meeting ground, a place where no single group exercises complete hegemony, an in-between place, or a middle ground. “The American West” Limerick considered as frontier “was an important meeting ground, the point where Indian America, Latin-America, Anglo-America, Afro-America, and Asia intersected.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Weber noted, “Frontiers have at least two sides . . . Rather than see them as lines, frontiers seem best understood as zones of interaction between two cultures—as places where the cultures of the invader and the invaded contend with one another and with their physical environment to produce a dynamic that is unique to both time and place.”<sup>3</sup> In this respect, the historical “frontier” begins to morph into the more contemporary parlance “border” and “borderlands.” Also, envisioning the missions themselves as “borders” geographically within the “borderlands” that have many similarities with Limerick and Weber’s “frontiers” in terms of different groups and cultures meeting, interacting, clashing, and at times, co-existing merits brief consideration. As buildings constructed and dedicated for holy worship, the missions

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” In *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and Other Essays*, With Commentary by John Mack Faragher (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 31-60.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 27.

<sup>3</sup> David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 11. For another discussion of European-Indian clashes and accommodation in the northern portion of the continent, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

were, and still are borders between the sacred and the profane. Over the course of nearly three centuries, a variety of racial and ethnic groups have met, clashed, and interacted at, or because of the missions: Spanish and Native American, as well as Mexican (including Tejano) and Anglo.

In the Introduction to his 2004 book, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions*, historian James A. Sandos relates that his colleagues (apparently with no small degree of exasperation) asked him why he felt another book on the California missions was needed. His rationale for contributing to the extensive existing literature struck a chord with me as I read and researched my own project on the five extant Spanish missions of San Antonio, Texas. Sandos explained the existing mission literature was polarized in two camps which he characterized as “pro- and anti-Franciscan.”<sup>4</sup> He intended his book to bring a more balanced and nuanced approach to the topic. My scholarly interests in San Antonio’s missions have similar goals as there is just as much of a need to move Texas mission historiography forward into the twenty-first century. However my examination of the Texas missions is through the lenses of collective memories.

As historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot so accurately observes, “History is messy for the people who must live it.”<sup>5</sup> However, history is no less “messy” for historians who, often many years after the fact, try to reconstruct the past and extract some

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<sup>4</sup> James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), xiii.

<sup>5</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 110.



meaning for the present. In this respect, Texas history and historiography is in no way exceptional. In his insightful essay, “Three Truths in Texas,” historian Walter L. Buenger identifies three distinct historiographical camps, each with its own interpretation of Texas history. The first camp, in chronological order, is the “updated traditionalists,” with their focus on elites, moral virtue, and uninterrupted progress of Anglo civilization. Second are the “persistent revisionists,” whose origins lie in the New Social History of the 1960s, and who strenuously challenge the traditionalists with their counter-narratives of class and other under-represented groups. Lastly are the “cultural constructionists” from the 1990s, who are more tolerant of interdisciplinary theories that suggest a constructed past and “focused on a nuanced, interconnected past, and the human creation and influence of cultural characteristics including gender, group identity, regional and national citizenship, and memory.”<sup>6</sup> Buenger concludes that each group is alive and well and mostly moving parallel, with a few exceptional intersections.

My own professional training in library science has given me a very ecumenical approach to research and the methodologies and sources utilized for this project would locate my work in Buenger’s “cultural constructionist” camp. My rationale for self-identifying as such is that I freely incorporate data and information from the other two groups which I believe has validity and contributes to my argument. I should also state that even though it was not my conscious intent to draw from such a wide variety of scholarly fields, the more I explored the topic, the more questions I found could best be

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<sup>6</sup> Walter L. Buenger, “Three Truths in Texas.” In *Beyond Texas Through Time: Breaking Away from Past Interpretations*, ed. Walter L. Buenger and Arnolde De León (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2011), 1-3.

answered outside the traditional fields of history. Therefore, many of the sources used in this dissertation to construct the intellectual framework come from disparate fields including: anthropology and archaeology, art and architectural history, memory studies, American Studies, travel and tourism studies, women's studies, religious studies, and print culture. There is a cliché comparing some research projects to peeling an onion where removing one layer simply exposes another layer to be dealt with. While that holds some degree of accuracy, a better metaphor might be architectural; after all, the mission buildings are the source of my initial curiosity. Buildings are constructed out of a variety of materials, each type of which is chosen for a particular strength or aesthetic property. The mission buildings are not merely adobe brick stacked one upon another on the bare ground, but are constructed with foundations of rock, frames of wood with limestone and plaster overlay, windows of glass, all of which are held together by mortar. Hence, I have tried to select sources which advance my thesis in the strongest manner. Nonetheless, my primary training is as a historian, and my methodology will not be unfamiliar to fellow historians accustomed to spending hours in archives sifting through manuscripts, scrolling through reels of microfilm, or turning the fragile pages of rare books while wearing protective cotton gloves.

It also needs to be stated that while my focus is on the five missions of San Antonio, Texas, out of necessity I will occasionally make references to the Spanish missions throughout the Southwest in New Mexico, Arizona, and especially, California. The missions of California attract a great deal of popular and scholarly interest, especially in 2015 when Pope Francis, during his recent visit to the United States,

canonized Fr. Junipero Serra, the controversial founder of many of these missions. On a more personal note, I frequently encounter surprised reactions from non-Texans upon hearing my proposed dissertation topic, followed by some statement to the effect that they thought only California had missions. The California missions are indeed popular tourist attractions and have been for well over a century thanks in large part to Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 romance novel, *Ramona*, and booster-extraordinaire, Charles Fletcher Lummis who promoted Southwestern tourism in various media in the early decades of the twentieth century. While California had Lummis and several times the number of extant missions than Texas; San Antonio has the Alamo, and its popularity among tourists is impossible to ignore. That being said however, so many people say they "remember the Alamo," but only know a single event from 1836, and little else. Again, I hope this dissertation can be a positive contribution to the discourse in expanding how we see these buildings.

Research and writing on the Spanish missions has become more contentious, particularly in the years immediately leading up to and following the 1992 Quincentenary of Christopher Columbus and his claimed discovery of a New World. Mission historiography is currently trapped and bifurcated into a black-white binary: *La Leyenda Negra* (the Black Legend) and the White Legend. Inherently associated with this binary is the consuming question, "were the missions successes or failures?" The short answer is, "it depends," particularly on how one defines "success" and "failure." The Black Legend, according to distinguished historian David J. Weber, harkens back before colonial times when propaganda from the Protestant British versus Catholic

Spanish rivalry hardened into stereotypes that would endure hundreds of years into the future.<sup>7</sup> According to this Legend, the Spanish explorers and colonists who settled in today's North American Southwest were "cruel, avaricious, treacherous, fanatical, superstitious, cowardly, corrupt, decadent, indolent, and authoritarian."<sup>8</sup> The Black Legend at the missions would be interpreted as idolatrous (i.e. Roman Catholic) and abusive priests led unwitting indigenous into slavery, sin, and death. Historian Richard Kagan has explored how the Black Legend affected American historiography in the nineteenth-, and twentieth centuries and offers some interesting observations, particularly in the light of travel narratives and advertisements which featured San Antonio's missions. Kagan states that Spain's geographical proximity to Africa, combined with its strong Moorish heritage encouraged Americans in the nineteenth century to view the Spanish as Orientalized and inferior Others. However, among certain American elites, there was at the same time a fascination with Spain and Spanish culture. Kagan suggests this fascination did nothing to correct the view of the Spanish as a hopelessly backward nation, and further marginalized them as "picturesque," a common term of the era used to describe a social or ethnic group perceived as inferior.<sup>9</sup> American visitors, including early-nineteenth-century diplomat Caleb Cushing, were enthralled by the Islamic-influenced arts and promoted an overly romantic view of the country. Ironically, these elites were "upset by the American habit of equating

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<sup>7</sup> Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 9-10; 336-359.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 336.

<sup>9</sup> Richard L. Kagan, "From Noah to Moses: The Genesis of Historical Scholarship on Spain in the United States." In *Spain in America: The Origins of Hispanism in the United States*, ed. by Richard L. Kagan (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 22-23. See also, Richard L. Kagan, "Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain," *American Historical Review* 101 (April 1996): 423-446.

Spaniards” with Mexicans (whom Kagan notes were denigrated as a mongrel race of Indians and Africans, whereas the Spanish were still European).<sup>10</sup> These attitudes would be common fodder in travel narratives about San Antonio in the nineteenth century and this type of romanticism would also be frequently applied to San Antonio’s missions.

Conversely, the White Legend was purposefully created by a group of early- to mid-twentieth-century historians led by Herbert E. Bolton to counter the numerous accusations leveled at the Spanish.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, the White Legend portrayed the Spanish friars as saintly, dedicated to bringing the pagan indigenous populations into the bounty of Heaven and European civilization through gentle instruction and the patience of Job. Although the pervasive and hostile nature of the Black Legend created the idea that the Spanish period in North American history was largely irrelevant, insignificant, and could thus be ignored by most American historians, doing so disregards a rich history that is a cornerstone of our past, not just for Texas, but for the United States as well.<sup>12</sup> Historian Herbert E. Bolton challenged the Black Legend starting in the early decades of the twentieth century. Between his prodigious output as a scholar and his skill as a mentor, he and his legion of students created a wealth of material which cannot be ignored. Bolton could justifiably be considered the founder of the field of Borderland Studies and through his teaching and writing, he emphasized the integral part of United States’ history the Spanish played. For the purposes of this specific project, Bolton’s

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<sup>10</sup> Kagan, “Noah to Moses,” 37.

<sup>11</sup> Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 7-9; 353-357. See also, Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa, “Spanish Texas and Borderlands Historiography in Transition: Implications for United States History,” *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 2 (September 1988): 394-396, accessed January 18, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1887864>.

<sup>12</sup> Poyo and Hinojosa, “Spanish Texas and Borderlands Historiography,” 394.

essay, “The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies,” defines the original purpose and function of the missions.<sup>13</sup> Bolton argues the Spanish Crown intended the missions to be defensive and temporary; defensive in terms of keeping the Spanish flag flying over remote areas of land claimed as part of the Spanish Empire; and temporary in that a mission was only to function as such for ten years, by the end of which the Native Americans who joined would theoretically be fully indoctrinated in the Catholic faith and taught their duties as loyal Crown subjects (which of course included defending Spanish lands from encroachments by the French and English rivals).<sup>14</sup> Bolton’s essay on the missions is part of the foundation on which this dissertation is constructed.

Other historians who followed Bolton’s lead and contributed to the White Legend, particularly regarding Texas, include Carlos E. Castañeda and Marion Alphonse Habig. Beginning in the 1930s, Castañeda wrote a massive, six (later expanded to seven) volume history of the Catholic Church in Texas. Sponsored by a Catholic fraternal organization, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, described in lavish detail the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of the Catholic Church as it sought to bring the indigenous peoples of Texas under its fold, provide for their spiritual needs, and bring the Light of the True Faith into this part of the world.<sup>15</sup> Castañeda also translated

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<sup>13</sup> Herbert E. Bolton, “The Mission as Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies,” *The American Historical Review* 23, no. 1 (October 1917): 42-61, accessed January 18, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1837685>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, ed. Paul J. Foik and prepared under the auspices of the Texas Knights of Columbus Historical Commission. 7 vols. (Austin, TX: Von Beckmann-Jones Co., 1936-1958).

several colonial-era Spanish documents that will be used later in this dissertation.

Marion A. Habig was a historian, priest, and Franciscan who wrote two books that are of special interest to this dissertation: *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions*, and *San Antonio's Mission San Jose: State and National Historic Site, 1720-1968*.<sup>16</sup> Similarly to Castañeda, Habig, along with fellow clergyman Benedict Leutenegger, translated several Spanish documents important for this dissertation. It should come as no surprise that given the close ties Castañeda and Habig had with the Catholic Church, their writing style was unequivocally hagiographic, and contributed heavily to the White Legend in Texas.

James Sandos would have little trouble putting Bolton, Castañeda, and Habig into his “pro-Franciscan” group of mission historiography were he to turn his eyes toward Texas. There is, however, the other group of historians, Sandos’ “anti-Franciscans,” or “Christophobic Nihilists” as he also names them, who have risen to challenge the White Legend interpretation throughout the Southwestern Borderlands.<sup>17</sup> As one might suspect from the name, this group of historians is extremely critical of the Franciscans and their missionary efforts, and push forth a counter-narrative effectively turning the missions into death camps and the friars into sadistic, lascivious beasts. Some of the historians in this category would doubtlessly fall into Walter Buenger’s persistent revisionist camp of Texas historiography. A contemporary critic of the White

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<sup>16</sup> Marion A. Habig, *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968); and Marion A. Habig, *San Antonio's Mission San Jose: State and National Historic Site, 1720-1968* (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1968).

<sup>17</sup> Sandos, *Converting California*, xiii. Sandos created the phrase “Christophobic Nihilist” to be the opposite of “Christophilic Triumphalist,” a phrase he credits David J. Weber with creating to describe the “pro-Franciscan”/White Legend school of historiography. Ibid.

Legend school was journalist Carey McWilliams, editor of *The Nation* magazine for over two decades, who censured Anglos in California for creating a “fantasy Spanish heritage” around the saintly friars at the missions, distinguished *dons* enjoying their extensive *ranchos*, who wiled away their copious free time wooing elegantly-dressed and castanet-clicking *señoritas* to the tune of soulful guitars.<sup>18</sup> The problem for McWilliams was that not only did this Spanish heritage never exist; the Anglos who created it viciously discriminated against the local Mexican-American population (who, along with the Native Americans, are the true descendants of the Spanish colonizers).<sup>19</sup> McWilliams held the railroads responsible when he stated, “Discovered as a tourist-promotion in the 1880s, the Spanish mission background in Southern California was inflated to mythical proportions.”<sup>20</sup> San Antonio’s missions were subjected to similar exaggeration.

In looking for revisionist histories of the Spanish missions in Texas, it quickly becomes apparent that Texas historiography lags behind. However, this is not necessarily the problem it initially appears to be. While certain revisionist authors do provide a much-needed corrective to White Legend hagiography, some of them go too far, hampering their intended goal. Ramón A. Gutiérrez garnered quite a bit of publicity with his book, *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality,*

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<sup>18</sup> For an excellent discussion on real life in eighteenth-century San Antonio, see Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain’s Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); although de la Teja concentrates his attention and argues the importance of the villa founded after the first mission and presidio for the development of the region.

<sup>19</sup> Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, rev. ed. with added material by Matt S. Meier (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1990), 35-53.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.



*and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*. Gutiérrez describes the Franciscans working with the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico in the sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth centuries as little more than manipulative sadomasochists, who regularly practiced mortification of the flesh. So strong was their desire for martyrdom, that they employed deliberately cruel tactics in their efforts to eradicate indigenous religious and cultural practices which ultimately provoked the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, a violent, but temporary setback in Spain's colonizing efforts. In couching his argument thusly, Gutiérrez turns the Pueblos into victims with little agency except for the decade following the 1680 revolt. By the second part of the book, the Indians are invisible, either dead, or thoroughly assimilated into the Spanish populations.<sup>21</sup> One wonders if Gutiérrez and similar scholars are creating a new "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty.

Robert H. Jackson, an independent historian who has made a cottage industry publishing books on Spanish missions in the Americas and who successfully blends anthropological and demographic data with traditional historical materials to critique the White Legend. Unfortunately, his arguments tend to be repetitive and slight variations on the theme of bringing the indigenous populations into the missions and forcing them to live in such close proximity resulted in a "demographic collapse," primarily from European diseases from which the natives had no immunity, but also from the trauma associated with dramatic lifestyle changes.<sup>22</sup> At the Texas missions, Jackson names an

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<sup>21</sup> Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Sanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>22</sup> Robert H. Jackson, *From Savages to Subjects: Missions in the History of the American Southwest* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), 100. See also, Robert H. Jackson, *Missions and the Frontiers of Spanish America: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Environmental, Economic, Political, and Socio-*

additional factor contributing to the high mortality rate, that of forcing a nomadic, hunter-gathering population to become regimented, sedentary agrarians in a very short period of time. Jackson's Indians, similar to Gutiérrez, have little to no agency of their own and are little more than passive victims. Those that survived the epidemics either ran away or quietly assimilated, but in both instances, they disappeared.

One final and somewhat problematic revisionist work on the Spanish period remains to be discussed: historian David J. Weber's masterful synthesis, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. Weber's book is elegantly written by an eminent historian and offers a clear-eyed and objective assessment of the Spanish colonization efforts. Despite these advantages, as well as the sweeping scope of his project, Weber gives the missions short shrift, ultimately considering them failures, relics of a misguided crusade. For Weber, the presidio (or fort, usually erected near the vicinity of the missions as protection) should replace the mission as primary frontier institution.<sup>23</sup> However, it must be remembered that the presidios were never built on their own, but came in support of the mission, and the mission's function was originally specified to be temporary (ten years to Christianize and assimilate the Indians into Spanish peasant culture, then it becomes a Spanish community, part of the Spanish Empire, and the missionaries move on to begin the process anew). For Weber, the legacy of the missions is seen in Mission Revival architecture of the late nineteenth century, and "nostalgia" for a

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*Cultural Variations on the Missions in the Rio de la Plata Region and on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Prescott, AZ: Pentacle Press, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 212-214.

romanticized past (his interpretation of McWilliams' "fantasy Spanish heritage").<sup>24</sup> Perhaps Weber is too jaded, and today, we should consider that while Spain might have built presidios as well as towns on the frontier, the romantic tales of the saintly missionaries are in large part what inspired the dominant Anglo culture to begin conservation and preservation work on these sites. The fact that there are remnants of buildings, four in San Antonio still functioning as active parishes, is a living link to the past beyond a bunch of streets or place names Anglos mangle in pronouncing. Writing over a decade after Weber, Sandos challenges students and scholars to move past the hackneyed and useless "success-versus-failure" debate considering it "irrelevant," and to examine more closely the lasting effects of the missions.<sup>25</sup> With this project I accept Sandos' challenge and the lasting effects I choose to examine are those created by the myriad collective memories about San Antonio's missions.

Who, then, would fit Buenger's "cultural constructionist" interpretations? There are a variety of candidates from a multiplicity of disciplines. Historian Raúl Ramos takes an in-depth look at the creation and survival of a cultural identity in the face of a radically changing hierarchy. He concentrates on San Antonio's Tejano community across four pivotal decades from Mexican Independence to the start of the American Civil War.<sup>26</sup> Anthropologist Richard Flores is one of the few scholars to look beyond the Alamo of 1836 for repercussions into the current era. In his provocative study, he suggests that the Alamo should be remembered more as a modern symbol of Anglo-

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 343-346.

<sup>25</sup> Sandos, *Converting California*, 175.

<sup>26</sup> Raúl A. Ramos, *Beyond the Alamo: Forging Mexican Ethnicity in San Antonio, 1821-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

American racial domination over Hispanic “others,” something that hardly deserves to be fondly remembered and celebrated.<sup>27</sup> Architectural historian Louis P. Nelson notes, “As products of human agency, sacred spaces are inextricably linked to socio-political identity. . . .”<sup>28</sup> Despite Flores’ astute exploration of the Alamo in terms of socio-political identity, he does not extend the concept to the other four missions. This dissertation project proposes to move beyond Flores’ and include the other four San Antonio missions, in addition to using the lenses of collective memories with which to examine them.

Another anthropologist who, like Flores, revealed how the traditional interpretation of the 1836 Battle of the Alamo benefits Texas’ Anglo population over the Mexican-American population is Holly Beachley Brear. In a more readable, but no less erudite book, Brear dissects many of the myths and rituals which have grown around the Alamo. She offers some very useful and stimulating insights which have informed this project regarding the Alamo chapel as a shrine (and thus, sacred space), its role in the creation myth of Texas, the Alamo’s holy trinity of Davy Crockett, William Barret Travis, and Jim Bowie, and possible meanings for the growing Tejano population. Although in 2011, the Texas General Land Office took over custodianship of the Alamo from the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, which makes some of the tensions Brear

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<sup>27</sup> Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Louis P. Nelson, ed., *American Sanctuary: Understanding Sacred Spaces* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006): 8.

discusses in her book slightly outdated, this in no way compromises the utility of her work for this project.<sup>29</sup>

In offering a fresh look at the San Antonio missions this project utilizes its sources in a similar fashion as two creative historians who examine the relationships between the indigenous Native American peoples and their encounters with Europeans. Juliana Barr and Pekka Hämäläinen’s thought-provoking studies have turned the Euro-centric encounter narrative on its head. Barr and Hämäläinen both challenge earlier historians’ notions that once the encounter with Europeans began, the Indians faded away before the presumed more advanced society. Barr begins her challenge to the traditional conquest narrative of the initial encounters and interactions between European powers and the Indians of eastern Texas by asking, “Why would Europeans have to play by native rules?”<sup>30</sup> She theorizes that when the Spanish and French entered into areas controlled by the different indigenous groups, they generally did so from a point of weakness with relatively small contingents of soldiers, priests, and traders, rather than legions of conquering armies. Pekka Hämäläinen’s award-winning book offers an innovative window into the Comanche world. Expanding the terms such as “empire,” “colonization,” and “exploitation,” Hämäläinen asserts that the Comanche proved to be the greater power in the Spanish Borderland region. It was the Comanche who turned Spain’s colonial outposts from New Mexico to Louisiana into colonies of their own from whence they extracted tribute, in the form of guns, powder, metal goods,

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<sup>29</sup> Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007): 2.

food, and especially, horses. Whether these materials came by trade or theft mattered little to the Comanche. The Texas missions were easy targets with plenty of cattle and horses, and few defenders.<sup>31</sup> Hämäläinen's novel interpretation offers a unique glimpse into one of Weber's minimum of two sides on the frontier.<sup>32</sup> Barr and Hämäläinen buttress this project by challenging the accepted narratives of the past on indigenous-European relations. They suggest the Spanish conquest of the northern borderlands was neither as swift nor as complete as claimed by previous scholarship, and like Sandos, they read more agency into the Native American experience.

Memory has been inherently connected with the discipline of History since the ancient Greeks. According to Classical Greek mythology, "Memory" (Mnemosyne) was the mother of the Muses, which included Clio, the Muse of History.<sup>33</sup> On a more contemporary note, historian Carl Becker recognized the intimate connection between memory and history when he defined "history" in its most simple and basic terms as, "the memory of things said and done."<sup>34</sup> Individual memories as historical sources are familiar and accepted among historians; using the lens of collective memory to examine the past of a societal institution is not, however, without its critics. In 1997, the *American Historical Review* published a forum discussion on the topic of collective memory and cultural history. Contributing historian Alon Confino complained about the overuse and equivocal definitions applied to collective memories. While he did not deny

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<sup>31</sup> Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008): 3.

<sup>32</sup> Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 11.

<sup>33</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, "Introduction," *Representations* 26 (Spring, 1989): 1. This was a special issue on memory and counter-memory that also included articles by Renato Rosaldo and Pierre Nora.

<sup>34</sup> Carl Becker, "Everyman his own Historian," *The American Historical Review* 37 (Jan. 1932): 223.

the value of using collective memory as a sophisticated means to analyze the past, he lamented the almost faddish nature to which the concept had been reduced.<sup>35</sup> Confino's valid criticisms notwithstanding, collective memory remains a viable means to analyze the past, particularly in projects such as this which offers a novel interpretation and analysis of the missions and what they meant to the people that visited (whether for a three hour tour, or each week for Mass). As historian Walter Buenger reminded his fellow Texas historians, the currents of historiographical trends flow slowly through Texas, and projects incorporating collective memories may yet find purchase here.<sup>36</sup>

In the early twentieth century French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs wrote one of the seminal texts regarding collective memory. In it he observed that individual memories of past events were dependent on the memories of others, but in order for others' memories to assist the individual, all of the memories must share an agreement of certain basic facts and assumptions. Halbwachs also differentiated between the collective memory and history claiming that history must be more detached, objective, and based more on the available facts, whereas collective memory was not held to such high standards of evidence; thus, the historical accuracy of collective memory is suspect.<sup>37</sup> This project examines collective memory not as historical fact, but more for what it tells us about the manner in which past cultures acted, and thought about San Antonio's missions. The concept of collective memory was further developed by a

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<sup>35</sup> Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102 (Dec. 1997): 1386-1403.

<sup>36</sup> Buenger, "Three Truths in Texas," 1-19.

<sup>37</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, translated by Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (1950; repr., New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980).

French historian, Pierre Nora, whose immense oeuvre, *Realms of Memory*, is a three volume (in English translation, seven in the original) history of France. Nora asserts, “If the expression *lieu de mémoire* must have an official definition, it should be this: a *lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community.” Furthermore, the *lieu*, or “site” may be understood as an archive or a repository for a given national memory.<sup>38</sup> It should not stretch the imagination too much to see the relevance as San Antonio’s missions become *lieu de mémoire* on different levels, to different communities, and at different times. Nora admitted that *lieu de mémoire* are very complex and multifaceted, “they are *lieu*—places, sites, causes—in three senses: material, symbolic, and functional.”<sup>39</sup> Memory is the mortar that holds the various bricks of interpretations of the missions’ varied roles together.

The notion of thinking critically about historical memory is not confined to French scholars. Cornell University historian Michael Kammen’s hefty tome, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*, scrutinizes the often antagonistic relationship between academic history and society’s collective memories from the antebellum period to modern times. The United States’ evolution from a nation with little historical memory prior to the Civil War, to a nation where collective memories drive and are in turn driven by economics, myth, popular culture,

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<sup>38</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer; English-language edition edited and foreword by Lawrence D. Kritzman. 3vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). Quote from vol. 1, page xvii.

<sup>39</sup> Nora, *Realms*, 14.



and the development of identity is the primary focus of Kammen's narrative.<sup>40</sup> Historian of the U.S. South, W. Fitzhugh Brundage's book, *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, likewise offered some very perceptive observations about the uses of memory in America to examine the past. He suggested memories of events which some groups attempt to suppress and intentionally forget may be just as telling, if not more so, about what that community believes important. He also contended, "Because memories are transitory, people yearn to make them permanent by rendering them in physical form. By erecting monuments or marking off sacred places, groups anchor their memories in space and time."<sup>41</sup> Another salient observation he made was that in some cases, collective memories can also be used to challenge the dominant version of history.<sup>42</sup> Texas historians Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner make historical memories the subject of their edited volume, *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas*, which scrutinizes a variety of cases where memories held by the general public often clashed with historical fact.<sup>43</sup>

California's missions have been scrutinized by scholars utilizing a variety of interpretations including collective memories, including historian Phoebe S. Kropp and her 2006 book, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place*, which is an important part of the intellectual foundation upon which this project is built.

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<sup>40</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "No Deed But Memory," in W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000): 8. Brundage's assertion that certain groups would suppress or forget memories that went against existing power structures is echoed in Michel-Rolph Trouillot's book, *Silencing the Past*.

<sup>42</sup> Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow*, 22.

<sup>43</sup> Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, eds. *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas* foreword by W. Fitzhugh Brundage. (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2007).

Although she dedicates only a single chapter specifically to California's missions, her book covers a much shorter time span, roughly from the 1880s to the 1930s. Her observations are incisive and extremely useful to this project. She argues that Anglos invented California's mythic Spanish past not as a reaction to the rapid societal changes of the era, but to take advantage of opportunities to attract additional people (preferably more Anglos with plenty of money to invest) into the area via immigration, "the Spanish past spelled growth, not retreat."<sup>44</sup> She notes that Anglos relegated the Mexican and indigenous populations to the role of "artifacts, colorful but awkward remnants of another time."<sup>45</sup> Her work contributes to this endeavor by pointing out the importance of collective memories built around similar architectural ruins. She observes, "Memory promoters seek to materialize their versions of the past in some fashion, through texts, media, artifacts, and places. The built environment offers particularly lasting material for transmitting memories to posterity and thus for studying their effects." Finally, Kropp recognizes "guidebooks, promotional articles, and the like were the ways in which most Anglos accessed the shifting forms of the Spanish past."<sup>46</sup> These types of sources, the buildings as well as travel narratives and advertisements all constitute a significant portion of the archive for this examination of memory and the missions of San Antonio.

Although this project analyzes the collective memories associated with and based upon the missions, it is nevertheless prudent to pay careful attention to the origins and

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<sup>44</sup> Phoebe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 13 and 15.

construction of the mission buildings. The buildings are what was and what currently are seen, and a better understanding of the construction and décor make the clashes between memory and historical fact stand out more clearly. There are few scholarly works that explicitly discuss the architecture and its meanings of San Antonio's missions in terms of form as well as sacred space. These aspects are very important to a more complete understanding of the missions, what they meant then, and why they occupy such a place in our collective memory since through the built environment is collective memory made tangible. Retired art historian Jacinto Quirarte has recently written a well-researched and documented history of the San Antonio missions. He examined numerous reports from colonial Spanish officials regarding each of the missions, their décor, the role of indigenous participants on missions-related projects, and the missions' overall condition. He also found many travel narratives which described the missions' condition after they were secularized in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, his secondary sources were woefully out of date with interpretations no more advanced than Bolton or Castañeda which hampered the overall utility of his study. Although beautifully illustrated, Quirarte's efforts at explaining the meanings behind the art and design fall short of a more rigorous historical analysis.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to Quirarte, other architectural historians who need to be mentioned for contributing to the intellectual foundation and framework of this study include George Kubler, a distinguished professor for many years at Yale University. Spanish

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<sup>47</sup> Jacinto Quirarte, *The Art and Architecture of the Texas Missions* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2002).

architecture translated in the Americas was his particular interest and resulted in two useful books: *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American Dominions, 1500-1800*, and *The Religious Architecture of New Mexico in the Colonial Period and Since the American Occupation*.<sup>48</sup> Kubler's works are among the classics in the field. Besides Kubler was Mexican art historian Manuel Toussaint whose writing helped distinguish the proper terminology of the missions' style (e.g. the façade of San Jose should be considered "Churrigueresque," which was a highly ornate form of Baroque). He also discussed the qualifications for being considered a master architect in eighteenth century Mexico.<sup>49</sup> Finally, art and architectural historian Valerie Fraser offers some interesting ideas from a revisionist or postmodern viewpoint for consideration. She suggests the mission churches and similar monumental architecture was designed to prove Spanish cultural and religious superiority over the indigenous groups.<sup>50</sup> Although Fraser writes about a different and distant Spanish colony, the idea travels well and in Texas, especially given the nomadic backgrounds of the local indigenous, may well have been an attempt to impress upon the natives the claim of superiority.

Archaeologist Mardith K. Scheutz (later, Scheutz-Miller) has made a career of exploring the Spanish missions in the Southwest through a variety of lenses. Her

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<sup>48</sup> George Kubler, *Art and Architecture of Spain and Portugal and Their American Dominions, 1500-1800* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959). Also, George Kubler, *The Religious Architecture of New Mexico in the Colonial Period and Since the American Occupation* 5th ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990).

<sup>49</sup> Manuel Toussaint, *Colonial Art in Mexico*, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth Wilder Weismann (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 275-278.

<sup>50</sup> Valerie Fraser, *The Architecture of Conquest: Building in the Viceroyalty of Peru, 1535-1635* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-13, 82, and 153.

dissertation at the University of Texas is a detailed demographic study of the Indian populations who lived at the missions in which she described the many different tribes who were involved. She also challenges the established belief that the missions had somehow failed and suggested the descendants of the original mission inhabitants continue to live in San Antonio.<sup>51</sup> In later publications she offers detailed descriptions of the materials and construction technology used by the mission builders, as well as keen insights about the builders themselves.<sup>52</sup> Schuetz-Miller also analyzed specific church buildings across the Southwest using a form of sacred geometry from the Classic Greeks, which she defended by pointing to the conservatism of the Spanish Catholic Church as well as the guilds, and the fact that these designs could be understood by the illiterate craftsmen who were building these churches on a remote frontier without sophisticated tools and materials. The resulting buildings reflected a significant level of beauty and grace which has intrigued visitors and tourists ever since.<sup>53</sup> Examples from the San Antonio missions include “Rosa’s Window” and the façade of Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, the acoustics of the dome of Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, and the portal of Mission San Francisco de la Espada.

Mardith Schuetz-Miller is not the only anthropologist to turn her attention to the Spanish missions of the American Southwest. In 2008, University of Texas anthropologist Maria F. Wade published a very broad overview of life at the Spanish

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<sup>51</sup> Mardith Keithly Schuetz, “The Indians of the San Antonio Missions, 1718-1821” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1980).

<sup>52</sup> Mardith Schuetz, “Professional Artisans in the Hispanic Southwest: the Churches of San Antonio, Texas,” *The Americas* 40 (July 1983): 17-70.

<sup>53</sup> Mardith Schuetz-Miller, “Pre-Euclidian Geometry in the Design of Mission Churches of the Spanish Borderlands,” *Journal of the Southwest* 48 (Winter 2006): 331-620.

missions from Florida to California.<sup>54</sup> A simple question asking what Indians actually *did* at the Spanish missions became the focus of her wide-ranging study taking into consideration differences in levels of tribal cultural advancement (agriculturalists vs. hunter-gatherers) and geography (the swamps of the South vs. the arid conditions in the Southwest). Wade also noted the differences in missionizing groups. The Franciscans had different methods and practices than the Jesuits. One of her more perceptive observations is how indigenous labor affected the “success” or “failure” of the mission.<sup>55</sup> While I take issue on whether judging the missions as “successes” or “failures” is a useful exercise for scholars, I commend Wade’s utilization of historian Fernand Braudel’s concept of *longue durée* to good effect in this study. Braudel’s theory of examining a subject over the course of centuries as being especially useful for historians as opposed to looking at a single event or a severely limited timespan is an excellent lens with which to examine San Antonio’s missions; a lens that has not been used nearly enough (especially by American historians). Wade concludes “Missions are memory sites for many descendants of colonial populations and for colonized Native Americans. Spanish missions enshrine complex and contested memories for those whose long-term histories are implicated in the process of mission-building and conversion.”<sup>56</sup> Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo posited an interesting and useful notion of “imperialist nostalgia” in the late 1980s. His critique, “a mood of nostalgia makes racial domination appear innocent and pure,” cuts to the heart of much of the constructed memories

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<sup>54</sup> Wade, Maria F. *Missions, Missionaries, and Native Americans: Long-Term Processes and Daily Practices*. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2008): xi.

<sup>55</sup> Wade, *Missions, Missionaries, and Native Americans*, xv.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

surrounding the missions. In essence, Rosaldo claimed, “agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed.”<sup>57</sup> Finally, another archaeologist, working for the National Park Service, James E. Ivey, has written an exciting and extensive architectural history of San Antonio’s missions, concentrating on the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries. Unfortunately, his work has not yet been published and will require extensive editing before it is ready to go to press.<sup>58</sup>

Tourism in the American Southwest is an interest for American Studies scholar Martin Padget. He contributes to this project through his use of travel narratives, photographs and postcards, and other textual and graphical depictions of the West. He described these sources as “representations of travel,” which give later scholars keen insight into thoughts and reactions of the travelers to what they perceived before them.<sup>59</sup> Another American Studies scholar, Marguerite S. Shaffer, argues convincingly that tourism in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries was predominately a white, middle-class luxury, but also the mere act of visiting parts of the United States (mostly in the far-flung American West) fostered the creation of a national identity among Easterners. She asserts that in looking at the magisterial beauty of the Rocky Mountains, the Grand Canyon, or Yosemite, these visitors became inspired to take more interest in

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<sup>57</sup> Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 68 and 69.

<sup>58</sup> James E. Ivey, “Of Various Magnificence: The Architectural History of the Missions of San Antonio, Texas in the Colonial Period and the Nineteenth Century” with contributions by Marlys Bush Thurber and Santiago Escobedo. (Santa Fe, NM: National Park Service, ca. 2006), unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.

<sup>59</sup> Martin Padget, *Indian Country: Travels in the American Southwest, 1840-1935* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 3.

the land and nation they claimed as their own.<sup>60</sup> Independent scholar and architectural critic Chris Wilson describes a mythical Santa Fe, New Mexico, that was created nearly from whole cloth and expressly for tourist consumption. Wilson observes how the boosters used stereotypes, selective appropriation of minorities, invented traditions, and a healthy dose of historical amnesia in their construction.<sup>61</sup> Historian Richard J. Orsi offers a detailed analysis of the primary mode of tourists' transportation, the Southern Pacific railroad, whose premier "Sunset Limited" ran through San Antonio. Orsi offers fascinating insights on some of the inner workings of the Southern Pacific advertising departments and how it marketed a particular interpretation of the American Southwest.<sup>62</sup>

Historian Bonnie Christensen notes the link between identity and a mythic heritage invented for tourists' consumption. She points to the sources of this construction with her contention, "Newspaper editors, published writers, movie producers, and politicians, after all, have taken the lead in shaping and defining what it means to be 'American.'"<sup>63</sup> The newspaper editors and published writers which Christensen describes were able to put their stamp on defining an "American" because of a dramatic increase in the availability of print media (and equally important were *illustrations* that accompanied the text). Political scientist Benedict Anderson explores

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<sup>60</sup> Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2001).

<sup>61</sup> Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

<sup>62</sup> Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>63</sup> Bonnie Christensen, *Red Lodge and the Mythic West: Coal Miners to Cowboys* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002), xiv.



what contributed to the formation of national identities in the seminal work, *Imagined Communities*. Anderson concludes that newspapers and print capitalism were significant contributors to the development of an imagined community by which readers construct similar identities with each other.<sup>64</sup>

Most importantly for this discussion, popular magazines and newspapers fostered the construction of national identity as a geographically diverse population read the same or similar stories of travel and adventure in these periodicals, thus vicariously sharing in these experiences. The common experience of arm-chair travel allowed readers to construct identities with fellow readers. Historian Joshua Brown noted the increasingly important contributions the illustrated press such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* made in the developing print culture as supplements to daily newspapers and attracting wider audiences.<sup>65</sup> Finally, sociologist Matthew Schneirov stresses the importance of magazines such as *Century* and *Scribner's*, especially with their historical-focused articles, in contributing to the creation of an American identity. Travel articles about the American West "had a mythic dimension that carried with it images of the frontier and rugged individualism . . . and an escape from the restraints of civilization."<sup>66</sup> These types of articles brought tourists by the trainload to San Antonio, looking for the romantic, the exotic, and they found it.

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<sup>64</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 33-36, and 45-46.

<sup>65</sup> Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 4-5, 32.

<sup>66</sup> Matthew Schneirov, *The Dream of a New Social Order: Popular Magazines in America, 1893-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 59.

Historian David Wrobel critically examines promotional literature and pioneer memoirs in his important study of what attracted the travelling public to the American West and the contrasts to their actual experience. His creative use of these sources and how an imagined West was constructed by these sources provides an essential part of the intellectual foundation to this project, which will rely heavily on similar travel narratives and advertisements.<sup>67</sup> Herbert Gottfried, a retired professor of landscape architecture at Cornell University uses guidebooks and the more heavily illustrated view books in his investigation of tourism in the United States by Americans. Gottfried provides another important piece of the methodological foundation for this project by critically examining these souvenirs which help feed the collective memories and create a particular American cultural identity.<sup>68</sup> Urban historian M. Christine Boyer also links the desire for travel, including vicarious travel, enabled by souvenirs such as illustrated postcards and stereopticon views, which generated cultural memories.<sup>69</sup>

One of the primary uses of romanticized images of the missions was to attract tourists and their money to San Antonio. Historian Char Miller examines San Antonio, Texas, directly and its historic economic dependence on travelers and tourists in a very insightful essay. He incisively described San Antonio's long dependence on tourism as the driving force of its economy as something akin to a Faustian bargain. While tourists brought money to spend in local hotels and restaurants, they also strained local

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<sup>67</sup> David M. Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002).

<sup>68</sup> Herbert Gottfried, *Landscape in American Guides and View Books: Visual History of Touring and Travel* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013).

<sup>69</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

infrastructure and created few well-paying, skilled jobs for the local populace. Miller suggests that Spanish administrators on official visits as well as cowboys driving herds to market were just as much “tourists” in the economic sense as modern visitors strolling down the Riverwalk and outfitting their children in faux-coonskin caps at the Alamo gift store.<sup>70</sup> Staying with works about San Antonio, journalist Lewis Fisher wrote a well-researched book on the history of conservation and preservation work in the city. He plows deep into the works of the many people involved with trying to save San Antonio’s unique heritage. Fisher’s efforts are revealing, but lack the insights a trained scholar brings.<sup>71</sup> Finally, religion professor Thomas Bremer examines the intersection between religion and tourism at San Antonio’s missions over the course of two centuries. He observes the tourists’ notions of “authentic” as well as the images of the missions sold to them were rarely historically accurate.<sup>72</sup> Bremer’s work is one of the closest to my proposed topic of collective memories and the missions, but he does not engage the literature on collective memories as extensively as this project. Additionally, I will critique more of the advertising literature that enticed so many of them to come visit the missions.

While on the subject of San Antonio, there are a number of excellent books describing the city, its origins on the Spanish frontier, as well as its Tejano population.

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<sup>70</sup> Char Miller, “Tourist Trap: Visitors and the Modern San Antonio Economy,” in Hal K. Rothman, ed., *The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003): 206-228.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Precarious Preservation of a Heritage* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1996).

<sup>72</sup> Thomas S. Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists: The Borderlands of Religion and Tourism in San Antonio* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 6.

Historian Jesús F. de la Teja's 1995 book, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier*, is the quintessential starting point for anyone wanting to understand the complex and often contentious relations of the various factions who were the early founders of the town.<sup>73</sup> Historians Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa have also contributed important studies on Tejano identity during San Antonio's early days.<sup>74</sup> Arnolde De León, esteemed historian of the Tejano population and their struggles in the face of vicious racism has two books which are essential to this project for their insight.<sup>75</sup> Finally, cultural geographer Daniel D. Arreola has two works which help capture the significance of this study by exploring the modern Tejano population and its influence on Mexican-American culture. Arreola considers San Antonio, thanks to its origins and current large Mexican-American population, a "Mexican-American Cultural Capital" beating out California cities, Los Angeles and San Diego.<sup>76</sup>

As scholars of religion David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal claim, "sacred space is inevitably contested space."<sup>77</sup> The tensions that exist between the holy and the profane are just as palpable as those between ethnic or socio-economic groups with

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<sup>73</sup> Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

<sup>74</sup> Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa, eds., *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-Century San Antonio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); see also Gerald E. Poyo, ed. *Tejano Journey, 1770-1850* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), which advances the Tejano story into the nineteenth century.

<sup>75</sup> Arnolde De León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); and Arnolde De León, *The Tejano Community, 1836-1900*. With a New Foreword by Richard Griswold del Castillo and New Afterword by the Author. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1997; originally published Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

<sup>76</sup> Daniel D. Arreola, *Tejano South Texas: A Mexican American Cultural Province* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); and Daniel D. Arreola, "The Mexican American Cultural Capital," *Geographical Review* 77 (January 1987): 17-34.

<sup>77</sup> David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, eds., *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 15.

competing memories, or tourists intruding into ceremonies. Historian John F. Sears states, “Twentieth-century tourist attractions also continue to combine the sacred and the profane, the religious and the secular, the mythic and the trivial, the spiritual and the commercial.”<sup>78</sup> Similarly, memory and sacred space are integral parts of religion, which is yet another facet of analysis. Maurice Halbwachs noted the intimate connection between memory and religion although he admitted that simply walking into a church does not automatically connect us with the denomination that uses that specific building. Instead, he suggested the building acted as a repository for the collective memories of the parishioners, even when services were not being conducted if the members could see the spires or hear the bells.<sup>79</sup> Theologian Belden Lane makes some very useful observations regarding the missions’ roles as sacred space. Most of all, Lane asserts that sacred places are “storied places” which “joins every detail of the landscape within a given community of memory.”<sup>80</sup> Today, the San Antonio missions continue to fulfill the role of worship center (even the Alamo, if only within the context of a civil religion) as both the faithful and visitors gather together and enter into discourse with a higher power and the spirits of those who came before.

Religion is arguably one of the most important features cultures use to identify themselves. Jeanette Rodríguez and Ted Fortier, a theologian and anthropologist respectively, note the significance of religion and memory as they state, “When we

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<sup>78</sup> John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 211.

<sup>79</sup> Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, 152.

<sup>80</sup> Belden C. Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 59.

speaking about cultural memory, we are including in this definition two distinct characteristics: (1) the survival of a historically, politically, and socially marginalized group of people, and (2) the role of spirituality as a form of resistance.”<sup>81</sup> Another scholar investigating the connection between religion, minority groups, resistance, and identity is theologian Timothy Matovina, who has published an insightful look on the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe in San Antonio, Texas. “The Virgin of Guadalupe,” “*la Morenita*” (the “Brown Virgin”), and other terms of endearment have been applied to this New World icon, currently venerated as patroness of the Americas. Devotion to Guadalupe has been strong among the Tejano community in San Antonio since the mid-1700s, and according to Matovina, her followers credit her for giving them the ability to endure momentous social and economic changes, maintain a unique identity, and even for the encouragement to resist endemic racism and poverty. However, Matovina’s study focuses on San Fernando Cathedral in downtown San Antonio, not at the outlying missions.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, with the exception of the Alamo, there currently is at least one image to Our Lady of Guadalupe at each of the missions.

Because the historical accuracy of collective memories are often suspect, examining these memories, as exhibited through the textual and graphical images of the missions, and identifying those inaccuracies allows for a more complete dialog about

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<sup>81</sup> Jeanette Rodríguez and Ted Fortier, *Cultural Memory: Resistance, Faith, and Identity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 1. While their observation regarding minority groups and cultural memory is perceptive, these are not the only groups to have memories. Part of the struggles between the dominant groups and the minorities are over *whose* memories are transmitted in a public forum.

<sup>82</sup> Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). Matovina also has an earlier publication which examined religious expression as a marker for cultural resistance or persistence of a Mexican-Tejano identity during a period of rapid social change; see, Timothy Matovina, *Tejano Religion and Ethnicity: San Antonio, 1821-1860* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

what happened at the missions after secularization. Being aware of the romanticized and exoticized images of the missions, and at the same time being sensitive to the people for whom these buildings still serve as a faith community is a delicate balancing act. Nevertheless, modern scholars have the duty to move beyond hackneyed “success-versus-failure” debates to a richer, more nuanced, and more productive discourse over what these buildings have meant at different points in their history, and how various people have remembered them over the course of nearly three-hundred long and contentious years. Had the story of the missions ended with secularization, or if veneration of the Alamo begun only after John Wayne’s cinematic paean and the resulting traditional interpretation it invented, this project would be much shorter; but it did not happen that way and much remains to be learned from the period of nearly three centuries that have passed.

Eminent French historian Fernand Braudel considered the “*longue durée*” to be the most important period for historical analysis. Braudel and his fellow historians of the *Annales* school studied the histories of institutions, of structures (physical as well as societal), over a lengthy course of time.<sup>83</sup> I contend that the missions can easily be seen as institutions (even Bolton called them such) of religion and of culture. Considering Braudel’s interest in economic patterns over centuries, the missions, in various modes have been a major contributor to the economic development of the region since they were founded. The *longue durée* was measured in centuries; and despite American

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<sup>83</sup> Fernand Braudel, *On History*, translated by Sarah Matthews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

society's disdain for the past and adoration of the new, critically following the twists and turns in the stories of these missions, and the memories that grew up around them over the course of three centuries, allows for a more holistic and nuanced view of the missions and the roles they have played in establishing both Texan and American identities. Since part of the *Annales* school's structures include economics, I would also argue that San Antonio's missions made significant contributions as the origins of the cattle ranching industry in Texas, as well as the basis for the tourism industry in Texas.<sup>84</sup>

The remainder of this dissertation will be organized in rough chronological order. Chapter II begins in 1718 with the establishment of Mission San Antonio de Valero in what is now San Antonio, Texas. In addition to discussing the original, intended function of the missions, this chapter describes what is known about the design and construction of the mission buildings, particularly those persons and features about which certain myths have arisen. Some of the myths from this time are the genesis for the collective memories about the missions which appear later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This chapter also analyzes the descriptions left by people who visited the missions during this period. The chapter closes in 1836 with battles at two of the missions. Chapter III examines the missions in a time of transition between Texas independence in 1836 and the arrival of the railroad in 1877. During the intervening years San Antonio went from being Mexican, then Texian, American, Confederate, and back to American frontier town. Throughout this period Texas boosters tried to increase

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<sup>84</sup> For the origin of the Texas ranching industry see Jack Jackson, *Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721-1821* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), as well as Armando Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); and for tourism in Texas, see Miller, "Tourist Trap," 206-228.



both tourist and immigrant traffic with romantic hero tales and promises of a new Garden of Eden. Other visitors including Frederick Law Olmsted and Sidney Lanier took a more detached view of the missions, but nonetheless added to the mystique of their presence. The mission buildings, though not consistently used for divine worship, served as attractive backdrop for local society picnics, and sights of interest to visitors. Also at this time, the Alamo received its characteristic and iconic roofline.

In 1877, the railroad arrived and connected San Antonio to the rest of the country. The fourth chapter covers the *fin-de-siècle* which saw a number of established literary figures including Stephen Crane and Oscar Wilde visit and wax romantic over San Antonio's sights and atmosphere. Also, print culture increased markedly during this time, spreading word of San Antonio's Spanish past and quaint ruins to a much wider audience. As the print culture in the United States increased, so too did romantic stories of a wild west and the halcyon days of the Spanish dons. The railroad companies came down more in favor of the romanticized, Spanish heritage and frontier, but still promoted modern attractions and conveniences.

As the missions were recognized as a tourist draw, there were those who felt more should be done to preserve and protect the buildings from further decay and vandalism. Preservation of historic buildings was considered a 'safe' activity for women in the early twentieth century before they had a formal political voice. Chapter V tells the story of three local society women who led the charge to preserve the missions for posterity in the first half of the twentieth century. Their strenuous efforts ensured the

survival of the missions for future generations of Texans and visitors from around the world.

Chapter VI takes a closer look at the missions for most of the twentieth century. During this time the railroads are pushing the missions even more as tourist attractions, and San Antonio locals began recognizing the need for preserving the remains of the missions. However, this time period was not without some growing pains and San Antonio searched for its own identity, between frontier tourist towns versus stable business center for the region. In 1936 Texas celebrated its Centennial in stereotypical, over-the-top-Texan style. While this was really a celebration of Anglo domination, there were nods to the Spanish heritage by including images of the missions. There were also debates and discussions over the division of state and federal money to promote and stage this particular interpretation of Texas. Contrasting the 1936 Centennial was the 1968 Hemis-Fair in San Antonio which celebrated a much more ethnically diverse interpretation of both Texas and the Western hemisphere. Again, the missions played a role in showing the region's Spanish roots. However, this period was during the Cold War and while some advertisers had turned the Alamo into a national symbol, Fess Parker and Disney, and John Wayne especially, put their interpretive stamp on the Alamo as Anglo-American symbol of sacrifice and liberty.

A final, seventh chapter will begin with four of the missions becoming part of the National Park Service (NPS), which despite its popularity was not a foregone conclusion. There was some opposition to the NPS taking control over what they saw as

their church home. During this period from the 1970s to the present, there was a racial demographic shift in San Antonio with some interesting ramifications for the present, the future, and the interpretation of the past. Also, the missions witnessed a return of people claiming to be surviving Coahuiltecan Indians, who demanded recognition and rights for their ancestors who lived, died, and were buried in the missions. This chapter additionally discusses the creation myths, the persistence of memories, and reconsiders Walter Buenger's "Three Truths" about Texas and what this project has to say about the questions Buenger raised involving Texas and memory. Finally, in July of 2015, UNESCO granted World Heritage Site status to San Antonio's missions which may usher in a new era of increased tourism but also greater access to preservation resources.

The missions, like so many of the collective memories about them, continue to persist in the present. As "sites of memory," they create tension and opportunities for discourse as historical accuracy and lived memory clash. As borders, they provide physical space for meetings and discourses between tourists and parishioners, Tejanos and Anglos, Spaniards and Native Americans, and between the sacred and the profane. Some scholars insist the missions failed to be the foundation upon which the eighteenth century Spanish empire would build its northern expansion. But the missions as sacred space outlasted the Hapsburgs. Just because the Spanish empire no longer exists, the indigenous populations either died, fled, or assimilated into what has become the modern Tejano population of San Antonio, the buildings were very nearly lost to neglect, and while Mass was not celebrated consistently for many years, must we call that an abject failure? The mission churches are still providing space for the Tejano culture in San

Antonio nearly three centuries after their founding, and tourists by the millions make their way to visit these celebrated religious buildings, once again living parishes and community centers. Perhaps they are not “successes” as originally conceived, but they cannot be judged as utter “failures.” Instead, as borders, as sacred space, and as community centers, the missions are “persisting” into their fourth century.

## CHAPTER II

### BUILDING MISSIONS, MYTHS, AND MEMORIES ON THE TEXAS

#### FRONTIER, 1718-1836

What's past is prologue. —William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

The Baroque is solid and complete; at the same time, it is fluid and fleeting.—Octavio

Paz, “Will for Form,” *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*

On May 1, 1718, at a remote site on the North American frontier, a Spanish deputation, under the military command of newly commissioned Governor of Tejas, Don Martín de Alarcón, and the spiritual leadership of Fray Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares of the Franciscan missionary college in Querétaro, Mexico, established Mission San Antonio de Valero near the San Antonio River in the province of Tejas. A few days later, Alarcón established the Villa de Béxar a short distance from the new mission between the river and San Pedro Creek.<sup>85</sup> Four additional missions soon followed. Just two years after Valero's founding, Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús founded Mission San

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<sup>85</sup> Marion A. Habig, *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions* (1968; repr., Livingston, TX: Pioneer Enterprises, 1997), 29; Jesús F. De La Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 8. I will refer to Mission San Antonio de Valero as “Valero” for the duration of the Spanish period in Texas. During the Mexican period and especially after the 1836 battle, the former mission becomes more commonly known as “the Alamo” and this dissertation will reflect that new identity.

José y San Miguel de Aguayo (San José) for the Franciscan missionary college at Zacatecas.<sup>86</sup> In 1731, three missions transferred to the area from east Texas: Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción (Concepción), Mission San Juan Capistrano (San Juan), and Mission San Francisco de la Espada (Espada). This chain of missions represents the largest concentration of colonial Spanish sacred architecture in the United States. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated these five missions a “World Heritage Site” in July, 2015.<sup>87</sup>

Historian and fellow librarian Adán Benavides described some of the political travails of constructing a church building on the remote Texas frontier in the eighteenth century and opined, “In time, how they *became* is unimportant. The mundane matters of their construction are obscure and trite.”<sup>88</sup> This chapter takes respectful, but adamant exception to his assertion that how certain buildings came to be is “unimportant,” “obscure,” or “trite.” The design and execution, along with the resulting aesthetics played significant roles in the embryonic formation of the collective memories based on the romantic and exotic appeal associated with these buildings. In his article Benavides also noted, “Historic buildings that preserve their function in the present become venerated.”<sup>89</sup> On this point I agree with Benavides. This observation is buttressed by

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<sup>86</sup> Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 83; Fr. Antonio Margil de Jesús, *Nothingness Itself: Selected Writings of Ven. Fr. Antonio Margil, 1690-1724*, translated by Benedict Leutenegger, edited by Marion A. Habig (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1976), 266-271. Fray Margil usually signed his name “La misma nada,” or “Nothingness Itself” as an outward sign of humility (see p. ix). He was to the Texas missionary field what Fr. Junipero Serra was for California: a tireless worker who founded many missions.

<sup>87</sup> UNESCO “World Heritage List,” accessed September 9, 2015, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/> .

<sup>88</sup> Adán Benavides, “Sacred Space, Profane Reality: The Politics of Building a Church in Eighteenth-Century Texas,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 107, no. 1 (July 2003): 1, accessed December 20, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30239423>. Emphasis is in the original.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

French historian Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) which Nora defined as "any significant entity . . . which by the dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic heritage of any community."<sup>90</sup> This dissertation asserts San Antonio's old Spanish missions are *lieux de mémoire*, and have often been used to market the city's Spanish and Mexican heritage as well as being a foil for Anglo-Texan and Anglo-American identity.

This chapter examines the origins of San Antonio's five extant missions to discern the aspects which influenced their becoming *lieux de mémoire*. These include: the original functions of the missions and the Native Americans, the architectural styles and aesthetics that influenced the buildings, as well as some of the architects and artisans who were involved. Benavides indicated the importance of sacred architecture to memory, "Churches as monumental architecture 'formed the dominant element of symbolic landscapes' in New Spain."<sup>91</sup> As the dominant feature in the Southwestern landscape, this chapter asserts the design, aesthetics, construction, and symbolism of the mission churches were essential in creating a specific image of the missions within American collective memory. The chapter will also briefly examine the ramifications mission secularization in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries.

Secularization was a complex process which some critics of the missions seem to believe was indicative of the failure of the missionary endeavors. I believe a more nuanced interpretation is overdue, and will hopefully bring this to light. My assertion, that of the

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<sup>90</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, English-language edition ed. and foreword by Lawrence D. Kritzman. 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), v.1, xvii.

<sup>91</sup> Benavides, "Sacred Space, Profane Reality," 1.

persistence of the missions within American collective memory, contradicts earlier views of abject failures to be relegated to the dustbin of history. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion of the violence associated with the movement for Texas independence which transformed one of the missions into an epicenter of myth and identity almost overnight.

Since the earliest days of the missions, people have travelled great distances to visit them. Some of these visitations may be characterized as a form of pilgrimage, but not as much for this time period. As the tiny frontier villa of San Antonio evolved slowly into a large and prosperous city, tourism became a staple of the economy.<sup>92</sup> In the present day, visitors line up to pay homage to the martyrs of the Alamo and view the quaint relics of the other four missions that gave rise to one of the city's nicknames, "the City of Missions."<sup>93</sup> And despite the tourists, these four missions remain active Catholic parishes today. Images of these missions, both in graphic and textual form, became fodder for railroad companies such as the Southern Pacific seeking to market their products and services. These companies sold a vision of the American Southwest based largely on a "fantasy Spanish heritage" to Americans seeking to travel to romantic and

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<sup>92</sup> Char Miller, "Tourist Trap: Visitors and the Modern San Antonio Economy," in Hal K. Rothman, ed., *The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003): 206-228. Miller used a particularly broad definition of "tourist" to include everything from colonial officials on inspection tours, to cattle drovers coming to market their herds, as well as the more modern and stereotypical image of tourists with cameras dangling from their necks or smart phones attached to "selfie sticks."

<sup>93</sup> Claude B. Aniol, *San Antonio: City of Missions* (New York: Hastings House, 1942). Aniol ran an advertising agency in San Antonio involved in promotional work for the city in the first half of the twentieth century. I will include more of Aniol's work in a future chapter.



exotic locales.<sup>94</sup> Anglos would later use this mythological Spanish past as a foil as they constructed a dominant American narrative. In a related vein, art historian Valerie Fraser has asserted “architectural metaphor is inherent in the vocabulary of imperialism.”<sup>95</sup> In San Antonio this metaphor encouraged tourists (especially Anglos) to see the missions as both symbol of Spanish (and by extension, European) conquest over the Native Americans, and as a decrepit, ruined state symbol of the old ways of Spanish colonialism that had been supplanted by more evolved Anglo-Americans wielding modern, industrial superiority. Over time, the images consumed became collective memories and a basis for national identity in the US during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

### **The Genesis of the Texas Missions**

The missions of San Antonio were not the first missions in what is now the State of Texas but have become the best known.<sup>96</sup> Two intrusions by French adventurers in 1685 and again in 1714 provided the impetus for Spanish officials to authorize sending missionaries into Texas. The first French incursion was the ill-fated colonizing

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<sup>94</sup> Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, rev. ed. with added material by Matt S. Meier (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1990), 43-53.

<sup>95</sup> Valerie Fraser, *The Architecture of Conquest: Building in the Viceroyalty of Peru, 1535-1635* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1.

<sup>96</sup> In 1682 the Spanish founded missions near El Paso del Norte for the Indians who accompanied their retreat south from the violence of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. These missions are not considered here as they were originally built south of the Rio Grande, as well as being under a different administrative unit (Nuevo Mexico rather than Tejas y Coahuila).

expedition led by the hapless René Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle. The second French infringement of Spanish claims was by intrepid explorer, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, who was much more savvy and successful than his earlier countryman. St. Denis' presence caused a great deal of consternation for the Spanish and ultimately convinced Crown officials that Texas needed more permanent colonization.

La Salle's intended goal was to establish a French colony at mouth of the Mississippi which would protect Canada's southern flank, give France an outpost on the Gulf Coast, and split Spanish Florida from the rest of New Spain. The French invasion sparked multiple, but unsuccessful, Spanish search-and-destroy missions. Spanish Governor Alonso De León did not find the remnants of LaSalle's colony until 1689, two years after the French explorer had been murdered and his colony wiped out.<sup>97</sup> One result of La Salle's intrusion was to inspire Spanish authorities to send missionaries to the Tejas and Caddo Indians. Mission San Francisco de los Tejas, founded in 1690, was the first of six missions planted along the current Texas-Louisiana border. Unfortunately, Spain's attempt to claim this area exceeded its logistical capabilities. Since the Spanish had no harbor along the Texas coast, supplies had to come by ox-cart via Mission San Juan Bautista, the nearest Spanish post, approximately thirty-five miles down the Rio Grande from modern-day Eagle Pass, Texas. This entailed a perilous journey of nearly 600 miles through hazardous terrain and hostile Native American groups. In 1691, Governor Domingo Terán de los Ríos, accompanied by Fray Damián

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<sup>97</sup> William C. Foster, *Spanish Expeditions into Texas, 1689-1768* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 17-51; and Donald E .Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 70-85.

Massanet explored other potential supply routes to the Tejas missions. During this expedition, they reconnoitered the area near present day San Antonio, even holding Mass by the river. Nevertheless, it would not be until 1718 that the settlement which grew into the major metropolitan city was founded.<sup>98</sup>

During the time between supply visits, the handful of Spanish friars and soldiers were dependent upon their native hosts. While sending Spanish friars and soldiers out in small numbers avoided much of the violence and financial costs associated with fielding an entire army, it put the Spanish in a position of weakness. Because of these small contingents, historian Juliana Barr states the Caddo peoples, which included the Tejas and the Hasinai, “never saw Spaniards as a ruling power.”<sup>99</sup> The Caddo allowed the Franciscans to build their missions and listened to their entreaties, but ultimately ignored pleas to dramatically change their way of life, particularly after smallpox began killing a disproportionate number of Caddo to Spanish.<sup>100</sup> The Caddo, as a nation of sedentary agriculturalists, had predictable sources of food and were militarily strong enough to repel enemy incursions. They had no need for what the Spanish offered and after several frustrating years, the Spanish withdrew from East Texas.

The second interloper, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, entered from Louisiana and made it all the way to the Rio Grande, nearly 600 miles, before encountering any

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<sup>98</sup> Foster, *Spanish Expeditions into Texas*, 51-57.

<sup>99</sup> Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 5. See also F. Todd Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance: The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786-1859* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 1-32.

<sup>100</sup> David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 154-155.

Spanish opposition; an embarrassing feat Spanish officials could not allow to be repeated.<sup>101</sup> In March, 1716, Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús, the Franciscan's Father President and leader of the Texas missions, re-founded the six missions in east Texas over the next two years. Just four months later, Margil wrote to the viceroy calling attention to the long distance and need for regular supplies:

“At a distance of more than 300 leagues from the nearest settlements, recourse cannot be had to our benefactors, nor is there reason to expect alms, nor can increased expenses and well known dangers from the natives be obviated. We are informing our superiors on this point so that they may make this especially plain to the paternal providence of Your Excellency from whom we await full relief.”<sup>102</sup>

Despite Fr. Margil's petitions, it took two years before the Spanish planted a new mission and presidio settlement at what is now San Antonio in 1718. In addition to its duties as a mission, this new settlement would act as a way station for supply trains travelling between the Rio Grande and the east Texas missions.<sup>103</sup>

## **Roles of the Missions**

In the spirit of the architectural axiom that “form follows function,” the intended functions of the missions of Texas warrant initial scrutiny. What were the Spanish

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<sup>101</sup> Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, 77-83, and 116-119; Foster, *Spanish Expeditions into Texas*, 17-33.

<sup>102</sup> Fr. Margil, *Nothingness Itself*, 220-227.

<sup>103</sup> Foster, *Spanish Expeditions into Texas*, 127-143; De La Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, 1-8.

intentions for the missionaries? The missions had four essential functions. First, the missionaries were to attract and gather willing Native Americans into a frontier community. Second, the missionaries were to convert these Native Americans to Roman Catholicism. Third, the missionaries were to teach Indians the essential vocational skills necessary to be a self-sufficient community on a remote frontier. Finally, the missionaries were to defend their neophytes, who in turn, as Christianized Indians that were now subjects of the Spanish crown, were also expected to defend their homes and fields against enemies such as Apache or Comanche raiders or rival European forces. Additionally, the most important feature of the missions was that they were supposed to be temporary. These four steps were theoretically to take only ten years, at the end of which, the missionaries would turn the churches over to the diocese and all properties to the Christianized Indians to become a functional Spanish villa and move further into the frontier to begin the process anew. This plan created a process to continually expand Spain's territorial claims.<sup>104</sup> Reality, however, would be very different.

The recruiting of nomadic indigenous people and gathering them together to form a mission community goes by the Spanish term, “*reducción*.” Critics of the Spanish missionary efforts have seized upon this term (and its unfortunate English cognate, “reduction”) to describe the precipitous drop in population among the Native American groups who entered the missions. Independent historian Robert H. Jackson,

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<sup>104</sup> Herbert E. Bolton, “The Mission as Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies,” *The American Historical Review* 23, no. 1 (October 1917): 42-61, accessed January 18, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1837685>; Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 17-23; Mardith K. Schuetz, “The Indians of the San Antonio Missions 1718-1821” (PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1980), 15-20. See also, Maria F. Wade, *Missions, Missionaries, and Native Americans: Long-term Processes and Daily Practices* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2008).

one of the most unrelenting critics of the Spanish missionary enterprise described the drastic decline of Native American populations in the San Antonio missions as nothing short of a “demographic collapse.”<sup>105</sup> Mardith Schuetz, an anthropologist and former archaeologist for the National Park Service, likewise noted precipitous declines in the indigenous populations. She observed that when the Coahuiltecan Indians (for whom the San Antonio missions were established) joined the missions their population did indeed drop, both as a result of European diseases against which the Indians had no immunity, and from the extreme cultural shock experienced by a previously nomadic hunter-gathering people that suddenly found themselves living in a strictly regimented and geographically constrained environ. Schuetz described the word “Coahuiltecan” as something of an umbrella term used to describe the many smaller tribes loosely linked by a common linguistic stock that gathered at the San Antonio missions. She further asserted that these small splintered groups were unable to compete with larger, more advanced tribal nations such as the Caddo. The Coahuiltecan, as hunter-gatherers, were a “fragile” society. They lacked the ability to effectively defend themselves against external influences. By joining with the Spanish at the missions, the Coahuiltecan exercised some agency to combat their marginalization within the larger Native American world. Schuetz claimed they just as easily could have chosen to assimilate

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<sup>105</sup> Robert H. Jackson, *The Missions and the Frontiers of Spanish America: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Environmental, Economic, Political, and Socio-Cultural Variations on the Missions in the Rio de la Plata Region and on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Scottsdale, AZ: Pentacle Press, 2005), 321. See also Robert H. Jackson, *From Savages to Subjects: Missions in the History of the American Southwest* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000); and Robert H. Jackson, “Congregation and Depopulation: Demographic Patterns in the Texas Missions,” *The Journal of South Texas* 17, no. 2 (2004): 6-38.

with the Caddo or the Apache.<sup>106</sup> However, by accepting the Spanish offers of food and shelter at the missions, those Coahuiltecan who survived “made the successful transition from a primitive people with a stone-age technology to citizens of a frontier community equipped with the requisite skills for survival in the modern world.”<sup>107</sup> The simple fact that the mortality rate among the mission Indians was appalling cannot be denied. Nonetheless, holding the friars culpable for the ravages of unknown contagions during this period of rudimentary medical understanding seems misguided at best.

The second function of the Spanish missions is arguably the most infamous: to convert the indigenous peoples to Roman Catholicism. As David Weber claimed, the “Franciscans had come to America with a militant vision that rivaled the more worldly dreams of the conquistadores.” Armed with the Gospel and apocalyptic vision, the Franciscans marched northward from Mexico into New Mexico and eventually Texas, either with or just ahead of Spanish explorers.<sup>108</sup> Congregating the Native Americans into mission communities for religious indoctrination and cultural assimilation had been devised in part to correct the heinous abuses of the quasi-feudal *encomienda* system that originated among the earliest conquistadores in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In theory, the Franciscans assumed a paternal role of instructing the Indians and converting them into tax-paying Spanish subjects and what they referred to as “*gente de razon*”

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<sup>106</sup> Schuetz, “The Indians of the San Antonio Missions 1718-1821,” 2-20.

<sup>107</sup> Schuetz, “The Indians of the San Antonio Missions 1718-1821,” 19. It is worth noting here that Schuetz concluded that by the 1780s the Indian population in San Antonio appeared to be stabilizing and even rebounding with increasing births and decline in childhood mortality. See Schuetz, “Indians of the San Antonio Missions,” 222-223.

<sup>108</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 94. See also Delno C. West, “Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission and the Early Franciscans in Mexico,” *The Americas* 45, no. 3 (January 1989), 293-313, accessed online January 3, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1007224/>.

(“people of reason”). This was considered an evolution away from a merely profit-driven, pecuniary system dependent on the naked and permanent exploitation of the Indian labor force. Also, the Spanish Crown contributed financially to the missionary enterprise both for religious reasons as well as to defend the empire.<sup>109</sup>

The Franciscans used gifts of food, clothing, and other material goods to reward Indian neophytes for learning the prayers, the songs, and rituals of Catholicism. The friars thus depended on a steady supply of material goods from Mexico and abroad which explains their dependence on regular supply trains reaching them consistently. In carrying out their order to convert the indigenous populations from pre-contact religious beliefs to Catholicism, the Franciscans counted an Indian’s baptism as a conversion in their record keeping. Although this practice had been established since the conquest of Mexico, it was not without controversy. Recent scholars have challenged how deep or committed Native Americans were to this new and foreign religion.<sup>110</sup> One of the Franciscans’ primary concerns came from Indians’ relapses into previous lifestyle either unintentionally or as a means of protest. The punishments for apostasy could be

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<sup>109</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 112-113, 124-125, and 307; Bolton, “The Mission as Frontier Institution,” 44-49.

<sup>110</sup> Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialog in Sixteenth Century Mexico* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1989); James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Viviana Díaz Balsera, *The Pyramid Under the Cross: Franciscan Discourses of Evangelization and the Nahuatl Christian Subject in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2005); Patricia Lopes Don, *Bonfires of Culture: Franciscans, Indigenous Leaders, and the Inquisition in Early Mexico, 1524-1540* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010). See also Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, *Fr. Gerónimo de Mendieta’s History: An Introduction to the Antecedents of the Spanish Missions in Texas*, with Introduction by Fr. Marion A. Habig, (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library, 1978), 17-18; Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 68-91.



severe.<sup>111</sup> Conversely, some Native Americans merely added Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Holy Trinity, and the other saints to their existing pantheon and made nice for the friars, but kept a measure of their pre-Contact religion. Historian Colin Calloway remarked that when confronted with the choice of clinging to their old ways or forsaking them for a new religion, many Native Americans “selected a middle path of their own making.”<sup>112</sup> Weber argued that the Indians practiced both religions retaining a degree of separation rather than “synthesizing” them into something new. Calloway, on the other hand, suggests there was more syncretism taking place than meets the eye.<sup>113</sup>

In addition to food, shelter, and material goods, historian James Sandos stressed the importance of music and singing in the conversion of the California Indians and it was apparently of similar value in Texas. On his 1767-1768 inspection tour of the San Antonio missions, Fray Gaspar José de Solís recorded that many of the neophytes at Mission San José displayed no small measure of musical ability, “Most of them play some musical instrument . . . a choir of four voices, soprano, alto, tenor, and base [*sic*], with musical accompaniment, sings so beautifully that it is a delight to hear it.”<sup>114</sup> At least some Native Americans were willing to raise their voices to make a joyful noise to their new deity. Nevertheless, in the book of written instructions to his successor, in

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<sup>111</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 98, 113, and 119; Wade, *Missions, Missionaries, and Native Americans*, 214-215.

<sup>112</sup> Calloway, *New Worlds for All*, 71.

<sup>113</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 118; Calloway, *New Worlds for All*, 91.

<sup>114</sup> James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 128-153; Rev. Peter P. Forrestal, “The Solís Diary of 1767,” *Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society* 1, no. 6 (March 1931): 21. See also Margaret Kenney Kress, “Diary of a Visit of Inspection of the Texas Missions Made by Fray Gaspar José de Solís in the Year 1767-68,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (July 1931): 51-52, accessed November 22, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30235387>.

1787, an unknown Spanish friar recommended taking an open mind regarding the persistence of certain indigenous practices:

“Regarding the lawfulness of the dance, called *mitote*, done by the Indians, (whatever one can say about it), this much is certain, that though some consider it evil, the missionary does make allowances. The claim is that the Indians cling to their superstitious practices and that for them this dance is like the *fandango* and *faraon* among the Spaniards. Therefore the missionary must be alert to prevent wrongdoing in the mission. Still, it is my conviction that when no superstition, no question of celebrating an enemy’s death, nor any sinful motive are present, then the *mitote* is not unlawful when done for mere diversion, because among the Indians it is the same as the *fandango* among the Spaniards.”<sup>115</sup>

This was but one example which questions the level of control exercised by the friars over their charges, and confirmed Mexican historian Silvio Zavala’s observation that the friars “had to adjust to the conditions prevailing on the frontier.”<sup>116</sup>

In terms of carrying out the third function—teaching their Native American charges the vocational and life skills they would need to survive as an independent Spanish villa—the Franciscans found themselves facing a difficult conundrum. They may have been trained well as preachers, but farming, wrangling, weaving, blacksmithing, and other vocational trades that were needed to build a frontier villa were in scarce supply. James Ivey, an archaeologist with the National Park Service, concludes that the use of Indian labor in constructing the missions was absolutely

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<sup>115</sup> Anonymous, *Guidelines for a Texas Mission: Instructions for the Missionary of Mission Concepción in San Antonio*, vol. 1 *Documents Relating to The Old Spanish Missions of Texas* edited by Howard Benoist and María Eva Flores. Translated by Benedict Leutenegger. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library 1994), 37.

<sup>116</sup> Silvio Zavala, “The Frontier of Hispanic America.” In *The Frontier in Perspective*, edited by Walker D. Wyman and Clifton B. Kroeber (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 47. Zavala was a history professor in Mexico and the director of the *Museo Nacional de Historia*.

essential for their acculturation into the Spanish lifeway. He notes, “a comparison of the development of the physical plant of a mission with the avowed purpose of the mission—the conversion of the Indians into productive, Christian, Hispanicized citizens—makes it clear that the construction effort was an integral part of the conversion process.”<sup>117</sup> The goal of the Franciscans was not to assimilate the indigenous into existing Spanish towns, but rather to create a separate society of Christianized Indians loyal to the King of Spain. Nonetheless, the friars believed that the Indians had to be living a “civilized” European lifestyle in order to be successfully converted to Catholicism.<sup>118</sup> The rationale of keeping Indian mission communities separate from Spanish communities was primarily intended to keep the Indians from picking up bad habits and vices from Spanish soldiers. This level of segregation proved impossible to maintain, especially in San Antonio since the friars relied upon the presidio soldiers both to teach the Indians vocational skills, to defend the mission against hostile Indians, and to assist in tracking down runaways.

In 1731, the community of San Antonio grew exponentially as the presidio and two existing missions (Valero and San José) welcomed the transfer of three missions (friars and their neophytes) from east Texas (Concepción, San Juan, and Espada) as well

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<sup>117</sup> James E. Ivey, “Of Various Magnificence: The Architectural History of the Missions of San Antonio, Texas in the Colonial Period and the Nineteenth Century” with contributions by Marlys Bush Thurber and Santiago Escobedo. (Santa Fe, NM: National Park Service, ca. 2006), 67, unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession (hereafter cited, Ivey, *OVM*, page). This manuscript began as a “Historical Structures Report” and grew into a detailed architectural history of all the mission churches in San Antonio, Texas. It is in need of thorough editing, but this author hopes it will eventually be published and available to a wider audience. The author acquired his copy through the generosity of one of the volunteer docents working at Mission Concepción.

<sup>118</sup> Gilberto M. Hinojosa, “Friars and Indians: Towards a Perspective of Cultural Interaction in the San Antonio Missions,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 9, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring 1990), 25-26; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 107-108, and 110-111.

as the arrival of over fifty settlers from the Canary Islands sent by the Crown to the area.<sup>119</sup> The Canary Islanders (also known as “*los Isleños*”) proved to be a mixed blessing for the community, at least early on. While on the remote Texas frontier the maxim “strength in numbers” was generally advantageous as a defense against the hostile Apaches, the new settlers unfortunately proved arrogant, quarrelsome, and litigious for several decades. Jealous of the missionaries’ use of Indians as agricultural labor and choice, irrigated farmland, the Islanders made numerous attempts to force labor from the Indian neophytes on their land. The missionaries, fearing the possibility of exploitation as well as corruption by the *Isleños*, refused to allow the neophytes to work in Islanders’ fields. A war of words thus made its way up the Spanish colonial bureaucratic hierarchy in which calumny and misrepresentation were common tactics.<sup>120</sup>

Defending the Spanish territorial claims was the final role of the missions. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the adversaries changed. Early rivals were European (French and British) and the various bands of Native Americans which actively resisted missionary efforts (such as the Karankawa). After 1720, the Lipan Apaches began aggressively raiding San Antonio taking horses, cattle, and people. As the mission compounds were constructed, the builders included defensive walls in the design; not just to keep the Indian neophytes in, but also as a measure of protection

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<sup>119</sup> De La Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, 17-18, 76-80, and 120-121.

<sup>120</sup> Gerald E. Poyo, “The Canary Island Immigrants of San Antonio: From Ethnic Exclusivity to Community in Eighteenth-Century Béxar,” in *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-Century San Antonio* ed. by Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 41-58; De La Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, 90, and 120. See also Benedict Leutenegger and Benito Fernández, “Memorial of Father Benito Fernández Concerning the Canary Islanders, 1741,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (January 1979): 265-296, accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30238589>, for the missionaries’ defense against a myriad of allegations laid by the *Isleños*.

against hostile raiders. Toward the end of the mission period, the Comanche had replaced the Apaches as the main threat. The Spanish Crown viewed the missions as a means to an end of expanding and marking its expansive territorial claims with small villas with minimal outlay of funds. The missionaries themselves were aware of this important role early on, as Fray Margil wrote in 1718 to the viceroy from east Texas: “By the founding of these two missions and the other three, any further progress on the part of the French has been blocked, and our captain has carried out the orders to establish missions until he should meet the French.”<sup>121</sup>

Intimately related to both the conversion and acculturation functions of the missions was the creation of the mission chapels as sacred space. As Adán Benavides sagaciously observed, “By commission, religious architecture is sacred, for it is the place for discourse with the divine.”<sup>122</sup> While none of the San Antonio mission chapels have been continuously used for divine service since the time they were built, the missions were consecrated as sacred spaces that have provided places for worshipers to enter into “discourse with the divine” for nearly three centuries. In his seminal text on collective memory, French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs discussed the relationship between a church building and its community of believers. He asserted that the “believer entering a church . . . knows he will recover a mental state he has experienced many times. Together with fellow believers he will re-establish, in addition to their visible community, a common thought and remembrance formed and maintained through the

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<sup>121</sup> Margil, *Nothingness Itself*, 251. Margil is referring to the missions then being re-established in east Texas, three of which would be transferred to the San Antonio region in 1731.

<sup>122</sup> Benavides, “Sacred Space, Profane Reality,” 1.

ages.”<sup>123</sup> Similarly, theologian Belden Lane asserts, “We form significant locales out of our memories, our relationships with others, a whole network of associations sacred and profane.”<sup>124</sup> The mission churches were at the time of construction and remain today houses of worship for the community of believers, and the spiritual foundation for the communities that grew up around them.

### **Building the Missions**

In his history of the province, Fray Juan Agustín Morfi marveled at the beauty of Mission San José, “no one could have imagined that there were such good artists in so desolate a place.”<sup>125</sup> How was such beauty created on the remote Texas frontier? It is important to remember that the mission churches visited by millions of tourists in the twenty-first century were not completed in months or even years. The mission chapels took decades, and even then for a variety of reasons, some were never finished. As Carlos Castañeda noted, the mission was “much more than the church and the house of the missionaries.” On the Spanish frontier, “mission” included not only the church, but additionally the granary and other buildings, the homes of the Indians as well as the

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<sup>123</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, translated by Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (1950; repr., New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980), 151.

<sup>124</sup> Belden C. Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 24.

<sup>125</sup> Juan Agustín Morfi, *History of Texas, 1673-1779*, vol. 6, translated by Carlos Eduardo Castañeda, (1935; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1967), 96.

missionaries, the defensive walls, and even the fields and ranches.<sup>126</sup> Nonetheless, of the original built environment, it is the church buildings that are most often what remain intact and serve as the visual cues for developing the collective memories.

As Mardith Schuetz observed, a “prevalent misconception is that the mission churches of the Spanish northern borderlands were literally built by their resident ministers.”<sup>127</sup> Herein lies part of my disagreement with Adán Benavides’ earlier statement regarding the inconsequentiality of how churches were built on the Texas frontier. A number of myths regarding the building of the missions have carried forward from the nineteenth- and into the twentieth centuries. Some of these myths are the result of lack of information; we simply do not have the plans, designs, drawings, and other documentary evidence to definitively show who designed and constructed the mission churches and their décor.<sup>128</sup> As a result of this dearth of documentary information, speculation and romantic tales have filled the gaps. This dissertation interrogates and dissects these myths and romantic tales which fueled the collective memories and tourists’ propaganda.

One example of this propaganda noted by James Ivey was the manner in which, “San Antonio tour guides usually say that some of the vaulted structures of the San Antonio missions, especially the granary at San José, were built with an earthen form;

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<sup>126</sup> Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, vol. 3, *The Mission Era: The Missions at Work, 1731-1761* (1938; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1976), 27.

<sup>127</sup> Mardith Schuetz, “Professional Artisans in the Hispanic Southwest,” *The Americas* 40, no. 1 (July 1983): 18, accessed November 21, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/981099>.

<sup>128</sup> Benavides, “Sacred Space, Profane Reality,” 2. See also John W. Reys, *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 41.

that is the entire structure was said to have been filled with a mound of earth, the top of which was shaped to the curve of the proposed vault.” Stones for the vault or dome were then laid over the dirt mound. Once the mortar had cured, the earth would then be removed from underneath by hand.<sup>129</sup> Such tales have existed for at least eight decades. In his 1936 book on San Antonio’s missions, architect Charles Mattoon Brooks, Jr. indicated the use of the earthen mound as a mold of sorts for vaults was an entrenched local legend.<sup>130</sup> Ethel Wilson Harris, who lived at Mission San José in the twentieth century and did much to enhance the romantic experience for tourists, published a guidebook for tourists in which she credited architect Harvey P. Smith, who supervised the 1930s-era restoration of San José, with confirming the use of this technique.<sup>131</sup> A few years later, the legend appeared again in the pages of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.<sup>132</sup> While Ivey allowed this was not an unheard of building technique, he asserted it was far too labor intensive to have been used constructing the San Antonio missions.<sup>133</sup>

As simple as Missions Espada and San Juan appear, and as small as Valero, San José, and Concepción may be compared to larger cathedrals both in Mexico as well as Europe, designing and constructing these churches in eighteenth century Texas was no mean feat. Practical considerations as well as Spanish guild laws required the

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<sup>129</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 66.

<sup>130</sup> Charles Mattoon Brooks, Jr. *Texas Missions: Their Romance and Architecture* (Dallas: Dealey and Lowe, 1936), 109.

<sup>131</sup> Ethel Wilson Harris, *San José Mission: Queen of the Missions* (San Antonio: Accurate Litho, 1942), pages not numbered.

<sup>132</sup> Billie Persons, “Secular Life in the San Antonio Missions,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (July 1958): 50.

<sup>133</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 66.



employment of specialists in stone cutting, carpentry, painting, and masonry. Having to hire this level of *maestro* also meant that designing and constructing the permanent stone church buildings had to wait until the missions became wealthy enough to attract skilled tradesmen to the northern Spanish borderlands. Both Ivey and Schuetz noted that a few specialists had always been associated with the missions since the beginning, but they were primarily used as teachers for the Indian neophytes.<sup>134</sup> Hence the delay until, as Benavides noted there were two major construction “booms” in San Antonio; the first in the 1740s and the second in the 1760s and 1770s. The economic well-being of the missions as well as the rise and fall of Indian populations directly affected the pace at which construction progressed.<sup>135</sup>

In terms of workforce and organization, the Father President of the missions generally acted as the patron and employer while the buildings were designed and the construction monitored by the *maestro de albañil* (master mason). Additional specialists included carpenters, freemasons, smiths, stonecutters, and teamsters. Local indigenous laborers made up the unskilled worker pool.<sup>136</sup> According to Mexican art historian Manuel Toussaint, the guild for architects in Mexico City passed an ordinance in 1736 which forbade non-Spaniards from becoming architects. The ordinance did allow *criollos* (persons born in the New World of Spanish parents) to qualify but specifically excluded Indians and mestizos.<sup>137</sup> However, while this ordinance may have controlled

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<sup>134</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 40; Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 18-19.

<sup>135</sup> Benavides, “Sacred Space, Profane Reality,” 8.

<sup>136</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 40-44, and 72-75.

<sup>137</sup> Manuel Toussaint, *Colonial Art in Mexico*, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth Wilder Weismann. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 277-278.

racial and ethnic backgrounds of architects at the Mexican urban center, on the northern frontier, things tended to be less restrictive. Nonetheless, in order for a building to have “an arch, vault, or dome, a master mason built it.”<sup>138</sup> In her article on professional artisans in San Antonio, Schuetz included a chart where she plotted the names, race or ethnic identifier (if known), and rank (if known) of many of the artisans who worked in the villa during the eighteenth century. Of the ten specifically ranked as a “master,” only three were identified as “Spaniard.” The rest were listed as Indians of various tribes or mixed race.<sup>139</sup> The imagined ethnicity of one particular artisan (Pedro Huizar) plays into some of the most cherished myths of Mission San José toward the latter part of the eighteenth century.

### **Mission Aesthetics**

Just as New Spain’s Northern Frontier was a place where no one group could claim hegemony, the missions themselves were architectural borders where no single style reigned alone. Construction drawn out over several decades partly explains this. Indeed, as Ivey observed, the “single most striking thing about the history of construction of the San Antonio missions is that no single architect completed his plan at

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<sup>138</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 70.

<sup>139</sup> Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 35-36. There may have been additional “master” craftsmen among those listed whose race/ethnicity was unknown at the time.

the missions—no mission represents a completed architectural intent.”<sup>140</sup> Ivey also believed “mission architecture in Texas was a mixture of vernacular and formal” styles as the architects “took the basic elements requested by the Franciscans and expressed them in the current style, or an amalgam of styles of the past.”<sup>141</sup> This observation is borne out by Schuetz as well as art historian John McAndrew, who noted that in Europe it is possible to trace a building’s construction timeline via the evolution of specific styles. However in Mexico, the various popular European “stylistic elements did not necessarily reappear in the same sequence,” thus allowing “gothic and renaissance” to be “contemporaneous rather than successive.”<sup>142</sup> The overall style of the mission churches is generally Spanish Baroque (some nineteenth-century travel narratives incorrectly refer to them as medieval), with hints of an even more ornate subset, Churrigueresque, particularly on San José’s façade.<sup>143</sup> Additionally, Schuetz asserted that Spanish Baroque was itself informed by the Iberian Peninsula’s rich history of Islamic, Visigothic, Romanesque, and Plateresque styles. As these styles moved northward from central Mexico, they evolved in surprising ways.<sup>144</sup> McAndrew also noted how traditional European styles which had already been modified by Moorish artistic

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<sup>140</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 411.

<sup>141</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 14. This is from Ivey’s Introduction, in which the pages are numbered separately from the main text.

<sup>142</sup> Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 17-18; John McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 169.

<sup>143</sup> Toussaint, *Colonial Art in Mexico*, 277; and Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 17-18.

<sup>144</sup> Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 17-18, and 24.

traditions on the Iberian Peninsula, were brought across the ocean to New Spain, and constructed by Native American laborers who made their own creative contributions.<sup>145</sup>

## Architects and Artisans

Multiple authors have noted the difficulties of constructing monumental architecture on the Texas frontiers in the eighteenth century: Fray Morfi's astonishment at the magnificence of Mission San José on the "desolate" frontier; Mardith Schuetz's conviction about how the "missionaries emphasized the difficulty in finding a qualified artisan willing" to accept a commission on the remote frontier; and Ivey's assertion that "no *maestros de albañil* lived in Texas during the early years of the new settlements."<sup>146</sup> Perhaps no account can illustrate those difficulties better than the drama associated with the first *maestro*, Antonio de Tello. Around the year 1740, the Franciscan friars of the College of Querétaro, Mexico, who managed the missions of Valero, Concepción, San Juan, and Espada, contracted with Spaniard Antonio de Tello, a master mason and sculptor from Zacatecas. Though no contract or other documentation between Tello and the Franciscans has been found, Ivey opined it was, "highly unlikely that a master mason would have come to San Antonio on his own."<sup>147</sup> Tello was only around twenty-seven

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<sup>145</sup> McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico*, 169. Traditional medieval European architecture tended to be austere, but the ornate arabesques from Moorish Spain, as well as techniques for embellishments developed during the Renaissance, served to liven up the traditional feel.

<sup>146</sup> Morfi, *History of Texas, 1673-1779*, 96; Schuetz, "Professional Artisans," 19; Ivey, *OVM*, 73.

<sup>147</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 78.

years old when he set out for the Texas frontier with his new commission. He began an ambitious building program for four of the mission churches. Additionally, there is enough visual evidence to suggest that Tello did some additional design work for the façade of the new parish church of Our Lady of Candelaria for the *Isleños*. In order to maintain a manageable workload, Ivey asserted that Tello used the same basic template, a simple cruciform design, for each church, the main distinguishing feature being the façade and other decorative elements. Ivey concluded the “main entrance doorways of Concepción, Valero, and Candelaria, and the unfinished *mixtilíneo* arched doorway at Espada are very much alike, all in the flat style called *plateresco*, more typical of the sixteenth century. This suggests that Tello was running through the basic arch designs to distinguish each façade from the others.”<sup>148</sup> Sometime in 1741, Tello and his work crew began building Mission Concepción; three years later, after construction progressed sufficiently, Tello and his crew laid the cornerstone of Valero on May 8, 1744.<sup>149</sup>

Unfortunately for the friars, Tello’s personal life did not live up to his holy commission. On August 21, 1744, a gunshot shattered the peaceful evening. Two hours later, Don Alberto Lopez Aguado y Villa Fuerte, *alcalde* for the villa of San Fernando (now the city of San Antonio), was summoned to a house where a man lay dying of a bullet wound. Since the villa had no professional surgeon or doctor, and Francisco Joseph de Arocha, the notary public also present, believed the wound mortal, the *alcalde* began his judicial inquiries. They swore in the wounded man, Matías Treviño, aged

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<sup>148</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 78-80. Ivey claimed that working on multiple projects simultaneously was not unheard of for architects during this time. Our Lady of Candelaria is now known as San Fernando Cathedral in downtown San Antonio.

<sup>149</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 78.

forty-eight, and began asking him the circumstances of his calamity. Despite what was likely agonizing pain, Treviño accused Antonio Tello [*sic*], “mason of the mission of San Antonio” of shooting him at point-blank range. Treviño attested Tello had invited him some distance from the villa to pick up a yearling Tello owed him. As Treviño bent down for the animal, Tello produced a pistol and fired. The bullet passed through Treviño’s wrist as well as his abdomen. After Tello fired, Treviño claimed he began to pistol-whip him as well saying, “Now you’ll see, cuckold.” When asked if there had been any quarrel between the two men, Treviño stated that a few days before he scolded his wife in Tello’s presence for unfaithfulness with Tello. Treviño then related how his wife ominously swore, “I’ll have you killed.” Since he considered himself a Christian facing his own mortality, Treviño asked God’s forgiveness on both Tello and his wife. He died at approximately four o’clock the next morning.<sup>150</sup>

Aguado directed presidio Captain Torribio de Urrutia to apprehend Tello the next day, only to discover the suspect had taken refuge in what would have been the temporary church building of Mission San Antonio de Valero. Urrutia stationed a few troops around the building with orders to arrest Tello if he came out. Aguado secured the permission of Fr. Mariano Francisco de los Dolores, the friar in charge of Mission San Antonio de Valero, and interrogated Tello in the relative safety of the mission church. Tello admitted to firing the fatal shot, but blamed a case of mistaken identity; he

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<sup>150</sup> Criminal Proceedings Against Antonio Tello, Charged with Killing Matías Treviso. August 21, 1744, 71-80. Trans. from the Bexar Archives, Briscoe Center for American History. Accessed online, August 1, 2013, [http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar/gallery\\_doc.php?doc=e\\_bx\\_000061](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar/gallery_doc.php?doc=e_bx_000061). The original Spanish is also available through this website. The murder victim’s name is spelled as “Treviso” in the title of the English translation, “Tribiño” in the Spanish original, and a variety of ways in the typescript of the English translation.

thought the man he shot was an Apache about to attack him. The suspect also denied having illicit relations with Treviño's wife. However, Aguado seemed incredulous that Tello could have shot a man at such close range that left powder burns on the dead man's shirt and not recognize who he had killed. As Aguado's investigation progressed, more evidence mounted against the mason. Other community members testified that while Treviño had been out of the country on business, Tello's behavior with the victim's wife was notorious. The mason allegedly built a house at his own cost for Treviño's wife in order to carry on their affair. Aguado also cross-examined Treviño's wife, Rosa Guerra. Despite her denials he placed her in irons since there was not a separate jail cell for women. Three days after the shooting, Aguado and a company of soldiers from the presidio, again with the permission of Fr. Dolores, went to Valero to arrest Tello only to find the man had escaped. At this point, Tello disappears from history.<sup>151</sup>

When Tello bolted from San Antonio in 1744, some of his building projects halted while others continued. Construction on the church at Concepción did stop as the church was half finished and the friars may have wanted to find another qualified *maestro* to complete the job. Work on the parish church also stopped. However, the friars and their neophytes continued to work on the Valero church and the Espada and San Juan granaries by simplifying Tello's plans. This consisted of dropping the complex vaulted roof line in favor of a flat one. Ivey suggested that some of the laborers may

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<sup>151</sup> Criminal Proceedings Against Antonio Tello, 81-102; also, Schuetz, "Professional Artisans," 19-20; and Ivey, *OVM*, 81-82. Ivey stated while that no trial record exists for Rosa Guerra, she did appear in later census records as having married twice more.

have been journeymen masons and carpenters who the friars believed were qualified to carry on with such modifications. However, it would be four years before another *maestro de albañil*, Gerónimo de Ibarra, and *maestro de escultor*, Felipe de Santiago, arrived in San Antonio. After the Tello scandal, future *maestro* contracts included moving families to San Antonio as part of their compensation.<sup>152</sup>

When Ibarra and Santiago arrived, they modified Valero's façade. Tello designed a façade in the somewhat outdated Plateresque-style characterized by flatter, less-rounded decorations and embellishments. Instead of retaining this older style of decoration, Ibarra and Santiago created more modern, Baroque-style ornamentation including the "familiar fully round *salomónico* columns standing out from the façade and the elaborate carving of the multiple cornices and niches on the façade today."<sup>153</sup> The result has all the appearance of a triumphal arch motif (see Fig. 2.1). In her thought-provoking study of Spanish colonial architecture, Valerie Fraser asserted how such a basic motif could carry a significant amount of symbolic power. The use of an arch, particularly a triumphal arch was a bold and blatant declaration of victory of the Spanish Catholic God over any and all indigenous deities. Fraser concluded Spain, as the "conquering power" seized what they perceived as advantages by "making a clear visual distinction" between Catholicism as manifested in the advanced technology employed and the complexity of the Spanish churches' design and aesthetics, and the lack of such

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<sup>152</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 82-86.

<sup>153</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 119.



refinements on the part of the Native Americans. Fraser likens the distinction to be nothing less than that between “civilization, and barbarism.”<sup>154</sup>

Although Fraser raised some curious points, she discounted the degree to which the Spanish depended upon Native American labor. In the region of her study, the indigenous peoples had a history of building large structures, but not so on the Texas frontier. Similarly, there is no record of whether the Coahuiltecans grasped the symbolism of a triumphal arch, but given their lack of experience with Western monumental architecture, we may assume that Ibarra and Santiago’s efforts on the façade of Valero may have been understood or appreciated differently than intended.

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<sup>154</sup> Fraser, *Architecture of Conquest*, 153. Fraser’s critique of the Spanish colonial effort would fall in the same historiographical camp as Ramón A. Gutiérrez, and his book, *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away*.

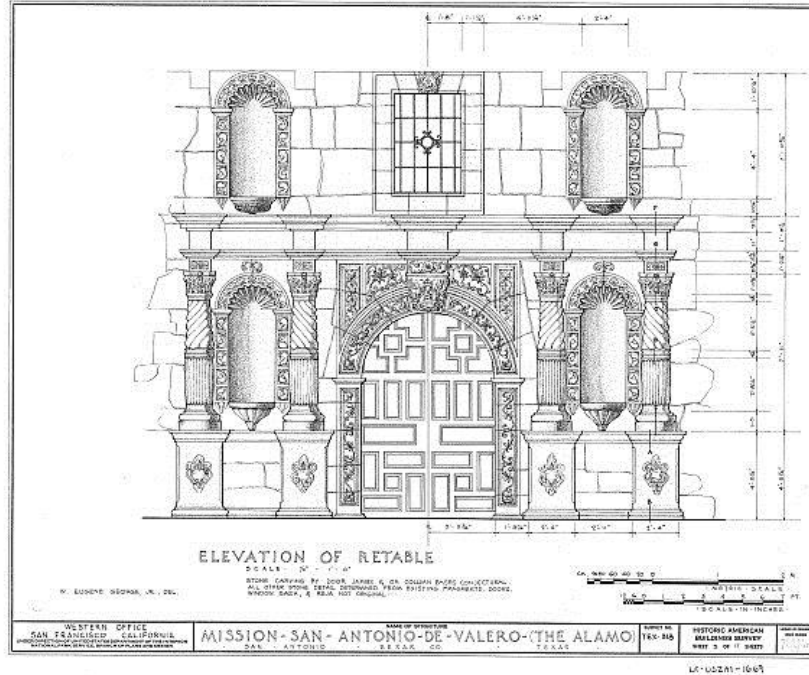


Figure 2.1 Retable (façade) of Mission San Antonio de Valero showing proportions as a triumphal arch. Image from the Library of Congress Historic American Building Survey (HABS) collection. HABS TEX,15-SANT,15- (sheet 5 of 17) Accessed online: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.tx0035/sheet.00005a>, April 2, 2015.

According to his 1759 report, Fr. Mariano Francisco de los Dolores y Biana noted that the interior of the Valero mission church was completed. Although he did not specifically mention the status of the roof, Dolores indicated that the interior had been furnished with works of art, altars, and carved images which would suggest some form

of covering to protect against the elements.<sup>155</sup> Unfortunately, just three years later on a return visit, Fr. Dolores noted the church had collapsed because of the “poor intelligence” of the builder.<sup>156</sup> We do not know if the fault lay solely with the unnamed builder who finished the job Tello started but was perhaps incompetent, or if the fault was with the friars who tried to continue working on the church in the intervening time between Tello’s sudden departure and Ibarra’s arrival four years later. Fr. Dolores did state that a new church was being constructed to replace the one that had fallen in.<sup>157</sup>

In July, 1761, *maestro* Joseph Palafox, perhaps the most talented artisan to work on the San Antonio missions given his multiple specializations, arrived from Saltillo. Ivey cited mission account ledgers which referred to Palafox as a master mason, stone cutter, and foreman.<sup>158</sup> Between his arrival in 1761 and departure for greener pastures in 1765, Palafox made several major contributions to the missions seen today by modern tourists. He designed the church for San José that stands today, although he left before construction actually began. Approximately two years after Palafox left, Fr. Gaspar Solis participated in the ceremony to begin construction at San José with Governor Hugo O’Conor. As Solis recorded in his diary, he “blessed the foundations and the first stones, . . . Don Hugo O’Conor laid one of the stones and I laid the other.” He also

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<sup>155</sup> Fr. Mariano Francisco de los Dolores y Biana, *1759 Report of Fr. Mariano Francisco de los Dolores y Biana*. Trans. by Rosalind Z. Rock from Archivo Franciscano—Convento de Queretaro/Celaya, Our Lady of the Lake University. (San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, 2007), 21, accessed online March 1, 2015, <http://www.nps.gov/saan/learn/historyculture/stories.htm>.

<sup>156</sup> Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 20.

<sup>157</sup> Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 20.

<sup>158</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 89-90. As with Ibarra and Santiago, the costs of moving Palafox’s wife to San Antonio the next year, was part of his compensation.

described the planned church as a large stone structure 150 feet long and 30 feet wide.<sup>159</sup> Additionally, Palafox replaced the ceiling over Valero.<sup>160</sup>

One of Palafox's more interesting influences on the missions involves the door of Mission Espada. The permanent church for Espada had been designed nearly two decades before by Antonio Tello, but never completed. This design included ornamentation for the main door. In its current state, the arch over the door appears broken. (See Fig. 2.2) One modern professional, architect and historic preservation expert W. Eugene George argued that Espada's doorway arch is "one of the few Mudejar arches known to exist in the region." However, the voussoirs were "incorrectly placed during the initial construction period."<sup>161</sup> George believed the stones had been pre-cut and left for later installation by a designer who ultimately was not present to answer any questions the laborers might have. Had these stones been installed correctly, a much cleaner, more harmonious arch would result giving the overall appearance of some of the horseshoe arches used in the Great Mosque of Cordoba, Spain. He concluded that the directions regarding the stones "might not have been fully comprehended. Having never seen an arch with elements that first spring outward from an opening prior to curving inward, the workcrew must have been baffled."<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Forrestal, "The Solis Diary of 1767," 18; Kress, "Diary of a Visit of Inspection of the Texas Missions Made by Fray Gaspar José de Solís," 48.

<sup>160</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 89-90.

<sup>161</sup> Eugene George, "Espada Doorway: A Lesson in Harmony," *Perspective* 9, no. 1 (May 1980), 13.

<sup>162</sup> George, "Espada Doorway," 14. Horseshoe arches are also known as "Moorish arches."



Figure 2.2 Portal showing the “broken” Mudejar arch. Mission Espada, San Antonio, TX. Photograph by the author. December 21, 2014.

James Ivey, on the other hand, disputed any notion the stones were installed incorrectly. He contended that because the Espada chapel seen today was not designed to be the permanent church for the mission but rather the sacristy for a larger sanctuary, the arched portal was never intended to be placed where it is. When a decision was made to forego plans for the larger church and make the sacristy into the chapel, Palafox repurposed the stones Tello had left for the main portal. The problem, according to Ivey, was that the main church was designed to be larger than the sacristy and the doorway arch Tello designed would not fit the front of the sacristy. Therefore, Palafox altered the design and rearranged the stones. This change made the design both narrower and lower by two feet “to match the smaller scale of the sacristy/church and to avoid having to disturb the choir loft.” Ivey concludes Palafox made these alterations to save time and money, both of which may have been in short supply at the time, rather than create a new design from scratch.<sup>163</sup> Of the competing explanations of the mystery of Espada’s portal, Ivey’s theory has the advantage over George’s based on two decades of additional research and the conclusion that the original stone arch had been intended for a different (and somewhat larger) building.

The next *maestro de albañil* after Palafox to have a significant impact on the missions was Antonio Salazar. Salazar was an Indian (no tribal affiliation given), born in Zacatecas, and arrived in San Antonio sometime after 1768.<sup>164</sup> There is some dispute

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<sup>163</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 283.

<sup>164</sup> Census by Families, of San José Mission, 1792, Bexar Archives, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Accessed online, April 7, 2015, [http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar/gallery\\_doc.php?doc=e\\_bx\\_006945](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar/gallery_doc.php?doc=e_bx_006945). Both Spanish and English are available from this site.

over the degree to which Salazar contributed to Mission San José. Mardith Schuetz claimed, “it is now possible to identify the genius behind the magnificent baroque church with a reasonable chance of being correct,” and named Salazar as the designer and builder of the mission chapel.<sup>165</sup> Ivey, on the other hand, asserted that Palafox designed the church and Salazar only modified the design.<sup>166</sup> Both conclusions rely on a fair amount of speculation as the records for San José before 1779 cannot be found. Schuetz believed that there was no coincidence that Salazar was from Zacatecas and Mission San José was founded by friars from the apostolic college in that city.<sup>167</sup> Even if Salazar did not design the entire church, Ivey noted that he “had a strong influence on this era of mission architecture in the San Antonio area. . . His contributions may be found at all the missions.”<sup>168</sup> At Valero Salazar built supporting ribs for the vaulted ceiling as well as those to support the planned dome and groined vaulting. Salazar also worked on the granary at San José. And at both San Juan and Espada Salazar added identical *espadañas* (a raised wall or gable cut for bells to be mounted) which distinguish the outline of these two small chapels into the present day.<sup>169</sup>

In late December of 1777 and early January of 1778, the inspection tour of Teodoro de Croix, commandant general of the *Provincias Internas*, lodged in San Antonio. While Croix had little positive to say about the frontier villa or the presidio, the man who accompanied the expedition as chaplain, Fray Juan Agustín Morfi, kept his

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<sup>165</sup> Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 31.

<sup>166</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 94 and 169.

<sup>167</sup> Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 31-32.

<sup>168</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 94.

<sup>169</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 93-95.

own diary and in his later history of the Province offered his assessment on the ecclesiastical environment. Morfi's diary remarked that in January of 1778, the chapel at San José was not yet completed, although even in its unfinished state was strikingly beautiful. He noted the vaulting over the nave and a dome. He also described how the white stone used on the façade was easily worked into the fantastic shapes by the carvers. The mission church was so pretty, that by comparison Morfi noted the church of the villa did not fare nearly as well.<sup>170</sup> Later, in his history of Texas, Morfi expanded his admiration for Mission San José. He considered San José "in truth, the first mission in America, not in point of time, but in point of beauty, plan, and strength."<sup>171</sup> If he found fault it was in the excess of ornamentation on the interior of the church and on the façade. Perhaps Morfi had developed more cosmopolitan tastes in Mexico City where, according to Mardith Schuetz, the elaborate ornamentation of the Churrigueresque was being supplanted by a more restrained neo-classicism.<sup>172</sup> All in all, Morfi thought the chapel at San José was of such beauty as to "grace a large city as a parish church."<sup>173</sup>

Just as previous master masons worked with fellow artisans, Antonio Salazar had assistance while he worked on the mission churches. Ivey noted that while Salazar was a master mason, he was not a master fine-carver or sculptor. In the eighteenth century, fine-carving was closely related to wood-working, and a carpenter could sometimes be

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<sup>170</sup> Fr. Juan Agustín de Morfi, *Diario y Derrotero (1777-1781) por Fray Juan Agustín de Morfi*. Edición de Eugenio de Hoyo y Malcolm D. McLean. (Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico: Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores, 1967), 102-104. Translation is mine.

<sup>171</sup> Morfi, *History of Texas, 1673-1779*, 95-96.

<sup>172</sup> Mardith K. Schuetz, trans., *Architectural Practice in Mexico City: A Manual for Journeyman Architects of the Eighteenth Century* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1987), 4.

<sup>173</sup> Morfi, *History of Texas, 1673-1779*, 95-96.



relied upon to apply decorative touches. At San José in the 1770s, that person was the legendary Pedro Huizar.<sup>174</sup> Depending on which version of the legend one finds, Huizar (usually “Pedro,” but sometimes appearing as “Juan”) alternately appears as a young Spanish immigrant arriving on the frontier to begin plying his trade, or he is already a master sculptor sent personally by the King of Spain as a direct descendant of the artist who created the Alhambra to San Antonio to decorate this specific church. Waiting for him across the wide ocean is the love of his life, Rosa. Again, depending on the version, Rosa ships passage to the New World to marry Pedro, but is lost at sea; or, Rosa stays in Spain, tires of waiting for Pedro and marries another man. Heartbroken, poor Pedro pours out his devotion and anguish into the intricate carvings which embellish the south-facing window of San José’s sacristy, known either as “the Rose Window” or “Rosa’s Window,” and by some tales, dies a very lonely man shortly after completing the decorations.<sup>175</sup>

According to the historical record however, Pedro Huizar was not a Spaniard, but either a mulatto or a mestizo, from Aguas Calientes. Originally a carpenter, he also did considerable work surveying mission lands in preparation for closing and secularizing

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<sup>174</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 96-98; and Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 32. Over the years and in various legends Huizar’s name appears variously spelled as “Huisar,” “Huicar,” or even “Guicar.”

<sup>175</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 96-97. Ivey credited Edward King, a journalist who travelled in Texas in the early 1870s with first publishing the version with Huizar as the Spanish monarch’s favorite sculptor, although the story was probably well-known locally prior. See Edward King, *The Great South* (Hartford: The American Publishing Co., 1875). King also published his dispatch on San Antonio and the missions in the popular magazine, *Scribner’s Monthly* (January 1874). A more detailed discussion on King and the late nineteenth-century popular press will appear in a later chapter of this dissertation. For more on the legends of Huizar, see Luis Torres, *Voices from the San Antonio Missions* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1997), 289-292; Fr. Marion A. Habig, *San Antonio’s Mission San José: State and National Historic Site, 1720-1968* (San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1968), 211-213; Robert Sturmberg, *History of San Antonio and of the Early Days in Texas* (San Antonio: Press of the Standard Printing Co., 1920), 125. A rose window may also refer to the large circular windows seen in some European Gothic cathedrals.

the missions in the 1790s. The 1792 census of families living at Mission Concepción listed “Huisar” [*sic*] as a mestizo carpenter, having a wife and five children between the ages of four and fourteen. Ivey and Schuetz noted that Antonio Salazar acted as godfather to several of Huisar’s children. His sons later served as local officials for mission communities in the early 1800s. Although Schuetz considered Salazar as the mastermind behind the elaborate decoration of Mission San José’s façade and sacristy window, Ivey claimed there was no reason not to believe that Pedro Huisar was, indeed, the brilliant artist responsible.<sup>176</sup> (See Fig. 2.3.)

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<sup>176</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 96-98; Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 32; Census by Families, of Mission Concepción, 1792, Bexar Archives, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Accessed online, April 7, 2015, [http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar/gallery\\_doc.php?doc=e\\_bx\\_010084](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar/gallery_doc.php?doc=e_bx_010084); and Schuetz, “The Indians of the San Antonio Missions 1718-1821,” 303-308.



Figure 2.3 Rose Window, Mission San José, San Antonio, TX. Photograph by the author, 11/15/2013.

If we briefly interrogate the legends of the “Spanish” Pedro Huizar, one important question is whether he was deliberately “whitened.” Did the legends’ proponents believe that a mixed race individual was incapable of executing such a large

scale and magnificent oeuvre, to the degree that they had to make the artist of European stock? Or, if we examine another aspect, if Huizar was supposedly descended from the artist who decorated the Alhambra, he becomes Moorish, or by the eighteenth century, Mudejar. In this case, Huizar is not “whitened,” but instead “Orientalized,” albeit with a European royal blessing.<sup>177</sup> The tragic love story element is pure romantic fiction and created from whole cloth since census records clearly show Huizar was married with a family. Those who created the legends may have had only the man’s name and little additional information regarding Huizar’s ethnicity. As Torres reminds us, at present there is no documentary evidence positively linking Pedro Huizar to Rosa’s Window.<sup>178</sup> Thus, the entertainment value becomes more important than historical reality and the tale grows with the telling. The additional consequence is the increasing divergence between collective memory and historical fact.

Both the sacristy window (the Rose window) and the façade are superb examples of Baroque flourishes and sculpture. Whether Antonio Salazar or Pedro Huizar designed and carved the tracings, scallop motifs, figures of saints, cherubs, and flowers, or whether they directed a team of stone-cutters and assemblers in the work, the result is nothing short of impressive. When completed, the friars could use the sculpting around the main portal as a teaching tool for converting the Coahuiltecan Indians to Catholicism. Unlike the triumphal arch on the façade of Valero where comprehending

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<sup>177</sup> For more on the concept of “Orientalism” and the manner in which Arabic and darker-skinned peoples have been exoticized and marginalized by Western European cultures throughout history, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition with a New Preface by the Author. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

<sup>178</sup> Torres, 291.

the symbolism was dependent upon a degree of knowledge of Western architecture, the façade of San José shows in graphic detail the Biblical “Tree of Jesse,” or a genealogy of Jesus Christ. On the first level on either side of the elaborately carved wooden doors, are niche-pilasters with statues set out from insets in the wall behind (a common decorative technique for this era). The figures represent St. Joachim and St. Anne, traditionally held as the parents of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus. Centered just above the door, on the arch keystone, is the Virgin Mary as Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of New Spain.<sup>179</sup> On the second level of the design, above an oval window, is a stature of St. Joseph (in Spanish, “San José,” titular saint of this mission) holding the Christ child. He is flanked on either side by statues representing St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic (founders of the mendicant orders). At the top of the façade is the icon of the Sacred Heart (a heart wrapped in thorns) representing Christ and His outpouring of love for the world. As Schuetz marveled, this “visual representation must have been awesome to the Indian neophytes.”<sup>180</sup> (See Fig. 2.4.)

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<sup>179</sup> Theologian Timothy Matovina offered an interesting commentary on Guadalupan devotion in San Antonio from colonial times to the present, although his study ignored the missions and concentrated on the parish church of San Fernando for *los Isleños*. Matovina concluded that Our Lady of Guadalupe’s appeal is primarily based on her brown skin and her offering of protection and succor to all *castas*. See, Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 10-17, and 64.

<sup>180</sup> Schuetz, “Professional Artisans,” 29; Jacinto Quirarte, *The Art and Architecture of the Texas Missions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 86-92.



Figure 2.4 Façade decoration, “Tree of Jesse,” Mission San José, San Antonio, TX. Photograph by the author, 11/15/2013.

## Secularization and its Discontents

At this point changes across the entire Spanish frontier completely altered the trajectory of San Antonio's missions. While these changes were largely beyond the missionaries' control, some modern critics of the missionary efforts point to these as indicators of the missions' failures. Ivey observed that in the waning years of the eighteenth century, all of the missions' functions changed. The frontier was becoming more settled and larger numbers of Hispanic settlers were able to reside at the missions.<sup>181</sup> Some of the changes were merely administrative. In 1767 the King of Spain had expelled the Jesuit order from the empire. The Franciscans from the apostolic college of Querétaro moved in to administer the former Jesuit holdings in modern-day California and Arizona, which necessitated some reshuffling of responsibilities elsewhere on the Spanish frontier. In 1773, the Querétarans relinquished control of their San Antonio missions (Valero, Concepción, San Juan, and Espada) to their brethren from the apostolic college in Zacatecas to facilitate their move westward.<sup>182</sup>

Other changes had a more direct impact on the missions. These changes coincided with shifting Spanish strategies in dealing with the Apache and Comanche, European power struggles, and fiscal issues. In an attempt to get a handle on the latter, in early 1778, Commandant General Teodoro de Croix declared all unbranded livestock to be Crown property and fixed a tax on killing or selling livestock outside of the

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<sup>181</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 305.

<sup>182</sup> Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 242-243; and Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 26.

province. Croix set a four month grace period before this edict went into effect for the missions and ranches to round up and brand what they might from area herds.

Unfortunately, the missions, whose populations had already been declining for a variety of reasons could not field or contribute enough wranglers for these round ups and thus lost most of their potential wealth.<sup>183</sup> In his 1785 report to his superiors in Zacatecas, Fr. José Francisco López, Father President of the San Antonio missions laid the blame for the missions' struggling circumstances primarily on Croix and his parsimonious policies. López described the chapels of Valero, Concepción, and San José as being made of cut or wrought stone with carved gates and good locks. He also remarked on the beautiful decorative touches such as the façade of Valero, Concepción's twin bell towers and "cupola" (dome), and judged San José's church and sacristy "because of their architecture, are the most beautiful structures to be seen anywhere this side of Saltillo." López estimated the fine furnishings necessary to conduct religious services valued at a combined twenty-two thousand *pesos*, but noted the combined population of the three missions only amounted to two-hundred sixty-one (of whom only thirty-two were neophytes, the rest of the "Indians" had been Christianized). López attributed the low population to a recent plague of "buboes," as well as the missions being too poor to adequately feed the resident Indian populations.<sup>184</sup> Although Croix's plan was overturned by the Crown eight years later, the damage done had been immense. As historian Don Chipman observes, "Since the first days of Spain in America, state and

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<sup>183</sup> Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, 203-204.

<sup>184</sup> Fr. José Francisco López, "The Texas Missions in 1785," trans. by J. Autrey Dabbs, in *Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society* 3, no. 6 (January 1940), 5-9, and 12-13.



church, sword and cross, had labored together, at least in theory. That cooperation had essentially ended by 1782.”<sup>185</sup>

After 1780 the Franciscans began preparing the missions for secularization. Part of those measures included finishing as many building projects as possible. Churches that were not yet finished were completed as soon as possible; or, if unable to be completed, other stone buildings such as granaries and sacristies were converted to be used as the permanent churches as was the case at San Juan and Espada.<sup>186</sup> It is ironic that just as the missions were completing the permanent stone churches, their function to their community changed so dramatically. Nonetheless, this was part of the original plan that missions be temporary, a fact that seems lost on many modern critics. In preparation for the transition to secular life, the Franciscans reduced the amount of time spent in basic evangelism, and with the assistance of local villagers who moved into the mission communities, began instructing the Indians in the civic duties which were expected of all royal subjects.<sup>187</sup>

In a follow-up report of 1792, Fr. López argued that the time had come to convert the San Antonio missions into secular holdings and send the missionaries further afield to begin the process anew, as had been the plan all along.<sup>188</sup> López reported that the

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<sup>185</sup> Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, 194.

<sup>186</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 10. This is from his “Introduction” which is numbered separately from the rest of the manuscript.

<sup>187</sup> Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, 202.

<sup>188</sup> “Secular” here, as in many secondary sources consulted, is under the direction of a diocesan priest. In New Spain during the colonial era there were two types of clergy: “regular” and “secular.” “Regular” clergy were the Franciscans and other religious orders whose lives were “regulated” by the rules of their order (often a variation of the Rule of St. Benedict). “Secular” clergy, despite the apparent oxymoron, were simply priests under the supervision of the local bishop.

Indians at Valero were “so instructed in the Christian dogmas and gospel teaching, . . . that they are not now, nor can they be called neophytes, or even Indians.”<sup>189</sup> López observed since most were the children of mixed marriages, it could “therefore be inferred that this mission cannot be called a mission of Indians but a gathering of white people.”<sup>190</sup> His statement, by which he so facetly raised mixed race children to the level of European whites, even if delivered off-the-cuff, gives modern historians pause to wonder what manner of statement he might have been trying to make (if any) regarding caste. Furthermore, López claimed that there were no Indians remaining in a sixty-league area around Béxar. Within that boundary, all Indians had been converted; outside that boundary, the Indians could not “be taken out of their land without violence to their nature, without offending the laws of humanity,” or against other royal and pontifical edicts relating to evangelizing among the indigenous. Hence the missionaries must move outward further into the frontier.<sup>191</sup>

In order to accomplish this, López recommended reorganizing the mission structure in San Antonio. He suggested secularizing Valero, retaining missionaries at Concepción and San José, and converting San Juan and Espada into “settlements of visitation [mission-stations]” of the previous two. This plan would mean the missionaries at Concepción and San José would also be responsible for regularly visiting the two smaller, outlying missions in order to conduct services and minister to the needs

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<sup>189</sup> Benedict Leutenegger, “Report on the San Antonio Missions in 1792,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 4 (April 1974): 490, accessed November 22, 2013 at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30241978>.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 490-491.

of the populations, and the missionaries at those missions would be released to establish new missions.<sup>192</sup> The plan was accepted and executed in 1794, but not quite as López had suggested. Valero was fully secularized in 1793. Missionaries were retained at San José and Espada, while Concepción became a mission-station to San José, and San Juan a mission-station to Espada, a more logical plan from a geographical perspective.<sup>193</sup> All of the San Antonio missions were fully secularized by 1824.

Former Bexar County Archivist John O. Leal translated the 1805 census for the Mission Concepción community which listed twenty-two persons identified as “Indians,” fifteen “Spaniards,” and four of unidentified ethnicity. The mayor of the community was Don Antonio Huizar (son of Pedro Huizar, but identified as “Spaniard” in this census) and a ninety-year-old Indian, José Manuel Cueves, was listed as governor of the “pueblo.”<sup>194</sup> Given how common miscegenation was on the frontier it is interesting that the census only listed two racial categories.<sup>195</sup> Four years later, the number of Indians decreased by one, to twenty-one, while the number of Spaniards increased to thirty-two. Don Antonio Huizar was still mayor and lived with his wife, Maria Teodora Guerra, and three of his siblings. Two of the Huizar brothers were farmers, another a musician, and one a carpenter. All members of the Huizar clan were

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 493.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> John O. Leal, *Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña Records, 1796-1818* (San Antonio: privately published by John O. Leal, 1993), no page numbering. Copy at the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas. Hereafter cited as “DRT Library.” Leal cited Bexar County Microfilm Roll 32, #959, 1805.

<sup>195</sup> For additional description of how fluid racial categories in colonial San Antonio could be, see Jesús F. de la Teja, “Why Urbano and Maria Trinidad Can’t Get Married: Social Relations in Late Colonial San Antonio,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 112, no. 2 (October 2008): 121-146, accessed September 11, 2015, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30239620>; Raúl Ramos, *Beyond the Alamo: Forging Mexican Ethnicity in San Antonio, 1821-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 66.

listed as “Spaniards” even though their father had been considered of mixed race on an earlier census. José Antonio Huizar commented that the Indians who were “citizens of this Mission” all had houses within the walls and one *suerte* of farmland. However, Huizar also noted that while the land had been distributed by Governor Don Manuel Munos, the Indians were still waiting for titles to their holdings.<sup>196</sup>

A few years later at Mission Espada, the census revealed an even greater disparity between Spaniards and Indians. In February, 1815, enumerators recorded sixteen Indians, but one-hundred-one Spaniards. Similar to the Concepción records, no additional ethnic breakdown was given. The record listed a Spanish mayor, José Antonio Bustillos, a native of Bexar, married with two children, and an Indian governor, Emeterio Espinosa, a fifty-eight year old farmer, with no additional family.<sup>197</sup> In 1819, census takers combined the returns for the Mission Espada community with that of Mission San Juan. Additionally, a more detailed racial breakdown of the populations was given. At San Juan there were sixteen Spanish, thirteen mestizos, seven mulattos, six lobos, and three Indians. Meanwhile, at Espada there were fourteen Spaniards, sixty-two mestizos, thirteen mulattos, and twenty-seven Indians.<sup>198</sup> James Ivey has noted that the secularization process for the Spanish missions was quite complex and not always followed consistently, although he asserted that the common assumption that all of the

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid. Leal cited Bexar County Microfilm Roll 41, #0732, 1809.

<sup>197</sup> *Census of Espada Mission, Feb. 27, 1815*, Folder O.S.M. Espada-Census 1815, 1819, Box 1, Old Spanish Missions Collections, Catholic Archives of San Antonio, San Antonio, TX. Hereafter cited as “CASA.” This data was reproduced and translated from Bexar County Microfilm Roll 54, #0732, 1815.

<sup>198</sup> *Census of Espada mission and San Juan Capistrano, 1819*. Folder O.S.M. Espada-Census 1815, 1819, Box 1, Old Spanish Missions Collections, CASA. This data was reproduced and translated from Bexar County Microfilm Roll 63, #655, 181819. A “lobo” was the child of African and Native American parents.

Indians immediately lost their lands to Spaniards is erroneous, or at least, somewhat overstated. Land thought to be lost by Indian families had actually been passed down to later generations via marriage and inheritance.<sup>199</sup> Historian Félix Almaráz, Jr. reached a similar conclusion and suggested that landowning widows, whether using their maiden name, or if remarried, a second husband's name would clarify how parcels of land came to have different names attached, yet remain the possession of the original families.<sup>200</sup>

While some Indians remained living at the Concepción and Espada communities, such was not always the case at every mission during the secularization process which lasted three decades. American explorer Zebulon Pike traveled through San Antonio in 1807 as he was being escorted out of Spanish territory. The town's missions created such a striking impression to him that he made a special note in his journal and observed "Those buildings for solidity, accommodation, and even majesty, were surpassed by few that I saw in New Spain."<sup>201</sup> Pike also described meeting a local priest, loved by all, who treated him with "the greatest hospitality" and the two men had an interesting exchange regarding the Native Americans. When Pike asked what had become of the natives at the missions, this respected clergyman replied that "it appeared to him that [the Indians] could not exist under the shadow of the whites." He further opined the natives "who formed those missions had been nurtured and taken all the care of that it was possible, and put on the same footing as the Spaniards, . . . had dwindled away . . . ;

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<sup>199</sup> Ivey, *OVM*, 19-22, and 387-402.

<sup>200</sup> Félix D. Almaráz, Jr. *The San Antonio Missions and their System of Land Tenure* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 18.

<sup>201</sup> Zebulon Montgomery Pike, *The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike: With Letters and Related Documents* ed. by Donald Jackson, 2 vols. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), vol. 2, 78.

from this he had formed an idea that God never intended them to form one people, but that they should always remain distinct and separate.”<sup>202</sup> Perhaps the priest’s comments reflected more of his own frustration rather than divining the will of God or Pike’s own racial outlook. Still, Pike’s experience indicated the secularization process was complex and inequities and prejudice existed.

Secularizing the missions was a lengthy process that began with Mission Valero in 1793, and was not completed for the other four missions until 1824. As part of the secularization process, the church buildings of the missions were intended to be used as parish churches for the new Indian villas, except at Valero. When the missionary activities at Valero ceased, the spiritual responsibilities were picked up by San Fernando parish, but only for a few years. A new parish at Valero was founded in 1801 which lasted until 1825.<sup>203</sup> The flying company of cavalry, the “Compañía Volante del Alamo de San Carlos de Parras,” arrived in 1802 and were posted at the mission site. Their chaplain used the sacristy for Mass as the chapel itself had never been completely rebuilt. In 1810, after the old mission’s friary had been rebuilt as a hospital, a proposal was drawn up to roof the church, not for divine service, but as an artillery storehouse.<sup>204</sup> Although earlier construction efforts on the church had left some supports still in place,

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<sup>202</sup> Pike, *Journals*, 78-79. Marion Habig asserted the priest was Fr. Bernardino Vallejo at Mission San José. See Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 105.

<sup>203</sup> Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 70-71.

<sup>204</sup> James E. Ivey, “The Completion of the Church Roof of San Antonio de Valero,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 29, no. 91 (Otoño 2007): 133-141, accessed April 22, 2015 at <http://www.analesiie.unam.mx/index.php/analesiie/article/view/2246>. In this article Ivey asserted that in his “Sacred Space, Profane Reality” essay, Adán Benevides had attributed a drawing to the wrong church. Benevides claimed a particular architectural drawing from the Bexar Archives was a plan for the roof of San Fernando in the mid-1700s. Ivey claimed the drawing was executed in 1810 for a proposal to convert the old Valero mission chapel into a more useable military storehouse.

by this time those were no longer safe and in the end, the roof project proved too expensive and was never carried out. The church would have to wait until the late 1840s and the United States Army before it was once again closed to the elements, but in the meantime it had acquired a new identity, “the Alamo.”<sup>205</sup>

Some Catholic historians consider the opening decades of the nineteenth century to be a nadir for the Church in Texas which helps explain why so many other historians tend to view the missions as miserable failures. Carlos Castañeda blamed revolutionary politics for much of the decay, as many in the Catholic hierarchy sided with Spanish royalists and were chased out. A new Catholic leadership organization depended on Rome and negotiations with the new government in Mexico City were delayed. Castañeda observed, “The effect of the prolonged struggle for independence upon the Church in Texas, particularly upon the missions was disastrous.”<sup>206</sup> During this period Félix Almaráz asserted there were not enough diocesan priests in the area to attend the spiritual needs of all the churches in the area. As a result, a few of the Franciscans remained at the missions to care for the remaining population until final secularization was complete.<sup>207</sup>

Other historians lay a significant measure of blame at the feet of one of the local priests, Father José Refugio Guadalupe de la Garza who served as parish priest of San

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<sup>205</sup> Ivey, “Roof of San Antonio de Valero,” 150-151.

<sup>206</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, vol.6 *Transition Period: the Fight for Freedom, 1810-1836*, 307.

<sup>207</sup> Almaráz, *San Antonio Missions*, 17.

Fernando from 1820 to 1840, whom critics charged with neglecting his duties.<sup>208</sup>

Although historian Robert Wright has recently published a reassessment of Garza during this period, his actions related to the missions must be thoughtfully considered.<sup>209</sup>

Garza, a San Antonio native, began his tenure at San Fernando. He was well regarded and after the wars of independence was sent as a trusted representative of the citizens of San Antonio to Mexico City. In this capacity, he looked after the interests of the people of San Antonio, but perhaps to the detriment of the missions. Among his accomplishments as part of the new Mexican government, Wright credits Garza with two significant “milestones in Texas history: the end of the mission system and the privatization of the mission lands mostly into the hands of Tejanos.”<sup>210</sup> Castañeda, on the other hand, accused Garza of being “more interested in politics than in the spiritual welfare of his flock.”<sup>211</sup> Wright states that Juan Seguín was one of Garza’s worst critics and suggested that because of the political rivalry between the two men, Seguín’s testimony should be treated with caution.<sup>212</sup>

Garza’s actions present modern historians with a conundrum and a perfect example of historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s prescient observation that, “History is

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<sup>208</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, vol.6, 307; Ralph Bayard, C.M., *Lone-Star Vanguard: The Catholic Re-Occupation of Texas (1838-1848)* (St. Louis, MO: The Vincentian Press, 1945), 58-59; Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 110, 145-146, and 264-265; Félix D. Almaráz, Jr., “San Antonio’s Old Franciscan Missions: Material Decline and Secular Avarice in the Transition from Hispanic to Mexican Control,” *The Americas* 44, no. 1 (July, 1987): 6. Accessed online December 13, 2011 at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1006846>.

<sup>209</sup> Robert E. Wright, O.M.I., “Father Refugio de la Garza: Controverted Religious Leader,” in Jesús F. de la Teja, ed., *Tejano Leadership in Mexican and Revolutionary Texas* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2010), 77-101.

<sup>210</sup> Wright, “Refugio de la Garza,” 80.

<sup>211</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, vol. 6, 307.

<sup>212</sup> Wright, “Refugio de la Garza,” 83-86.



messy for the people who must live it.”<sup>213</sup> The missions, by this period, were land-rich, but human resource-poor. Also, considering the level of racial mixing among the Indians and local populations, Wright’s use of the term “Tejano” carries multiple racial and ethnic possibilities which raise questions about exactly who is gaining land versus who may be losing. Garza’s efforts in the Mexican assembly allowed a number of Tejanos (and people who would become Tejanos) to purchase former mission lands along with the all-important irrigation rights. Nonetheless, once secularization was completed, the speculators found little to impede them from relieving many Indians from their land.<sup>214</sup> Indeed, Garza himself benefitted from speculating in former mission lands.<sup>215</sup> Garza also attempted to appropriate some of the vestments, liturgical items, and altar furnishings from the recently closed missions for his own use at San Fernando.<sup>216</sup> While the priest remained active in local politics, Wright admitted some members of the community felt this involvement led to the neglect of his sacred responsibilities. Scandals involving women and illegitimate children in Garza’s household did not help his cause either. For these reasons he was eventually relieved of his pastoral duties in 1840.<sup>217</sup>

In 1824 San Antonio’s missions ceased to exist as missions. Félix Almaráz has asserted that either because of, or in spite of, a “cumbersome” process to divide and

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<sup>213</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 110.

<sup>214</sup> Almaráz, “Material Decline and Secular Avarice,” 1-22; and Almaráz, *San Antonio Missions*.

<sup>215</sup> Wright, “Refugio de la Garza,” 80-82.

<sup>216</sup> Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 145-146; Wright, “Refugio de la Garza,” 81-82. Granted Garza did make inquiries through channels rather than absconding with the desired items. However, given his role in closing the missions, there hangs an odor of conflicting interests in these actions.

<sup>217</sup> Wright, “Refugio de la Garza,” 77-101.

distribute the secularized mission lands to both resident mission Indians as well as other qualified recipients, “a rampage of malfeasance and destruction” was prevented.<sup>218</sup> With the mission lands in private hands, what became of the buildings? For their fate we must depend on the observations and descriptions of tourists who left recorded commentaries. From these descriptions we can construct images of the mission churches and their decay, and gain insight into the curiosity they continued to inspire. One such visitor was the French naturalist Jean Louis Berlandier, whom accompanied Mexican General Manuel de Mier y Terán on his 1828 inspection tour of the borderland between Mexico and the United States.

Unfortunately, Terán left no description of San Antonio or its missions, but his keen-eyed traveling companion was sufficiently fascinated with what he saw of the missions and the town of San Antonio to record his impressions. Berlandier was most charmed by the remnants of the Alamo chapel (née Mission San Antonio de Valero), opining it “could pass for one of the loveliest monuments of the area, even if its architecture is overloaded with ornamentation like all the other ecclesiastical buildings of the Spanish colonies.”<sup>219</sup> Although somewhat critical of the dated Baroque style, Berlandier did not dismiss what he observed. He additionally noted of the other four missions, “Although in ruins, these edifices still bear the traces of a former splendor.”<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Almaráz, “Material Decline and Secular Avarice,” 22.

<sup>219</sup> Jean Louis Berlandier, *Journey to Mexico During the Years 1826 to 1834*. 7 volumes in 2, trans. by Sheila M. Ohlendorf, Josette M. Bigelow, and Mary M. Standifer. Intro. By C. M. Muller. (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1980), 292.

<sup>220</sup> Berlandier, *Journey to Mexico*, 293.

Despite the deteriorating condition, the buildings retained enough beauty to catch a European eye.

### **The Missions and Texas' Quest for Independence**

One of the missions' original functions was defense; not just territorial defense, but also to protect the inhabitants from attacks by hostile forces, indigenous or colonial. Berlandier noted the "enormous battlement" at the Alamo that bespoke of this necessity.<sup>221</sup> During the lengthy struggle for Mexican independence from Spain, the violence and chaos that followed each successive government culminating in the Texian revolt, San Antonio and its missions witnessed its share of turmoil. As early as 1813, the Mexican revolutionary, José Bernardo Gutiérrez briefly established a headquarters outside San Antonio at Mission Concepción before capturing the city in April of that year.<sup>222</sup> However, it would be the Texas Revolution that brought armed forces again to Concepción, and would change the identity of Mission Valero in a clash which would be forever burned into Texas and American public memory.

The precise details of the causes of the Texas Revolution are beyond the scope of this project of historical memory. It is not within this dissertation's purview to comment upon the motivations of the Anglo-Texan rebels, their Tejano allies, or the deficiencies

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<sup>221</sup> Berlandier, *Journey to Mexico*, 292.

<sup>222</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, vol.6, 97-98; and Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 144.

of the Mexican government. Instead, by focusing on the origins of collective memories it is the effects and the aftermath that require examination. Revolutionary violence came to not one but two of San Antonio's missions. On October 27, 1835, advance forces under the overall command of Stephen F. Austin drew the attention of Mexican forces protecting San Antonio under General Martín Perfecto de Cos. The Texans had advanced from positions near Espada and had taken up a position near Concepción. Early the next day, Mexican infantry supported by two canon moved out of the town and engaged the Texans, under the command of James Bowie. The Texans held the better defensive positions and repelled multiple charges before staging their own which drove the Mexicans back into the town. Fortunately for the mission building itself, the fighting took place some distance away from the compound. Austin then laid siege to San Antonio until early December when an assault was mounted. After several days of close fighting, Cos surrendered.<sup>223</sup>

The Texans held San Antonio from December of 1835 to early March of 1836. Actually, had Texan General Sam Houston received permission from Governor Henry Smith, he planned to order Colonel James C. Neill to destroy the Alamo thus denying its use as a fortress for Mexican forces and move eastward with all munitions and supplies intact.<sup>224</sup> Had this occurred, the famous Battle of the Alamo never would have taken place. However, Smith did not authorize the destruction of the Alamo. The story of the siege and capture of the Alamo is well-known. Colonels James Bowie and James Neill

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<sup>223</sup> Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, 148; Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, *A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory* (New York: Touchstone, published by Simon & Schuster, 2002), 45-46, and 56-60.

<sup>224</sup> Roberts and Olson, *Line in the Sand*, 109 and 112.

fortified the city against an anticipated Mexican offensive. William Barret Travis and a small party of men arrived shortly afterward followed by former Tennessee Congressman and raconteur Davy Crockett with several companions. In early February, Col. Neill took a leave of absence to deal with a family illness leaving Travis in command. Although the Texans knew a substantial Mexican army was moving north toward their position, they did not do an effective job of keeping track of its progress and were somewhat surprised on February 24 to find a very large army commanded by none other than General Antonio López de Santa Anna at their gates.<sup>225</sup> Though a thirteen-day siege commenced, the outcome was never in question. A few Texan rebels broke through the Mexican lines to take their place among the Alamo defenders, but not enough to alter the course of the battle. In the dawning hours of March 6, 1836, Santa Anna unleashed his forces and in less than two hours overwhelmed the Alamo defenders killing the entire garrison.<sup>226</sup>

The Alamo was not especially significant from a military perspective. Indeed, a Mexican officer in Santa Anna's army, Lieutenant Colonel José Enrique de la Peña rhetorically asked his diary, "To whom was this sacrifice useful?"<sup>227</sup> Nonetheless, from a symbolic perspective, the massacre at the Alamo very quickly took on a life of its own and the battered mission was transformed into a *lieu de mémoire*. Indeed, only a few weeks later at the Battle of San Jacinto, Texan General Sam Houston rallied his troops to victory over a numerically superior foe caught unprepared, securing Texas independence

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<sup>225</sup> Roberts and Olson, *Line in the Sand*, 112-120.

<sup>226</sup> Roberts and Olson, *Line in the Sand*, 121-168.

<sup>227</sup> José Enrique de la Peña, *With Santa Anna in Texas: A Personal Narrative of the Revolution* trans. and ed. by Carmen Perry. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1975), 54.

with the cry, “Remember the Alamo!” or for his Tejano soldiers, “*Recuerden el Alamo!*”<sup>228</sup> However, for the Alamo building itself, glory in battle did not translate into protected status. As historian Michael Kammen observed, “Although the Alamo myth managed to emerge within days of the Texan’s defeat in 1836, the actual site in San Antonio did not begin to be regarded as sacrosanct until the very end of the nineteenth century.”<sup>229</sup>

The events of 1836 wrested San Antonio out of Mexican hands and into those of Anglos, many of whom were Protestant. The mission churches’ ornate décor, the statuary, and the symbols that were important to Catholic belief would be looked upon as curious relics of a foreign past which facilitated the construction of collective memories in Anglo-Americans. It is tempting to end the stories of the missions here, after secularization and the Alamo massacre; after all, the missionary functions to the indigenous people ceased with secularization. However, the mission church buildings persisted, as relics, as ruins, as curiosities, as dwellings, and indeed as sacred space. This persistence continues into the next chapter and begins to have a curious effect on the Anglos, particularly those with an imagination fired by romantic hero tales, or an eye for the sublime. This chapter set the stage by putting the physical remnants in place on the frontier from which numerous legends and collective memories would be constructed. The story of the missions does not end here; indeed the end of the mission period is merely the prologue in the creation of a mythological Spanish past.

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<sup>228</sup> Roberts and Olson, *Line in the Sand*, 187-189.

<sup>229</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 53.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS IN TRANSITION: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, 1836-1877

The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.

—L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*

The smoke and stench from the funeral pyres near the battered mission-turned-fortress of the Alamo had scarcely cleared away before its defenders had been sanctified as martyrs in Texans' collective memory. Although the defenders of the Alamo were immortalized nearly immediately; the mission's compound, as well as the other former missions near San Antonio continued to slowly decay even before final secularization was complete. However, just because these buildings were no longer used as missions to the Native Americans did not mean that they were completely deserted and forgotten. In fact, divine services were occasionally held in some of the chapels or sacristy buildings as visitations or extensions of the downtown San Fernando Church and the Catholic Church tried to develop plans for a variety of purposes using some of the

buildings late in this period. Furthermore, visitors to San Antonio found their way to the missions. Thus would begin decades of published descriptions, with varying degrees of accuracy, and romances related to, or inspired by, the old buildings. The Alamo became a *lieu de mémoire* over the course of two violent weeks in early 1836.<sup>230</sup> Its status as such was confirmed just a few weeks later in April at the Battle of San Jacinto when the cry, “Remember the Alamo!” rallied the exhausted Texas army to an unlikely victory as they caught a numerically superior foe unawares. The other missions evolved to become *lieux de mémoire* more slowly. Romantic depictions of the missions in early travel narratives facilitated this evolution.

This chapter examines the missions, the town of San Antonio, the State of Texas, and the United States over the course of four transitional decades. During this period the mission churches no longer served strictly Native American congregations and suffered greatly from neglect (and in two cases, the violence of warfare). Within the town, there was a sea change in San Antonio’s racial hierarchy. Anglos had been arriving in the frontier town before Texas independence, but once the break from Mexico was achieved, many more Anglos came pouring in. The established Mexican families, who initially acted as “cultural brokers” for the Anglos, eventually found themselves outnumbered and eventually supplanted as the primary socio-economic holders in town.<sup>231</sup> In addition

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<sup>230</sup> French historian Pierre Nora defines *lieu de mémoire* (“site of memory”) as “any significant entity” which “has become a symbolic heritage of any community.” See Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, English-language edition ed. and foreword by Lawrence D. Kritzman. 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), v.1, xvii.

<sup>231</sup> Raúl A. Ramos, *Beyond the Alamo: Forging Mexican Ethnicity in San Antonio, 1821-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 81. See also Timothy Matovina and Jesús F. de la Teja, eds. *Recollections of a Tejano Life: Antonio Menchaca in Texas History* (Austin: University of Texas



to this change in racial hierarchy, the new Republic of Texas also became the epicenter in the debates concerning the United States' seemingly inexorable westward expansion, and the controversy over slavery. Supporters of 'Manifest Destiny' conceived of their cause as nothing less than a holy crusade to bring the entire continent under (Anglo-) American domination. Finally and perhaps most importantly, the chapter explores a significant element that informed travel writing and booster literature of the era, (as well as ideas of Manifest Destiny) which was that of the Romantic writers. Many of the sources used for this chapter exhibit the flamboyant rhetoric and style characteristic of Romantic period. The sources additionally reveal the period's ideas of Orientalism and similar leitmotifs related to Romantic nationalism and ethnocentrism.<sup>232</sup> This chapter concludes that the romanticized views and depictions of the missions that were so effective in advertising the railroad and promoting travel to San Antonio as an attractive destination began during this period.

The sources used for this chapter will reflect an evolution from the diaries, journals, and official reports, most of which were not intended to be published at the time they were written, or if so, distributed to a very limited audience, to travel narratives, booster or promotional publications, newspaper articles, and other written descriptions of the missions that *were intended* to be seen by a wider audience.<sup>233</sup>

Descriptions of the missions appeared in travel narratives published in United States

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Press, 2013), for the memoirs of a significant Tejano who served multiple roles between the competing racial and ethnic groups.

<sup>232</sup> For more on Orientalism, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition with a New Preface by the Author. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

<sup>233</sup> Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Random House, 1965), 125-128.

newspapers and popular magazines. These materials shaped a particular narrative of the American Southwest which became ingrained in the national (not just regional) collective memory. One goal of booster literature was to increase emigration to Texas, whether from east of the Mississippi River or even different parts of the world such as Great Britain or Bohemia. Additionally, much of this promotional material sacrificed accuracy for superlatives, or as historian Daniel Boorstin claimed, “they sometimes confused the vision and the reality . . . ‘sometimes represented things that had not yet gone through the formality of taking place.’”<sup>234</sup> More importantly for this project, booster literature, realizing that today’s tourist may become tomorrow’s emigrant, regularly identified points of interest and attractions (such as the missions).

Sections of this chapter, out of necessity, briefly treat the Alamo separately from the other four missions, but that is more a narrative device for readability. Just as Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, and William Barret Travis could not escape the Alamo, neither can scholars trying to treat San Antonio’s missions as a specific whole. To tell the story of the missions without the Alamo is telling only part of the story, since the Alamo as shrine is essential to this investigation of memory. However, the countless stories relating to the Alamo battle alone can easily become a juggernaut, overwhelming anything else in its path. The 1836 siege and massacre combined with General Sam Houston’s rallying cry at the Battle of San Jacinto altered the Alamo’s historical trajectory relative to the other missions. Historians are constantly challenged to find the balance among them. Missions Concepción, San José, San Juan, and Espada have their

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<sup>234</sup> Boorstin, *Americans: The National Experience*, 127.

own stories of racial strife, admiring visitors as well as vandals, and efforts by the Catholic diocese to return the buildings to functional use. As historian Raúl Ramos perceptively observes, despite the cessation of their initial responsibilities to the Native Americans in 1824, “the missions of San Antonio de Béxar retained symbolic value, helping to define the image and history of the town.”<sup>235</sup> Unfortunately, Ramos does not delve into how the ‘symbolic value’ of the missions created this defining image. By exploring the missions’ stories as well as the Alamo’s during this transitional period, this chapter seeks to illuminate early recognition of the missions’ value to San Antonio.

### **Racial Context in San Antonio After 1836**

While a reordering of the racial power structure in San Antonio did happen, and the shift was indeed dramatic, it did not materialize overnight, nor was it complete. A convoluted web of familial connections and other relationships in addition to fluid racial definitions severely complicate this tale of historical memories. As historian David Montejano admits, “Although the American presence generally represented a new class in an old Mexican society, it did not completely transform the traditional power structure.” The newcomers intermarried with the established families to the benefit of both. Montejano continues, “The social basis for postwar governance, in other words, rested on the class

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<sup>235</sup> Ramos, *Beyond the Alamo*, 69.

structure of the Mexican settlements.”<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, historian Arnolando de León opines:

Although Tejanos lived in a markedly different world after 1836, things were not catastrophic. True, white intrusion had disturbed their old communities, but Tejanos experienced little demoralization. They retained their ‘Mexicanness,’ identified with old traditions and beliefs, and carried on Hispanic practices while rejecting certain Anglo American ones. Meantime, like other conquered people seeking to survive under adverse conditions, they appraised the new situation and developed ways and means that allowed them control over their lives.<sup>237</sup>

Finally, historian Andrés Reséndez astutely describes identity choices as frequently being malleable and dependent on the specific situation, “A person was not a mission Indian *or* a Mexican, a black slave in Mexico *or* an American, a foreign-born colonist *or* a Texan, but could be either depending on who was asking.”<sup>238</sup> Nonetheless, while Tejanos retained some measure of agency in their lives, it cannot be denied that San Antonio’s power structure had been reordered, and not necessarily in their favor.

Mary Maverick, wife of Samuel A. Maverick, whose descendants would be intimately involved in San Antonio politics for much of its history, chronicled in her memoirs some of the early interactions between her Anglo family and their Tejano neighbors in the years following Texan independence. She recorded that in December of 1840, her family was invited to participate in the celebrations and dances in honor of the

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<sup>236</sup> David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 34-35.

<sup>237</sup> Arnolando De León, *The Tejano Community, 1836-1900*. With a New Foreword by Richard Griswold del Castillo and New Afterword by the Author. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1997; originally published Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 23.

<sup>238</sup> Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3. Emphasis in the original.

*Dia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, “the patroness saint of Mexico, and whom the priests had identified with the Virgin Mary.” Maverick, a devout Methodist, described the processions, decorations, and devotions, as “all quite a novel and interesting scene to me.”<sup>239</sup> This ‘novelty’ Maverick mentioned could be read as paternalistic and Orientalist, but it may have been equally innocent curiosity as well.

Maverick’s participation in the Guadalupean celebrations deserves some consideration by modern scholars. How much significance should be attributed to the Tejanos inviting their Anglos neighbors (and the significance of the Anglos accepting the invitations) to *fiestas* honoring the patroness of Mexico? Religious historian Timothy Matovina considers religion to be “a crucial component of ethnic identity” which goes beyond “denominational affiliation” to also include “public ritual practices.”<sup>240</sup> Tejano inclusion of Anglos in such an important religious festival denoted a significant degree of acceptance of the new arrivals, although Matovina astutely notes however, the Mavericks as well as the Tejano families with whom they associated represented the upper crust of San Antonio society. Nevertheless, he concludes, “Anglo-American participation in the Guadalupean feast showed the strength of local traditions at San Antonio and the Tejano desire to incorporate newcomers into those traditions.”<sup>241</sup> Theologian Jeanette Rodriguez and anthropologist Ted Fortier offer a different interpretation suggesting “the role of spirituality as a form of resistance” is a

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<sup>239</sup> Mary A. Maverick, *Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick, Arranged by Mary A. Maverick and her son Geo. Madison Maverick*. Ed. by Rena Maverick Green. (San Antonio: Alamo Printing Co., 1921), 53-54.

<sup>240</sup> Timothy M. Matovina, *Tejano Religion and Ethnicity: San Antonio, 1821-1860* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>241</sup> Matovina, *Tejano Religion and Ethnicity*, 38, and 44-45 (quote).

characteristic of the cultural memory of a “historically, politically, and socially marginalized group.”<sup>242</sup> So while Anglos at Guadalupean feasts revealed a degree of peaceful co-existence with their Tejano neighbors particularly among elites, nonetheless, Anglos would eventually usurp the leading Tejano families and relegate the majority of Tejanos to more servile positions and menial labor. Despite the political usurpation, Tejano religious expression served as a means of resistance and heritage preservation in the face of the Protestant Anglo majority. Although not in continual use for Divine service during this time, the Catholic Church consecrated the missions as sacred space, and modern scholars should consider that for many Tejanos, the missions were a spiritual home where they could express their religiosity in their preferred manner.

During this time period, the instances of the Tejano sacrifices on behalf of the Texas republic began to disappear from published sources, mostly newspapers. Eventually, a more effective suppressing of Tejano participation at the 1836 Alamo battle began to take effect late in the nineteenth century. Historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot considers this a “silencing” of the minority Tejanos by the dominant racial-, ethnic power, the Anglos.<sup>243</sup> By deliberately erasing or unconsciously ignoring Tejano participation at the Alamo and in the Texas republic more generally, Anglos gained control over the construction of the collective memories regarding the Alamo. Control over the collective memories included their uses and interpretations which could be

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<sup>242</sup> Jeanette Rodriguez and Ted Fortier, *Cultural Memory: Resistance, Faith, and Identity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 1.

<sup>243</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995), 1-2, 9-11, and 26-29. Matovina and de la Teja, *Recollections of a Tejano Life*, 2-4, and 11-12.

altered as needed to cement Anglo societal, economic, and political control in San Antonio. Anthropologists Holly Beachley Brear and Richard R. Flores also examine these competing interpretations of the Alamo which will be discussed more thoroughly in the chapters focusing on the twentieth century.<sup>244</sup>

### **Tejanos, Race, and ‘Manifest Destiny’**

In his definitive investigation of Anglo racism against Mexican-Texans in the nineteenth century, Arnaldo De León observes, “It was, after all, in the 1840s and 1850s that Americans were drenched with the spirit of Manifest Destiny and were even thinking beyond those areas populated by Mexicans in Texas.”<sup>245</sup> Divisive issues of race, slavery, land, and Manifest Destiny combined to make the debates over whether the United States should annex Texas (or whether such was even desirable to Texans) especially contentious. Despite disagreements among politicians in Washington, D.C. over the methods or appearances of the seeming inexorable spreading of Anglo-Americans across the North American continent, the end results did not bode well for Tejanos.

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<sup>244</sup> Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); and Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, & the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

<sup>245</sup> Arnaldo De León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 26-27. See also Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 158-186.

Only two years after Mary Maverick joined her Tejano neighbors in celebrating the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexican armed forces invaded Texas and seized control of San Antonio not once, but twice in March and September of 1842. The ease with which the Mexican Army gained San Antonio had deleterious effects for the town's Tejano population. Tejanos became a "suspect class" in the minds of many Anglo Texans, and while some still held positions of authority in San Antonio post-annexation, their influence had decidedly diminished.<sup>246</sup> Some Tejano families fled to Mexico under the perceived protection of the withdrawing Mexican forces. However, what expectations of better treatment in Mexico they might have had appeared to be misplaced. As one newspaper observed early in 1843, "Many of the Mexican families who accompanied Gen. Woll in his retreat from Bexar, in September last, have returned. Many of them are quite destitute, and in a wretched condition."<sup>247</sup> Questions over Tejano loyalty during Mexico's invasion and the Mexican War four years later was but one of the ingredients in the witches' brew which Arnoldo De León claims hardened Anglo feelings toward them.<sup>248</sup>

Racial hostility against Tejanos and other Mexican-Americans was not the monopoly of Anglo-Texans, but was also shared by Anglo-Americans elsewhere in the United States. These anti-Mexican attitudes came to light as the country debated

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<sup>246</sup> Ramos, *Beyond the Alamo*, 168-204. See also Timothy Matovina and Jesús F. de la Teja, eds. *Recollections of a Tejano Life: Antonio Menchaca in Texas History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 100-106.

<sup>247</sup> "Late From Texas," *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), March 22, 1843, accessed July 27, 2015, Readex America's Historical Newspapers.

<sup>248</sup> De León, *They Called Them Greasers*, 78-79. See also Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 178-179.



whether or not to annex just Texas, or even more Mexican territory, into the Union. In his detailed examination of the political machinations behind the annexation of Texas, historian Joel Silbey concludes that annexation opponents voiced concerns over the acceptance of a “debased population” on the US southwestern border made of “an amalgam of Spaniards, Indians, and blacks.”<sup>249</sup> As politicians in Washington, D.C. debated over war with Mexico, Southern leaders such as John C. Calhoun, opposed seizing additional Mexican territory on racist grounds despite the opportunity to spread slavery.<sup>250</sup> Conversely, historian Andrés Reséndez challenges previous interpretations of the inevitability of conquest assumed by Manifest Destiny. Reséndez counters earlier arguments by claiming the absorption of Texas by the United States was neither inevitable, nor the result of detailed government conspiracies. Instead he forcefully argues that even the phrase, “Manifest Destiny,” is merely an “ahistorical construct” that completely distorts a more nuanced story in which not just Anglos, but all races and ethnicities managed to demonstrate a measure of agency.<sup>251</sup> Nonetheless, the romantic hyperbole of Manifest Destiny was extremely intoxicating to many Anglos in the United States as they cast their eyes to the west, which would be reflected in their descriptions of San Antonio and the missions.

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<sup>249</sup> Joel H. Silbey, *Storm Over Texas: The Annexation Controversy and the Road to Civil War* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 35.

<sup>250</sup> Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 199-212. See also Boorstin, 272-273; and Horsman, 241.

<sup>251</sup> Reséndez, 6.

## Romantics at the Missions (Part One)

By the mid-nineteenth century the Romantic Movement in literature and the arts had reached its apogee. Nonetheless, it retained enough potency to influence many of the writers and orators espousing the rhetoric and ethnocentrism of Manifest Destiny.<sup>252</sup> At the same time, advances in printing and paper-making allowed the ideas championed by supporters of Manifest Destiny to be distributed to a wider audience. Similar advances in travel technology and infrastructure encouraged people to travel further in exploration of the United States and adjoining territories. The travel narratives they produced, coupled with the expansion of availability to the printed words, fed the construction of an American identity. Literature professor John Cox sagely observes, “The road, after all, has long been the space where members of different communities, races, cultures, or classes have most frequently interacted with each other.”<sup>253</sup> As travelers made their way to San Antonio, lurid depictions of the 1836 massacre at the Alamo as well as descriptions emphasizing the foreign-looking design and construction of the other missions caught tourists’ attention and began appearing in published narratives.

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<sup>252</sup> “Annexation,” *The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review*, July/August 1845, 5-10; attributed to the editor, John L. O’Sullivan. Accessed, July 21, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series Database. See also Hine and Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History*, 199-202.

<sup>253</sup> John D. Cox, *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 157. For the effect of expanding print capitalism on national identity, see also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006); and Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

Part of this coupling of the Romantic Movement and the San Antonio missions comes from the rhetorical devices and the purple prose used during this period. Orators and editors inflated the Alamo massacre to Biblical proportions. Alamo commanders William Barret Travis, James Bowie, and Davy Crockett became something akin to a ‘Holy Trinity’ in the creation myth of Texas.<sup>254</sup> One of the phrases which became most popular and often repeated, however, conflated Travis and the Alamo garrison to a nineteenth-century A.D. version of King Leonidas and his doomed Spartan warriors. Historian Paul Hutton claims that within weeks of the Alamo’s fall, Texas politician Thomas Jefferson Green coined a phrase that quickly entered into the Alamo lexicon, “Thermopylae had her messenger of defeat—the Alamo had none.”<sup>255</sup> And while Green’s phrase became an indelible part of the collective memory related to the Alamo, it ignored historical reality. The Alamo did indeed have messengers of defeat. Unlike Thermopylae, the messengers from the Alamo were not combatants, and due to their race, gender, and age, were considered of lowly status (Susanna Dickinson and her infant daughter; Joe, a slave of Travis; as well as some Tejano women and children, including Enrique Esparza, the eight-year-old son of one of the Tejano defenders, all of whom evidently remained in San Antonio).<sup>256</sup> Nevertheless, the Dickinsons and Joe carried the gloomy tidings to General Sam Houston just the same. The Thermopylae

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<sup>254</sup> Brear, *Inherit the Alamo*, 38-43.

<sup>255</sup> Paul Andrew Hutton, “The Alamo as Icon,” in *The Texas Military Experience: From the Texas Revolution through World War II*, edited by Joseph G. Dawson, III (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 17. See also Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, *A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory* (New York: Touchstone, published by Simon & Schuster, 2001), 172.

<sup>256</sup> Brear, *Inherit the Alamo*, 38; Roberts and Olson, *Line in the Sand*, 166-176; and Bill Groneman, “Alamo Noncombatants,” *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qs01>), accessed August 15, 2015. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

metaphor lives on as part of the Alamo myth and further demonstrates the antagonistic relationship between history and collective memory.

In their superb examination of the Alamo battle and the impacts on collective memories well into the twentieth century, historians Randy Roberts and James Olson state those writing tributes to the Alamo dead at the time “thought, wrote, and spoke the language of the romantic age.”<sup>257</sup> They argue the paeans to Travis, Crockett, Bowie, and their comrades reflect the style of the Romantic era. In 1841, Arthur Ikin, British consul to Texas in London, wrote a book on Texas which included the mawkish poem titled, “Hymn to the Alamo,” in which Travis and his band embraced the “Spartan’s death” at “this new Thermopylae,” for “Freedom’s breath of life.”<sup>258</sup> The book’s intended audience was potential British immigrants and Ikin evidently believed including an ode dedicated to the Alamo martyrs would help them acclimate to the new culture. Two years later a Houston artist created and exhibited a monument in memory of the Alamo dead created from materials directly taken from the mission walls. One local newspaper hailed it as the “most beautiful and impressive piece of sculpture ever completed in the Republic.” The article’s author lamented his inability to adequately describe the monument, but gushed the sculpture was a “relic hallowed by the blood of martyrs.”<sup>259</sup> The sculptor’s use of stones taken from the site where the heroes died evidently made the monument even more sacred.

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<sup>257</sup> Roberts and Olson, *Line in the Sand*, 172.

<sup>258</sup> Ikin, Arthur, *Texas: Its History, Topography, Agriculture, Commerce, and General Statistics* reprint with Introduction by James M. Day (1841; repr. Austin: Texian Press, 1964), 11-12.

<sup>259</sup> “Monument of the Alamo,” *Telegraph and Texas Register* (Houston), July 26, 1843, accessed February 7, 2007, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

Along with Roberts and Olson, Hutton also opines that the romantic appeal of doomed forces making last stands, as well as total massacres being transformed into victories by the glorious sacrifice of martyrs is popular among many cultures. But Hutton sagaciously adds that no matter what the culture, “The heroes are always vastly outnumbered by a vicious enemy from a culturally inferior nation bent on the utter destruction of the heroic band’s people.”<sup>260</sup> Anglo-Americans as well as Anglo-Texans consigned Santa Anna and his Mexicans to the position of the “culturally inferior” Other determined to destroy the Anglos’ self-proclaimed liberties. Consequently, San Antonio’s Tejano population found themselves swept into this ‘Other’ category by association. Analogous self-sacrifices or battlefield last stands during the Romantic period which were similarly sensationalized at the time include poet Lord Byron’s death in Greece (1824), the “Charge of the Light Brigade” (1854), and General George A. Custer’s last stand at Little Bighorn (1876).<sup>261</sup>

One more facet of the Romantic period’s influence at the San Antonio missions relates to the nascent tourism industry in the United States. Historian John Sears examined the origins of American tourism and the influence exerted by the Romantic Movement. He notes “Tourism played a powerful role in America’s invention of itself as a culture.” Additionally, the Americans, similar to their British relations who, under the influence of Romantics such as William Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott, and Lord

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<sup>260</sup> Hutton, “Alamo as Icon,” 14.

<sup>261</sup> Hutton, 14; and Roberts and Olson, 172.

Byron, self-identified with the landscape they inhabited.<sup>262</sup> This identification with the physical territory tied Manifest Destiny and Anglo-Americans' presumed right to the entire continent together using the sentimental language employed by travelers to describe it in an increasing number of printed outlets, such as newspapers, magazines, and books. In the years between Texas independence and the arrival of the railroad in San Antonio, most tourists in the United States were from the genteel elite. Sears argues these travelers went out on the road seeking the "sublime or picturesque" based on European traditions which would have encouraged them to find some sort of moral lessons for themselves or to "cultivate their aesthetic sensibilities."<sup>263</sup> As tourists found the missions to be so picturesque and charming, their romanticized descriptions linked these buildings on a remote frontier to larger movements and influences going on in the core metropolitan regions of the United States.

### **Early Texas Boosters and Tourists Discover the Missions**

Anglo-American interest in Texas for potential settlement and seemingly limitless exploitable land, as well as the possibility for annexation to the United States began appearing just a few years after Mexico won its independence from Spain. Boosters did their best to stir up interest in new territory. The booster of the period was essentially a

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<sup>262</sup> John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 4.

<sup>263</sup> Sears, *Sacred Places*, 10.

pitchman who stressed the land's potential to the point of exaggeration while ignoring or slighting perceived liabilities, and when written in Romantic-era prose produced some florid depictions of Texas and its potential.<sup>264</sup> In 1829, a Baltimore, Maryland, newspaper featuring Stephan F. Austin's colonizing efforts claimed the Texas soil favorable "to any soil in the world, for the cultivation of Cotton and Sugars," and unlimited grazing for cattle and horses year-round.<sup>265</sup> Three years later, the Richmond *Enquirer* reprinted an article from the Nashville *Banner*, lamenting that Texas was not already "annexed to our Federal Union, but is under a government little suited to our taste, habits, and sympathies."<sup>266</sup> The author mused how it was yet "possible, that a territory inhabited by our citizens, and bordering on our western, frontier, should permanently continue a province of the Mexican Empire." The author seemed to prophesy Texas annexation, still fourteen years in the future, that "from geographical position, seems naturally to belong to us and to be required to round off and complete the symmetry of our south-western border, should by contract and mutual consent, be made to constitute a part—and a most delightful part it will certainly be—of this great nation."<sup>267</sup> In the same year Texas won independence from Mexico, Joseph Emerson Field published a small booklet extolling the benefits in Texas for commercial or agricultural pursuits. In the opening paragraph however, he paid homage to the

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<sup>264</sup> Boorstin, *Americans: The National Experience*, 123, and 162.

<sup>265</sup> "Austin's Settlement—Texas," *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser*, November 11, 1829, accessed July 27, 2015, Readex America's Historical Newspapers.

<sup>266</sup> "Miscellaneous," *Enquirer* (Richmond, VA), November 13, 1832, accessed July 27, 2015, Readex America's Historical Newspapers.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

architectural ornamentation and splendor of San Antonio's missions.<sup>268</sup> Field evidently felt the need to highlight the missions' aesthetic qualities as one of the numerous attractions that would bring people to San Antonio.

Just as Arthur Ikin's book was intended to guide British citizens and immigrants in Texas, British diplomat William Kennedy (who replaced Ikin as consul to Texas in 1842) published a massive, two volume description of Texas after his 1839 visit much to a similar purpose.<sup>269</sup> Kennedy included a general history of Spanish colonization in North America, and his caustic anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic observations regarding the administration of the missions reflected long-held British prejudices.<sup>270</sup> For much of the book, Kennedy, in true booster fashion, waxed prodigiously on Texas' natural advantages in climate, soil, inexpensive labor, minerals, game, and transportation. However, in a few brief descriptions on San Antonio's missions and some of their ornamentation, he called readers' attention to San José as "no mean specimen of architecture," complementing Spanish aesthetics despite earlier reprising the "Black Legend."<sup>271</sup>

George Wilkins Kendall, a survivor of the 1841 Texas-Santa Fe fiasco, was a keen observer and set down his impressions of the missions in his book on the

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<sup>268</sup> Joseph Emerson Field, *Three Years in Texas: Including a View of the Texan Revolution and an Account of the Principal Battles: Together with Descriptions of the Soil, Commercial and Agricultural Advantages, &c.* (Boston: Abel Tompkins, 1836), 1, accessed June 2, 2015, Gale Cengage Learning Sabin Americana. The Sabin Americana database was digitized from the American Antiquarian Society library's collection.

<sup>269</sup> William Kennedy, *Texas: The Rise, Progress, and Prospects of the Republic of Texas, Two Volumes in One* (1841; repr., Clifton, NJ: Augustus M. Kelly, 1974).

<sup>270</sup> Kennedy, *Texas: The Rise, Progress, and Prospects*, 218-223, and 246 for a few statements on the Texas missionaries.

<sup>271</sup> Kennedy, *Texas: The Rise, Progress, and Prospects*, 223.



expedition. He asserted “By far the greatest curiosities in the neighborhood of San Antonio are the *missions*.”<sup>272</sup> Like Kennedy, Kendall had few complements for the Spanish missionaries; although he did allow that select indigenous rites were permitted to co-exist with the Catholic ones. However flawed their theology may have been in Kendall’s opinion; he credited the friars’ with constructing beautiful sacred spaces on the frontier. He also lauded the strength of construction and elaborate ornamentation. Mission Concepción was described as a “very large stone building, with a fine cupola, and though plain, magnificent in its dimensions and the durability of its construction.”<sup>273</sup> At Mission San José, Kendall observed several Mexican families living on the grounds within the walls. Although he considered the church’s interior “plain” he remarked that the main western entrance was “surrounded with the most elaborate stone carving of flowers, angels, and apostles.” He claimed that despite the length of time Texan troops were quartered at the mission, “the stone carvings have not been injured.” Interestingly, Kendall also noted San José had “been repaired, and Divine service is performed in it.”<sup>274</sup> This would have been as an extension or visitation of the San Fernando Church, where the priest or his assistant came to San José on a regular (if not weekly) basis to minister to the people living there. Hence no longer a mission per se, but not forgotten and still serving its religious function as sacred space.

Two diarists, an Englishman and an American merchant, traveled through San Antonio during the mid-1840s and were inspired to record their experiences and

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<sup>272</sup> George Wilkins Kendall, *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fé Expedition* (1844; repr. Austin: The Steck Company, 1935), 48. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>273</sup> Kendall, *Narrative*, 49-50.

<sup>274</sup> Kendall, *Narrative*, 50-51.

reflections on the Alamo and the other missions. William Bollaert arrived in Texas in 1842, and spent two years exploring the country with a mind to possibly make it his permanent home.<sup>275</sup> As a newcomer, he was shown a clump of peach trees near the Alamo where the ashes of the Texan dead were said to have been buried. He remarked with some curiosity that stones from the Alamo were being used for a monument to the heroes as well as pipes for smoking tobacco, an early form of kitschy Alamo souvenirs.<sup>276</sup> He tried his hand at making sketches of the Alamo ruins and estimated the Alamo chapel had at one time beautiful scroll work on the façade. While making his sketches, an elderly Mexican lady who claimed to have known the defenders happened by. Looking at his drawings, she lamented “had you but seen the Alamo on a Feast Day, as I have seen it, not like it is now, in ruins, you would have been delighted . . . I am glad you love the Alamo; I’ll give you a crucifix made from the stone.”<sup>277</sup>

The next day Bollaert visited missions Concepción, San José, and Espada and was awed by the architectural achievements. He noted in his diary, “It is reviving to the European, to behold in the far West of the New World, edifices partaking the character of the sacred buildings he has left behind him; and we cannot withhold our praise from the Spanish ecclesiastics who designed and reared with the assistance of the Indians the churches.” He described the architecture as a mix of Italian and Spanish and considered

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<sup>275</sup> William Bollaert, *William Bollaert's Texas*, ed. by W. Eugene Hollon and Ruth Lapham Butler (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), xv-xvi.

<sup>276</sup> An 1841 newspaper article mentions a stone cutter named Nangle, originally from Philadelphia, had moved to San Antonio around 1839. He began making a living using limestone taken from the Alamo and “consecrated by the blood of the bravest of the brave” to make a variety of objects including, “seals, paper weights, pipe bowls, little vessels, &c., &c.” *The Southern Patriot* (Charleston, SC), August 17, 1841, accessed February 7, 2007, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>277</sup> Bollaert, *William Bollart's Texas*, 222-224.

the ornamentation, statues and figures, and especially the scroll work to be of “superior character.”<sup>278</sup> In early October, Bollaert accompanied a party on a second excursion to the missions, only this time he was able to look with a more critical eye. At Concepción, he was repulsed by the odor of bat guano inside the church. San José also had a bat infestation, but Bollaert commented that “mass is occasionally said to some 8 or 10 Mexican families who live within the walls.” He refined his earlier assessment of the style, mistakenly considering the churches “half Gothic.” After visiting San Juan and Espada, the party retired to the sacristy of San José, where they enjoyed a cordial evening of wine and song.<sup>279</sup>

Upon his return to England, Bollaert took selected stories from his diary and published these in British periodicals, often anonymously. In one such tale, he mentioned members of his party smoked their souvenir “Alamo pipes” carved out of the soft rock from the Alamo.<sup>280</sup> Bollaert also described San Antonio as the “Thermopylae of Texas,” and briefly explained the Alamo massacre to his British audience. He also described “Descending into its romantic and picturesque valley” where the traveler would see Missions Concepción and San José. Bollaert informed his readers, “The turrets of these missions rise in solitary grandeur amid the forests of the west, forming an interesting feature in the scenery of that wild country.”<sup>281</sup> The mission churches do not

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<sup>278</sup> Bollaert, *William Bollart's Texas*, 225-226.

<sup>279</sup> Bollaert, *William Bollart's Texas*, 231-234.

<sup>280</sup> “Hunting in Western Texas, and Visit to San Antonio de Bejar in 1843,” *A New Sporting Magazine* (December 1848): 435. Accessed August 20, 2015. ProQuest British Periodicals. The only author attribution is “By A Traveller.” The portion of this article that described the hunting trip was later edited into what became Chapter 11 of *William Bollaert's Texas*.

<sup>281</sup> “Hunting in Western Texas,” 432.

have “turrets” as might be found on an English castle. Bollaert was probably aggrandizing and taking a bit of artistic license with the drums and domes of Concepción, San José, and possibly even San Fernando Cathedral in downtown San Antonio to embellish his narrative.

Peripatetic merchant Josiah Gregg spent several years traveling between Missouri and Mexico on business, but in 1846, as part of the Arkansas Volunteers, he arrived in San Antonio and recorded his opinions of the missions. The town of San Antonio de Bexar did not make a good first impression on Gregg. While he allowed that he had not expected much in the way of charm or culture in a frontier town, by the same token, “I did not expect to see so poor and wretched a looking place.” He complained the streets were “dirty, crooked, and narrow” and the houses were no better, being thatched-roof *jacales* or “shabby looking” *adobe*.<sup>282</sup> The missions, conversely, fared much better under his eye and through his pen. He noted the Alamo dimensions and that it has some architectural detail remaining in the façade. He could also tell the roof originally had been arched, but since fallen in.<sup>283</sup> At Concepción, the accumulation of bat guano prevented his exploration of the interior, but he did describe some of the exterior stonework and ornamentation. San José, on the other hand, utterly charmed him and he observed it was “the best piece of ancient architecture in this country.” He pronounced the “sculptural elegance” of the façade with the “handsomely carved” figures (which he lamented had been horribly damaged by target practice). Gregg also

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<sup>282</sup> Josiah Gregg, *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg: Southwestern Enterprises, 1840-1847*, ed. by Maurice Garland Fulton (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 236-237.

<sup>283</sup> Gregg, *Diary & Letters*, 232-233.

estimated between 60 and 70 poor Mexicans living on the mission grounds. The chapels at San Juan and Espada were in ruins, but he estimated a total of 140 poverty-stricken Mexican residents.<sup>284</sup> Even in dilapidated conditions, the missions would at once pique the interests of those who took the time to visit, as well as provide home and community for those living there.

### **The Missions and the Mexican War**

Josiah Gregg was but one soldier who, on his way to the Mexican war, passed through San Antonio and on whom the missions made an indelible impression. The specifics relating to the causes and prosecution of that war are beyond the scope of this project. However, there were some aspects as a result of the war which do indeed fall into the purview of this dissertation. As United States soldiers and the journalists following them marched through San Antonio on their way to invade Mexico, some recorded and published their impressions of the town and its attractions (including the missions). With the annexation of Texas and successful conquest of prodigious territorial claims, the region enjoyed a relative increase in peace and prosperity. Wars against the Native Americans continued, but the constant threat to San Antonio decreased as the worst violence moved northward into the plains. As the town experienced more stability than

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<sup>284</sup> Gregg, *Diary & Letters*, 234-235. During this period, many primary sources referred to the non-Anglo population of San Antonio as “Mexican” simply assuming miscegenation with Native Americans, African-Americans, and Spanish. See De León, *They Called Them Greasers*, 14-23, and 40.

before, the number of visitors and travel narratives increased as Anglo-Americans came to explore and to settle the newly-gained territory.

One unnamed soldier-correspondent traveling with the First and Second Regiments of the Illinois Volunteers sent a series of reports to the popular *Niles National Register* magazine. He reported that the regiments had arrived in the San Antonio region in late August, 1846. After a few days of camp life, the soldier described some of the sights encountered on their maneuvers, “and among these, I know of none more striking than the vestiges which now remain of the early Spanish settlements.” He informed readers that while the missions were, at the time of his visit, “moss covered ruins,” he emphasized that these had been the “only outposts of Christianity in the wilderness of savages.” His stated reason for calling these buildings to readers’ attention was that as he found them interesting, he believed, “being now within the undisputed limits of our own country might prove worthy the attention of tourists and travelers in general.” While marching through the area, they encountered the “stupendous mission” of San José. After measuring the dimensions of the San José compound and buildings, he enthusiastically described the façade as “adorned with a richness of architecture and statuary so far superior to anything of its class among the religious edifices of our country that it strikes an American with awe and admiration.” The sculptural elegance and aesthetic details on the exterior and interior of the chapel affected this reporter so

greatly he felt compelled to encourage fellow Americans to travel to San Antonio in order to appreciate it for themselves.<sup>285</sup>

Although the Battle of the Alamo was widely reported in multiple newspapers shortly after it occurred in 1836, American troops again fighting Mexican foes ten years later gave some newspapers and magazines the excuse to revisit the massacre. One US Army officer in San Antonio claimed the “most interesting object however in the vicinity is the Alamo.” He then launched into a lurid and highly embellished retelling of the Alamo siege in which Crockett, as last survivor falls making his last stand at the door of the Alamo chapel.<sup>286</sup> In the late twentieth century, rancorous debates over the precise manner of Crockett’s death would pit collective memory against academic history. In printing dispatches received from Texas and Mexico, a New Hampshire newspaper claimed in very abbreviated form that the town of had been “defended to the last by Crocket, Bowie, and about 200 other Texans, for three [*sic*] days, against Sana Anna’s invading force. In the Alamo, the principal fortress, they sold their lives the dearest.” And as an off-hand comment for potential tourists or emigrants, “The climate is said to be delightful.”<sup>287</sup> Poetry, no matter how maudlin and racist, could also find a home in some newspapers, such as the Georgia newspaper that published “Song of the Texan

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<sup>285</sup> “Volunteers,” *Niles National Register*, October 24, 1846, 118-19. Accessed August 16, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series. The portion of this report which described San Antonio and the missions also appeared in the magazine, *The Catholic Telegraph* (which reprinted the article from *The St. Louis Republican*) less than one week later, again further distributing information about the missions and encouraging travel to San Antonio among a national audience. See “Mexico and the Invasion,” *The Catholic Telegraph*, October 29, 1846, 348. Accessed August 16, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series.

<sup>286</sup> “The Defence of the Alamo in 1836,” *Littell’s Living Age*, October 24, 1846, 175-177. Accessed August 16, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series.

<sup>287</sup> “War News,” *New Hampshire Sentinel* (Keene, NH), November 11, 1846, accessed July 27, 2015, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

Ranger” which described all manner of violence directed at the “Mexican herd” with the refrain, “The ‘Alamo!’ the ‘Alamo!’—remember the word.”<sup>288</sup> Reducing the enemies of the Alamo heroes to a “herd” further de-humanized the Mexicans under Santa Anna in 1836, as well as 1845, and unfortunately, extended to the Tejano population for generations afterward. Nonetheless, some of the results of this short war with Mexico were the exposure to a wider, American audience of the interesting sights in San Antonio, as well as the alteration of the Alamo façade to its current appearance.

### **How the Alamo Got its “Hump” (With Apologies to Kipling)**

Whether one considers it the ‘humped façade,’ a ‘gabled parapet,’ a ‘bell-shaped parapet,’ or the top of the quatrefoil motif seen at the other missions, the front façade of the Alamo chapel is arguably its most recognizable feature. As the subsequent chapters of this dissertation show, the characteristic ‘hump’ was used frequently in advertising San Antonio. However, the façade is also representative of the contentious relationship between collective memory and historical fact because at the time of the 1836 battle, the building’s façade appeared very differently. How the Alamo chapel acquired its unique façade is one of the more interesting, but lesser known tales of the missions that is often overlooked by the collective memories.

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<sup>288</sup> “Song of the Texan Ranger,” *Georgia Telegraph* (Macon, GA), December 1, 1846, accessed February 7, 2007, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.



San Antonio made a convenient staging area for the military as it prepared for its invasion of Mexico. Edward Everett, a sergeant and clerk for his unit, the First Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, arrived in San Antonio in August, 1846 and made camp near the Alamo.<sup>289</sup> He described the Alamo as being “highly picturesque . . . and having an Oriental style, which might perhaps be traced to its derivation from the Moors of old Spain.”<sup>290</sup> In a letter to his brother, Everett observed “the men making pipes out of the stone” taken from the Alamo ruins.<sup>291</sup> The regimental colonel assigned Everett and four others to collect information about the history and customs of the areas through which they travelled. Everett’s talents at drafting had been recognized and he was specifically tasked with executing the drawings. He made sketches of the Alamo, but San José really captured his attention. This mission, he noted, “was remarkable for its façade, which was elaborately carved in stone, scroll work, supporting statues of the Virgin and Saints, surrounding the entrance and central window. The workmanship was excellent, and the design unique and rich.” He opined the bell tower was a “rough Moresque style.” Plants were growing on the walls and roof, “and though occupied as a church, it showed neglect of ordinary care.”<sup>292</sup> (See Figs. 3.1 and 3.2.)

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<sup>289</sup> Edward Everett, “A Narrative of Military Experience in Several Capacities,” *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society For the Year 1905* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library), 179-236; Richard Eighme Ahlborn, *The San Antonio Missions: Edward Everett and the American Occupation, 1847* (Fort Worth, TX: Amon Carter Museum, 1985), 1-4; and Thomas Smith, “The U.S. Army and the Alamo, 1846-1877,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 118, no. 3 (January 2015): 263-264.

<sup>290</sup> Everett, “A Narrative of Military Experience,” 203-204.

<sup>291</sup> Edward Everett to Mr. S. W. Everett, “Dear Brother,” August 14, 1846, Edward Everett Papers, Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University (hereafter cited as “Everett Collection”).

<sup>292</sup> Everett, “A Narrative of Military Experience,” 204-205.



Figure 3.1 Mission San José. Drawn by Edward Everett, lithograph by C. B. Graham. Edward Everett Collection. Image and scan courtesy of the Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University.



Figure 3.2 Mission Concepción. Drawn by Edward Everett, lithographed by C.B. Graham. Edward Everett Collection. Image and scan courtesy of the Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University.

On the night of September 11, 1846, Everett, as sergeant of the evening guard, was shot just above the knee during an altercation and crippled.<sup>293</sup> The injury prevented Everett from marching south with his unit. After a month in hospital, Everett was reassigned to help the newly appointed Assistant Quartermaster, Captain J. H. Ralston. By early 1847, Ralston concluded that his current building was insufficient for their

<sup>293</sup> Edward Everett to Mr. S. W. Everett, "Dear Sam," September 14, 1846, Everett Collection; Everett, "A Narrative of Military Experience," 206-207.

needs and began looking for something to better protect the various stores of materials. He considered the Alamo compound and charged Everett with making drawings, plans, and working up estimates to convert the Alamo chapel and nearby remaining buildings into a useable facility. (See Figs. 3.3 and 3.4.) Despite his injury, Everett was able to make satisfactory recommendations to Ralston, who forwarded them up the military chain of command. Meanwhile, Ralston's immediate superior officer, Major Charles Thomas, Quartermaster, contacted Bishop Jean Marie Odin in Galveston and secured his permission to remodel the buildings as there was some question over whether the Catholic Church still owned the property. However, the Army bureaucracy moved at a near glacial pace, and Ralston had to proceed with some of the repairs and renovations without approval from Washington, DC, in order to protect some of the stores and material from the elements as well as thieves.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>294</sup>Smith, "The Army and the Alamo," 265-269; Everett, "A Narrative of Military Experience," 214-215.



Figure 3.3 Ruins of the Alamo, Exterior. Drawn by Edward Everett, lithographed by C.B. Graham. Edward Everett Collection. Image and scan courtesy of the Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University.



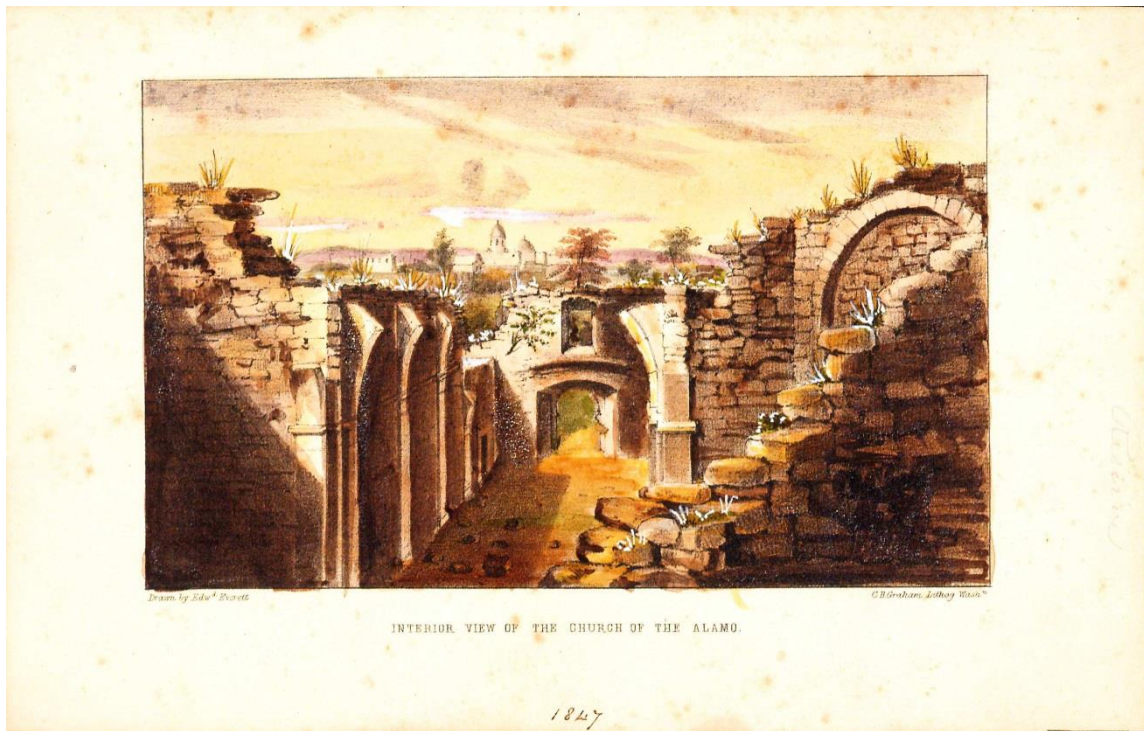


Figure 3.4. Ruins of the Alamo, Interior. Drawn by Edward Everett, lithographed by C.B. Graham. Edward Everett Collection. Image and scan courtesy of the Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University.

When hostilities in Mexico ended in 1848, Everett, Ralston, and many other soldiers returned home. The Army, however, maintained a presence in San Antonio and at the Alamo. A new quartermaster, Major Edwin Burr Babbitt arrived in March of 1849. Shortly after arriving, he sent a proposal to the Quartermaster General, Thomas Jessup in Washington declaring the existing Alamo site inadequate for his needs. Babbitt recommended either razing the existing Alamo, or acquiring other city property,

but in either case, he planned to spend over \$51,000 to construct the facilities he believed were needed. Jessup rapidly overturned the plan, ordering Babbitt to make repairs to the existing facilities as there was still some debate over exactly how much land beyond the Alamo chapel belonged to the Catholic Church.<sup>295</sup> Several more months of wrangling over the rent to be paid to the City of San Antonio between Babbitt and former San Antonio mayor Bryan Callahan delayed work until 1850.<sup>296</sup>

Babbitt wanted a large arched roof built over the Alamo chapel to better protect the supplies and materials stored within. However, the existing façade wall was too short to provide the necessary support, so the quartermaster turned to architect John M. Fries, a recent immigrant from Germany to design the structure.<sup>297</sup> There is some debate on where the inspiration for the ‘hump’ parapet came from. Historian Kevin Young suggests Babbitt made the design recommendations when he specified the arched roof. Babbitt also added two second floor windows to the front of the Alamo chapel at the same time.<sup>298</sup> Historian Thomas Smith as well as art historians Susan P. Schoelwer and Tom W. Gläser give more credit to the architect Fries and his stonemason, David Russi.<sup>299</sup> Schoelwer and Gläser suggest that while Fries was familiar “with formal architectural styles, the sources of the design for the Alamo gable remain a puzzle. This simple arched gable, no doubt intended to at least echo the original façade design,

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<sup>295</sup> Kevin R. Young, “Major Babbitt and the Alamo ‘Hump,’” *Military Images* 6, no. 1 (July-Aug., 1984): 17; and Smith, “The Army and the Alamo,” 269-271.

<sup>296</sup> Smith, “The Army and the Alamo,” 272-273.

<sup>297</sup> Young, “Babbitt and the Alamo,” 16; and Smith, “The Army and the Alamo,” 273.

<sup>298</sup> Young, “Babbitt and the Alamo,” 16-17.

<sup>299</sup> Smith, “The Army and the Alamo,” 273-274; and Susan Prendergast Schoelwer and Tom W. Gläser, *Alamo Images: Changing Perceptions of a Texas Experience* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1985), 35-36.

actually seems more reminiscent of urban Dutch architecture than of Spanish Baroque ecclesiastical buildings.” This speculation makes sense given that Fries recently emigrated from Germany where he probably had less opportunity to make a careful study of Spanish churches. Conversely, Smith argues that Fries may have copied the ‘hump’ motif from the sacristy and *convento* walls at Mission San José.<sup>300</sup> Architectural historian Marshall S. McLennan, however, makes a convincing declaration that this shape is far from unique and offers numerous examples of how “the baroque parapet with a curvilinear or stepped gable devolved from the high-style rococo-baroque cathedrals” in Spain, to the much more “simplified, minimal vernacular baroque parapets” as seen throughout the American Southwest from the nineteenth century onwards.<sup>301</sup> Another plausible explanation is that the ‘hump’ or arch strongly resembles the top leaf of a quatrefoil, which is a frequently used design motif in the exterior sculpting, frescoes, and painted surfaces of San José. This same motif also tops the famous “Rose Window” at San José.

Edward Everett, back in civilian life, was not impressed with the changes, and recorded as much in his journal. “There were no pretensions to ornamental architecture except in the façade of the church and portions of the interior.” The surrounding buildings were removed or altered according to the Army’s needs “without remorse,” but “the Church we respected as an historical relic and as such its characteristics were not marred by us.” Despite this deference Everett and his crew gave the chapel, “I regret to

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<sup>300</sup> Schoelwer and Gläser, *Alamo Images*, *ibid.*; and Smith, “The Army and the Alamo,” *ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> Marshall S. McLennan, “The Baroque Parapet: Cultural Diffusion and the Sense of Place in the American Southwest,” *PAST: Pioneer America Society Transactions* 33 (October, 2010): 40-53.



see by a late engraving of this ruin that tasteless hands have evened off the rough walls as they were left after the siege, surrounding them with a ridiculous scroll, giving the building the appearance of the headboard of a bedstead.” Nonetheless, Everett recognized that the alterations continued the functionality of the building and preserved it from destruction, “The care thus showed however questionable the taste of its exterior is highly commendable, when compared with the wanton destruction with which other curious buildings in the vicinity have been visited by relic hunters or other Vandals and iconoclasts.”<sup>302</sup> Here is an initial recognition of the sometimes contentious relations between historical accuracy and historic preservation at the Alamo.

Edward Everett was one of the more talented artists to make images of San Antonio’s missions during this period. He later made watercolors, lithographs of which were included in a government report on the Army’s activities in San Antonio.<sup>303</sup> Art historian Richard Ahlborn suggests Everett’s watercolors are worth considering on three levels: aesthetics, historical value, and “individual experience.” During the mid-nineteenth century artists working in the American West ran the gamut in talent from exceptional to amateurish. He places Everett and his ability to capture the buildings as well as a feel for their settings on the better end of the spectrum. Ahlborn also suggests that Everett, along with other artists including Seth Eastman and Theodore Gentilz who also came to San Antonio and created images of the missions, actually helped preserve

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<sup>302</sup> Everett, “Journals and Memoirs, 1846-1899.” Everett Collection.

<sup>303</sup> Ahlborn, *The San Antonio Missions*, 42-45; and Report of the Secretary of War, Communicating, in Compliance with a Resolution of the Senate, a Map Showing the Operations of the Army of the United States in Texas and the Adjacent Mexican States on the Rio Grande; Accompanied by Astronomical Observations, and Descriptive and Military Memoirs of the Country. Sen. Rep. No. 31-S.exdoc32 (1849). Accessed online, August 19, 2015, ProQuest Congressional.

the missions by capturing their appearance at a given moment in time, “These artists not only preserved a contemporary record, but their depictions of the missions popularized and stimulated interest to the point that preservation of the original structures could begin.” Finally, he suggests that Everett’s “individual experience” was his scrupulous approach and demand for accuracy, as illustrated by his displeasure at the alterations Babbitt and Fries made to the Alamo chapel.

Ahlborn concludes Everett’s legacy was to capture sensitive and “selective portrayals of historic buildings” which reflect foreign origins as the country rapidly expanded across the continent and consumed non-Anglo cultures.<sup>304</sup> Ahlborn credits Everett with real contributions to the preservation of the Alamo. Ahlborn also asserts that Everett’s images appeared in the popular journal, *Gleason’s Pictorial Drawing Room* in 1854. However, this claim is problematic. The drawings were not credited to Everett or his lithographer Graham. Furthermore, the *Gleason’s* images bear only a passing resemblance to Everett’s. If plagiarism, it was poorly done. The most glaring error is the scale is horribly wrong; the missions would be several stories tall based on the size of the people standing nearby, although this is perhaps a comment by the artist on their importance. Everett did not include people in his illustrations, and on the whole,

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<sup>304</sup> Ahlborn, *The San Antonio Missions*, 57-58. Seth Eastman was a minor painter in the Hudson River School who visited San Antonio in the late 1840s. Theodore Gentilz was a French immigrant who settled in San Antonio sometime in the 1850s and painted scenes of everyday San Antonio life. Everett’s watercolors are in the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, Texas.

demonstrates a much better comprehension of scale. Otherwise, Ahlborn's overall assessment is absolutely correct, "The romance of the mission age had begun."<sup>305</sup>

While the debates over the source of inspiration for the curvilinear arch atop the façade of a ruined church building on the frontier may seem frivolous, the Alamo and its façade, as it currently appears, is nothing short of an icon. As Schoelwer and Gläser conclude, "Despite the parapet's artistic and historic anachronism, it was quickly and irrevocably assimilated into the authentic fabric of both the Alamo site and symbol . . . [illustrating] both the pervasiveness of mid-nineteenth century romanticism and the nascent influence of the Alamo legend."<sup>306</sup> The Alamo by Babbitt and Fries would become the Alamo of legend.

### **The Missions Between the Wars**

After the war, Mexico and the United States created a commission with representatives from both countries to explore, survey, and document what would eventually become the political boundary separating the two nations. Citizens of northern Mexico found themselves living on American soil and under American laws with no more effort than the stroke of a pen. Just as San Antonio had been a convenient staging area for the

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<sup>305</sup> Ahlborn, *The San Antonio Missions*, 58; "Bexar and its Antiquities," *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion*, February 18, 1854, 103-105. Accessed May 1, 2012. EBSCO American Antiquarian Society Historical Periodicals Collection.

<sup>306</sup> Schoelwer and Gläser, *Alamo Images*, 38.

military moving south, it reprised that role for the boundary commission, headed by John Russell Bartlett. Furthermore, with Texas firmly as part of the United States, tourists and other explorers, spurred on by the incessant boosters, arrived to see the newly won territory for themselves.

Who were these tourists and explorers? They came from a variety of walks of life. There were the famous, the not-so-famous, and even those-who-were-not-yet-famous. John Cox, a scholar of travel writing notes that many were drawn from both the middle as well as the upper classes.<sup>307</sup> Voices of lower class travelers have largely been “silenced” (to again borrow Trouillot’s term), mainly for lack of sources. That is not to say there are none, but many in this socio-economic group were illiterate, or their works were not preserved in libraries and archives because they were not thought important, or the works simply have not yet been found. In addition to the politician Bartlett, future landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted ventured into Texas, as well as future US President, Rutherford B. Hayes, who described San Antonio’s missions in 1849 as “ruined castles with statuary, carved work, and painting, built for worship and defence in the most magnificent style; now in heaps of ruins affording shelter to bats, Mexicans, and venomous and filthy reptiles.”<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Cox, *Traveling South*, 4.

<sup>308</sup> Entry dated, “Monday, February 26, 1849.” Rutherford B. Hayes, *Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes: Nineteenth President of the United States*. ed. Charles Richard Williams, vol. 1 (Columbus: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society and the F. J. Heer Printing Co., 1922), 262. Two days before, Hayes had visited the Alamo and seemed rather disillusioned to find a “party of California emigrants cooking in the room where Crockett fell.” *Ibid.*, 261.

Even before the war with Mexico, Anglos wanted to see interesting and picturesque sights, and San Antonio's missions certainly qualified. In her memoirs, Mary Maverick recorded that a party from Houston which included a Texas cabinet member visited San Antonio and the missions. On a cool, sunny day in November, 1839, Maverick joined this group as they first rode to the head of the San Antonio River and then visited three of the missions including San Juan Capistrano. Because of the threat of Indian attack, everyone in the group, including the women, was "armed with pistols and bowie knives." Maverick noted that despite feeling certain they were under surveillance by Indians who might attack at any moment; the group very much enjoyed their excursion.<sup>309</sup> Maverick, playing local host and tour guide, led the group to visit the more picturesque sights in the area which included the missions. Sightseeing parties with both Anglos living in San Antonio, as well as outsiders coming in for business or pleasure found the missions irresistible, although some visitors were more impressed than others.

Some journalists describing San Antonio curiously offer conflicting views within the same commentary. The Pittsfield, Massachusetts, newspaper reprinted an article from the New York *Journal of Commerce* describing a visit to San Antonio. Initially, the correspondent was far from impressed, "A week here [in San Antonio] gives me few pleasant impressions. The 'Americans,' perhaps one tenth of the population, are, as always, kind and hospitable, but all else is so strange, so purely Mexican and half barbarian." Yet later on, the author seemed near ecstasy as he recorded, "I have visited

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<sup>309</sup> Maverick, *Memoirs*, 25-26.

the Old Missions. They are wonderful—almost too much for human credulity—these vast piles erected when the country was wilderness.” Concepción, although “fast going to decay” still exhibited “traces of great beauty.” But the grandeur of San José left the author awe-struck, “I have never seen a piece of architecture so astonishing.” He claimed the façade was “embellished with the richest carvings from solid rock with countless figures, heavily gilded with silver, gold, and bronze. The doors are solid oak, with costly finish.” He even claimed the roof was strong enough to support cannon. The sanctuary suggested “tens of thousands of dollars having been expended in its embellishment,” with carvings and paintings all of the highest quality and “exquisite workmanship.” Despite the dilapidated state and bat infestation, the correspondent asked of his readers, “Who is not lost in wonder that these magnificent structures, which would do credit to any age and any people were built in a wilderness, inhabited by the most relentless savage, far away from civilization.”<sup>310</sup> Was the correspondent so impressed with the missions that he thickly poured on such exaggerations? Or, given some of the negative experiences he had encountered, perhaps the missions, as sole highlight, received the lion’s share of praise.

According to historian Patricia Nelson Limerick, John Russell Bartlett, head of the US-Mexican boundary commission, was unfortunately a dilettante, a “bookseller, amateur scholar, and lay politician from Rhode Island” who was hardly up to the task of leading such an important and contentious group. His strengths lay in close observation

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<sup>310</sup> “Miscellaneous. Life in Texas,” *Pittsfield Sun* (Pittsfield, MA), July 6, 1848, accessed October 16, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

and accurate rendition of flora and fauna, not in navigating the treacherous waters of human relations, team building, and international politics.<sup>311</sup> Despite his shortcomings, Bartlett was an optimist and his published journals offered readers his observations and opinions regarding territory newly incorporated into the United States.

As Bartlett and his party approached San Antonio his first impressions were that it was a place of great beauty, “The place seems to be embowered in trees above which the dome of the church swells with an air quite Oriental.” But this congenial view did not last as they made their way through “the filthy buildings of the Mexican suburbs to the plaza, or public square. The town is a strange mixture of massive old Spanish buildings and recent American structures.”<sup>312</sup> Nevertheless, Bartlett considered the town “delightfully situated” with plenty of fresh water and the capacity for hydraulic power if more mills could be built.<sup>313</sup> He believed the town had good potential blessed with fertile land surrounding it, except for the Mexican population whom he casually wrote off as indolent. He perpetuated the generally-held stereotypes of American energy overtaking Mexican slothfulness for economic and agricultural production. The fact that San Antonio had no railroad connection and depended upon Mexican freighters was a serious drawback for future economic development.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 233-234.

<sup>312</sup> John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua, Connected with the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission During the Years 1850, '51, '52, and '53* vol. 1 (1854; repr. Chicago: The Rio Grande Press, 1965), 38.

<sup>313</sup> Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*, 39.

<sup>314</sup> Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*, 40; De León, *They Called Them Greasers*.

While in San Antonio, Bartlett paid visits to the missions, beginning with the Alamo, considered “one of the principal objects of interest to the stranger in” town. He remarked that the building was in use by the US Army Quartermaster as a storehouse and “retains little of its former appearance.” However, he claimed “the principal doorway, ornamented in the Moorish style, remains tolerably perfect.”<sup>315</sup> In addition to the Alamo, he recorded, “near the town and upon the banks of the San Antonio River are the remains of extensive mission establishments.” Bartlett managed to visit San José, Concepción, and San Juan before leaving on his appointed commission. He opined that San José had been the “largest and wealthiest mission; and its buildings were constructed with greater display of art, and still remain in better preservation, than the others.” The main entrance to the church itself “is surrounded by elaborate carving, which extends the whole length of the front, and includes numerous figures, among which San José, the patron of the church, and the Virgin and Child are conspicuous.” He erroneously declared that the material used for the carvings was a type of “stucco.” Bartlett lamented the vandalism from the various military forces over the years who found the ornamentation and statues convenient targets for firearms practice as well as proving “their contempt for the Mexican belief.” Bartlett additionally recorded remnant tracings and decorations in red and blue on the flat surfaces of the building. The pinnacle, however, was Rosa’s Window, “the most perfect portion of the church is an oval window in the sacristy, which is surrounded with scrolls and wreathwork of exceeding

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<sup>315</sup> Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*, 41.



grace and beauty.”<sup>316</sup> Unlike previous visitors who indicated the church was regularly used for Mass, Bartlett observed San José was “seldom used for religious purposes; as the Mexicans of the neighborhood are poor and cannot often afford the fifty dollars charged by the San Antonio priests for officiating.” Bartlett was disappointed in the other missions, indicating very little remained of San Juan to explore, and the day was fading quickly when he arrived at Concepción. He was disgusted at finding a sacred building was being used as a barn for cattle, and between the accumulated filth and a noisy bat infestation, “we found nothing of interest to repay us for encountering their disagreeable presence.”<sup>317</sup>

In the early 1850s, another native of New England, a young agriculturalist, fervent abolitionist, roving journalist, and future landscape architect named Frederick Law Olmsted made his way into Texas from New York. Keeping copious notes of his experiences, he later published accounts of his wanderings for the reading public. As he journeyed south and west, Olmsted’s writings revealed what English scholar John Cox suggests was a typical amount of Northern chauvinism. Cox asserts that many travelers from the northern states described the South as “backward,” and even potentially, “dangerous,” which he contrasts against the North as the nation’s “dominant cultural, political, and economic region.”<sup>318</sup> Previous to Olmsted’s reaching the German community of New Braunfels, Texas, he marveled “in the whole journey through

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<sup>316</sup> Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*, 41-43.

<sup>317</sup> Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*, 44-45.

<sup>318</sup> Cox, *Traveling South*, 2 and 8. However, in Chapter 4, “Yeomen All,” Cox also notes that Olmsted ventured into the South as an evangelist touting free yeomen farmers as being more efficient than the South’s hoary “peculiar institution,” which Olmsted believed was just as damaging to slave-owners as to the slaves.

Eastern Texas, we did not see one of the inhabitants look into a newspaper or a book, although we spent days in houses where men were lounging about the fire without occupation,” and he often denigrated even the victims of the soul-crushing poverty endemic to the population regardless of race.<sup>319</sup> Conversely, once in New Braunfels, Olmsted believed himself in Germany and so much closer to Paradise than he had experienced after weeks on the road. The lodgings, food, and level of intellectual stimulation all met with his unqualified approval.<sup>320</sup> According to Cox, Olmsted held the Texas German population with its free labor and industry would be the state’s saving grace and the example which all Texans should emulate.<sup>321</sup> Olmsted might have been tempted to remain, but the road called him further south to San Antonio.

Olmsted’s initial impressions of San Antonio bear some semblance to a travel agent’s description, hoping to inspire others to follow and share his experiences:

We have no city, except, perhaps New Orleans, that can vie, in point of the picturesque interest that attaches to odd and antiquated foreignness, with San Antonio. Its jumble of races, costumes, languages and buildings; its religious ruins, holding to an antiquity, for us, indistinct enough to breed an unaccustomed solemnity; its remote, isolated, outposted situation, and the vague, conviction that it is the first of a new class of conquered cities into whose decaying streets our rattling life is to be infused, combine with the heroic touches in its history to enliven and satisfy your traveler’s curiosity.<sup>322</sup>

As historian of tourism Sears noted, finding the “picturesque” was a highly desired commodity for the nineteenth century traveler. Similarly, the “jumble of races” created

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<sup>319</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas: Or, A Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier* (1857, repr., Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 117.

<sup>320</sup> Olmsted, *Journey Through Texas*, 143-147.

<sup>321</sup> Cox, *Traveling South*, 163-164.

<sup>322</sup> Olmsted, *Journey Through Texas*, 150-151.

in microcosm what Limerick contends, that the region at large is a meeting ground for multiple cultures.<sup>323</sup> Later, as Olmsted encountered and described the Tejano population, his descriptions inferred a foreign and exotic element that cast them as ‘Other.’<sup>324</sup>

Given that modern scholars credit Olmsted most for his landscape architecture and civic parks, his reaction to the missions is surprisingly reserved. His description of the missions did not drip with the saccharine superlatives of others, but instead Olmsted employed incisive understatement to great effect. He introduced them as “celebrated religious establishments,” similar to those elsewhere in the American Southwest. He revealed an unexpected sympathy for the Catholic friars whose “patient courage” eventually won over the indigenous “cruel brutes” that lived there. As part of this conversion effort, they constructed these “ponderous but rudely splendid edifices.”<sup>325</sup> Olmsted noted that the Alamo was “a mere wreck of its former grandeur.” But because of its role in 1836 and Texan independence, he very insightfully described it as a “monument, not so much to faith as to courage.” Descriptions of the other four missions were combined together. In playing to his readers’ desire for picturesque and exotic, Olmsted noted “They are in different stages of decay, but all are real ruins, beyond any connection with the present—weird remains out of a silent past.” Although he considered the missions “of various magnificence,” in contrast to other visitors rhapsodizing on the detailed sculptures, he expressed contempt at the “rude heads of

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<sup>323</sup> Sears, *Sacred Places*, 10; Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 27.

<sup>324</sup> Olmsted, *Journey Through Texas*, 151-152.

<sup>325</sup> Olmsted, *Journey Through Texas*, 154.

saints” and lack of “grace” in the “mouldings.” Nevertheless, Olmsted concluded “Many is the picturesque sketch offered to the pencil by such intrusion upon falling dome, tower, and cloister.”<sup>326</sup>

Like William Bollaert, Olmsted published selections from his journals in other popular media of the day. Cox notes one of the reasons for Olmsted’s journey south was for a series of letters to be published in the *New York Daily Times*.<sup>327</sup> The articles appeared between March 6, and June 7, 1854. Unfortunately for this project, these letters contained more discussions of the free labor versus slavery debate in Texas, and less description about the sights of San Antonio.<sup>328</sup> Conversely, some of Olmsted’s adventures in San Antonio were published in May of 1857 in the journal, *Friends’ Review*, probably to help publicize his book about his trip to Texas.<sup>329</sup> While the extra publications may have generated added revenue for the authors, there was also the undeniable effect of putting descriptions of San Antonio as an exotic location with its picturesque architecture in front of more potential travelers.

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<sup>326</sup> Olmsted, *Journey Through Texas*, 154-156.

<sup>327</sup> Cox, *Traveling South*, 142.

<sup>328</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, vol. 2, *Slavery and the South, 1852-1857*, ed. Charles E. Beveridge and Charles Capin McLaughlin (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 460-461.

<sup>329</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, “San Antonio, Texas,” *Friends’ Review*, May 2, 1857, 540-542.

## Missions as Sacred Space

Previous visitors to San Antonio's missions observed that Mass was occasionally held at San José. Although the Catholic Church was trying to re-establish itself in Texas after the chaos of Mexican-, then Texan independence, not to mention US annexation and a war with Mexico; for several decades in the early nineteenth century, Church activities drifted. This drift began to change when Father Jean Marie Odin of France arrived in Texas. Odin was an energetic man, charged with rebuilding a Catholic presence in what had nominally been Spanish Catholic territory.

In 1840, Odin arrived in Texas carrying the title Vice Prefect Apostolic, and had been tasked with inspecting Catholic operations in Texas and tending to whatever their needs might be. The situation he found appalled him. One of his first actions as vice prefect was to sack Father Refugio de la Garza, priest at San Fernando church, and Father José Antonio Valdez, from Mission La Bahia del Espiritu Santo in Goliad. The justifications for taking such drastic action against the two aging priests who had grown up in the community were for dereliction of their duties to their congregations, as well as living in sin with women.<sup>330</sup> In addition to repairing the clergy in San Antonio, Odin began earnestly repairing the church's physical facilities. Leaks in the roof of San Fernando were first on Odin's agenda, but as distinguished Catholic historian Carlos

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<sup>330</sup> Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, vol. 7, *The Church in Texas Since Independence, 1836-1950* (1958; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1976), 46-48; and Patrick Foley, *Missionary Bishop: Jean-Marie Odin in Galveston and New Orleans* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 60-61, and 75-79.

Castañeda points out, Odin “was struck by the beauty of the abandoned church and convent of San José.” He believed San José, with its surviving buildings and large campus could “easily be converted into a college or a seminary,” or even a school for boys.<sup>331</sup> Although it took a number of years to come to fruition, Odin tried to recruit Catholic groups such as the Society of Mary and the Benedictines to use the facilities at both San José as well as Concepción. According to Catholic historian Joseph Schmitz, Odin purchased or recommended other religious members purchase land around the missions. For ten years beginning in 1859, brothers of the Society of Mary lived at Concepción and the lands surrounding the mission were leased for farming.<sup>332</sup>

Odin contacted Abbot Boniface Wimmer of the Benedictine order in 1859 about bringing several members of that house to live at San José and minister to the German Catholic community in the region. A local newspaper celebrated the commitment (now Bishop of Texas) Odin was making toward the missions by “resuscitating and reconstructing the relics of the different Missions . . . We devoutly bid him God speed, protestant though we be, we cherish the relics of these antique Missions and hallow their memories, as much as the Athenians do that of the Parthenon.”<sup>333</sup> Before the Benedictine could begin their religious work, they carried out an extensive rebuilding project at San José. Father Alto Hoermann led four associates to San Antonio in preparation. Fr. Hoermann later wrote a maudlin romance based on San José during the

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<sup>331</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage: Church in Texas*, 49-51.

<sup>332</sup> Joseph William Schmitz, S.M. *The Society of Mary in Texas* (San Antonio: The Naylor Co. 1951), 44-47.

<sup>333</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage: Church in Texas*, 216-222; and “The Missions,” *San Antonio Ledger and Texan*, September 22, 1860, accessed online October 16, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

Spanish period. National Park Service archaeologist James Ivey states that much of the remodeling work was done to the *convento* in 1860 and it was during this project that Gothic- (also known as “lancet”) arched windows were installed on the second floor.<sup>334</sup> These windows clash with the earlier, more rounded, Roman arches and are easily identified today by the use of red brick instead of original limestone on their outline. Unfortunately, before much progress could be made, Odin was assigned to be Archbishop of New Orleans, and the outbreak of the Civil War prevented the Benedictines from taking up residence.

### **Romantics at the Missions (Part Two)**

In the 1850s, San Antonio was growing and becoming more interesting to tourists. A local newspaper pleaded that the town really needed a top quality hotel of “magnificent character.” The paper argued that no traveler can consider his trip to Texas complete without visiting San Antonio claiming, “He wishes to see before he dies,” the Alamo as well as the other missions. Because of the need to accommodate an anticipated increasing number of tourists, the paper continued, San Antonio needed a hotel with which to link its identity. Just as New Orleans had its Saint Charles Hotel and New

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<sup>334</sup> P. Alto S. Hoermann, *The Daughter of Tehuan: Or, Texas of the Past Century*, trans. Alois Braun (San Antonio: Standard Printing Co., 1932). James E. Ivey, “Of Various Magnificence: The Architectural History of the Missions of San Antonio, Texas in the Colonial Period and the Nineteenth Century” with contributions by Marlys Bush Thurber and Santiago Escobedo (Santa Fe, NM: National Park Service, ca. 2006), 363-366, unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.

York had its Astor House, “San Antonio should have its ‘Alamo House.’”<sup>335</sup> The town boosters understood linking tourist attractions and identity to enhance the attractiveness of the package, and romance was the key. Whether a pleasant picnic on the mission grounds, or genuflecting at the room where Davy Crockett allegedly died, many visitors wrote about visiting the missions with ostentatious prose.

In addition to textual descriptions of the missions, printing technology had advanced enough to make it more cost effective to include images printed from woodblocks engraved from sketches. These pictorial images were frequently no more accurate than written descriptions, but did show the ruined state, the Baroque design, or both to the reading public. Historian Joshua Brown describes how changes in engraving techniques increased cost effectiveness for printing images in weekly magazines, which in turn dramatically increased popularity and demand. The 1850s marked the time when illustrated periodicals began increasing in popularity in the US only to explode during the Civil War period with titles such as *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper’s Weekly* leading the way.<sup>336</sup>

While printed images supplemented text, flowery, romantic prose still painted the most vivid images of the missions. A US Army officer reconnoitered San Antonio,

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<sup>335</sup> “A Hotel Wanted in San Antonio,” *San Antonio Ledger*, June 23, 1853, accessed online, October 16, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>336</sup> Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 7-59. See also Richard Everett, “Things In and About San Antonio,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* (New York), January 15, 1859, accessed September 4, 2014, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph30324/>. Everett was traveling with a mining company to Arizona. Although he did not go into great detail about the missions, he described the scene overlooking the town as “Oriental” and the article included a very fine engraving of Mission Concepción.



perhaps on his way home from the Mexican war, or as part of Bartlett's boundary commission, and described his encounters for *Graham's American Monthly Magazine*. Just below the article's title is a dark, Gothic-looking image of the Alamo (although it is difficult to visually identify it as such), "where the lamented Crocket fell." The author visited the Alamo and while mistaking the chapel for a "cathedral" claimed the surviving sculpting of column and saint "would do credit to some of the best European sculptors." Similar accolades were given to the façade of San José. Finally, overcome with awe and inadequacy at describing the picturesque scene, the author invoked the Romantic hero poets and authors, "It was then we wished for the genius, the fire, and the conception of a Byron, a Scott, or a Stephens, that we might give vent to our feelings, and portray the beautiful prospect that surrounded us."<sup>337</sup>

Celebrated Southern writer and poet Sidney Lanier journeyed west into Texas "as valet to his right lung," seeking relief from the tuberculosis he contracted in a Civil War prison camp.<sup>338</sup> Lanier arrived in San Antonio in February of 1873 and wrote a lengthy essay which appeared in the *Southern Magazine* that summer. His essay included a history of the town from its founding as a Spanish colony, through the turmoil of Mexican, then Texan independence, and wrapped up with current events as Lanier observed them. He was so taken with picturesque nature of the city he began his

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<sup>337</sup> "Scenes in Texas," *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature, Art, and Fashion*, January, 1851, 37-40. Accessed August 30, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series online.

<sup>338</sup> Sidney Lanier, *The Centennial Edition of the Works of Sidney Lanier*, vol. 6, *Florida and Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Philip Graham (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1945), 190. San Antonio had a reputation in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a haven for people suffering from TB. See Char Miller, "Tourist Trap: Visitors and the Modern San Antonio Economy," in *The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest*, ed. Hal K. Rothman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 206-228.

description, “If peculiarities were quills, San Antonio de Bexar would be a rare porcupine.” The romantic history (especially the 1836 Battle of the Alamo), the ethnic and cultural diversity, and varied climate all riveted his attention and provided ample fodder for his pen.<sup>339</sup> His take on the city’s diverse population was, “one finds in San Antonio the queerest juxtaposition of civilizations, white, yellow (Mexican), red (Indian), black (negro), and all possible permutations of these significant colors,” and he remarked “Religious services are regularly conducted in four languages, German, Spanish, English, and Polish.”<sup>340</sup> Like some earlier visitors, Lanier mentioned the Moorish influence on the sacred architecture in the town, and he visited the missions, “notable places about the town which the stranger must visit.”<sup>341</sup> He explored Concepción’s roof before moving on to San José which he stated was more ornate and lovely. Lanier painted a blissful and bucolic scene for his audience, “Religious services are regularly conducted here; and one can do worse things than to steal out here from town on some wonderfully calm Sunday morning, and hear a mass, and dream back the century and a half of strange, lonesome, devout, hymn-haunted and Indian-haunted years that have trailed past these walls.”<sup>342</sup>

On the heels of Lanier was a journalist for *Scribner’s Monthly*, Edward King. Similar to Frederick Law Olmsted, King published his travel narrative through the Southern states into Texas, including San Antonio, in multiple venues, in the magazine

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<sup>339</sup> Lanier, *Florida and Miscellaneous Prose*, 202. See *Southern Magazine*, (July, 1873), 83-99 and *Southern Magazine*, (August, 1873), 138-152. An edited version of this essay was used for a guidebook on the city in 1890 and will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>340</sup> Lanier, *Florida and Miscellaneous Prose*, 233-234.

<sup>341</sup> Lanier, *Florida and Miscellaneous Prose*, 241-242.

<sup>342</sup> Lanier, *Florida and Miscellaneous Prose*, 242-243.

*Scribner's*, but also the next year as part of a much larger book, *The Great South*.<sup>343</sup> Multiple publications increased potential readers, which in turn increased potential tourists to San Antonio. English literature professor Jennifer Rae Greeson offers a thought-provoking interpretation of King's *magnum opus* suggesting it should no longer be read as part of the post-Civil War reconciliation literature. Greeson argues that because King was just as critical of Southern whites as he was the freedmen, it should properly be looked upon as colonialist literature. In essence, the Southern states, newly conquered in the Civil War, should be seen as being just as backward and underdeveloped as select other parts of the world where the European powers were planting flags and making imperial claims. Greeson suggests King saw the South as a land of unlimited potential that just needed new, vigorous, energetic men of vision and capital (in other words, Northern capitalists) to come in and exploit it.<sup>344</sup> The idea is not completely without precedent as John Cox had made a similar assessment of antebellum travel narratives, particularly Frederick Law Olmsted's.<sup>345</sup>

Despite Greeson's assessment, King's descriptions of Texas, San Antonio, and Texans could be seen as an attempt to extend the olive branch after the horrors of war and disappointments of Reconstruction.<sup>346</sup> King's narrative takes him (and the reader as if right beside him) by stagecoach from Austin down to San Antonio. Like Lanier, King

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<sup>343</sup> "Glimpses of Texas-I: A Visit to San Antonio," *Scribner's Monthly*, January, 1874, 302-330; and Edward King, *The Great South* (1875; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1969).

<sup>344</sup> Jennifer Rae Greeson, "Expropriating *The Great South* and Exporting 'Local Color': Global and Hemispheric Imaginaries of the First Reconstruction," *American Literary History* 18, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 496-505, accessed September 2, 2015, EBSCO America: History & Life, doi:10.1093/alh/aj1010.

<sup>345</sup> Cox, *Traveling South*, 2 and 8.

<sup>346</sup> "Glimpses of Texas," *Scribner's Monthly*, 302-303.

captured the colorful dialect of the stagecoach driver and others which added spice and interest to the tale. There were also thirty-two illustrations; small, but well-executed. The illustrations included Concepción, the ornate façade of San José (incorrectly identified as San Juan), the sacristy window of San José (Rosa's Window), and the Alamo. Also like Lanier before him, King included a detailed history of San Antonio from colonial times to the time of his visit which was heavily romanticized. He described the "old San Antonio road" which according to King, "for one hundred and fifty years, has been the most romantic route upon the western continent."<sup>347</sup>

Of the missions, King's descriptions were more detailed than Olmsted's. And like others, he could not help but remark on the "Moorish spirit" behind Concepción's décor perpetuating the exotic and Orientalist vision of the region.<sup>348</sup> Similarly, he described San José, "Mute, mighty, passing beautiful,--it is rapidly decaying; and the government should not willingly let it crumble into dust. The Catholic Church in Texas, to whom the missions and the mission lands now belong, is too poor to attempt the restoration of this superb edifice." King also asserted "One of the most famous of Parisian architects, in a recent tour through this country, pronounced the mission the finest piece of architecture in the United States." He did not identify or even hint who this famous architect might have been, but his readers would simply have to take him at his word. In a similarly questionable assertion, King claimed the reigning monarch of Spain "sent an architect of rare knowledge and genius to superintend its erection. This

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<sup>347</sup> "Glimpses of Texas," *Scribner's Monthly*, 309.

<sup>348</sup> "Glimpses of Texas," *Scribner's Monthly*, 314-315.

architect, Huizar, finally settled in Texas, where his descendants still live.” National Park Service archaeologist James Ivey claims this mention of Huizar as having been sent directly by the King of Spain is one of the earliest published instances of the romanticized Huizar legend.<sup>349</sup> Other variants on the legend would follow a few years later. Of the Alamo, King named it, “the shrine to which every pilgrim to this strange corner of America must do utmost reverence. As mission-church and fortress, it is venerable, and has been so baptized in blood that it is world famous.” He took a dim view of the Army’s repurposing of the Alamo as a depot for materials, “the government, which would use Washington’s tomb for a store-house, rather than build a proper one, if Mount Vernon were a military depot, has cumbered it with boxes and barrels.”<sup>350</sup> Granted, all the material probably detracted from the romance of a proper memorial to the martyrs of an American Thermopylae. Nonetheless, King’s prose suggested he was on the verge of rapture as he stood before the Alamo.

Greeson argues that King’s narrative should be considered a “local color” piece instead of trying to promote an agenda of reconciliation following the Civil War and Reconstruction.<sup>351</sup> While such a reading has some merits, King’s penchant for emphasizing the abundant natural resources in Texas begging to be exploited by capitalists is more reminiscent of the booster literature of the 1840s. Just as earlier depictions of Texas as a new ‘Garden of Eden’ included romantic descriptions of the

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<sup>349</sup> “Glimpses of Texas,” *Scribner’s Monthly*, 317. See also Ivey, “OVM,” 96. Ivey may well be correct that this was the earliest account published outside of San Antonio, but as an oral tradition, it was probably decades older.

<sup>350</sup> “Glimpses of Texas,” *Scribner’s Monthly*, 322-324.

<sup>351</sup> Greeson, “Expropriating *The Great South*,” 501-503.

missions, so too did King include romanticized textual images as he called for capitalistic exploitation of endless resources. I contend that in Texas, King's call for new, energetic, and well-funded people to come and take advantage of Nature's bounty more resembled the earlier booster materials. King's (as well as Lanier's) 'local color' writing style, interjecting conversations and quaint sayings in unusual dialects, is certainly more enjoyable to read than Kennedy or Kendall whose style, despite the layer of superlatives, was often a dry recitation of facts, climatic data, and estimated population numbers. King and Lanier should therefore be credited with bringing more literary appeal if not grace to booster literature in the second half of the nineteenth century.

James Ivey observes, "The late nineteenth century has been traditionally viewed as the 'period of neglect' or the 'era of decline,' and the missions popularly thought of as deserted ruins."<sup>352</sup> Certainly the many travel narratives and booster publications that described the buildings as crumbling or in dilapidated shape bear this out. In December, 1868, part of the north wall of the chapel of San José collapsed, severely weakening the remaining portions. Church services were then moved from the main sanctuary to the sacristy. However, during Christmas Eve Midnight Mass, 1874, most of the remaining roof, dome, and vault came crashing down.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Ivey, "OVM," 352.

<sup>353</sup> Ivey, "OVM," 366. Ivey cites a secondary source, Marion Habig's *The Alamo Chain of Missions*, for this information. Unfortunately, numerous attempts to track down a primary source, an official Catholic document, or even local newspaper accounts were unsuccessful.

The missions were indeed in dire shape, but they had not been completely abandoned, nor were they ever completely forgotten. Although no longer serving solely the original Native American populations for which they were founded, the mission churches remained as shelter or sacred space for the local Tejano population. The church buildings survived two Mexican invasions and the Mexican-American War (fortunately the armies moved through the area and no hostilities occurred on the grounds). The US Army, with the assistance of Edward Everett, Maj. Edwin Babbitt, and John Fries, had converted the Alamo into a serviceable warehouse whose romantic history completely eclipsed its mundane function. Booster tracts and travel narratives, often written by Northerners such as Frederick Law Olmsted and Edward King, with colonialist attitudes toward the South, appeared in popular magazines such as *Harper's* and *Scribner's*. Flush with the purple prose of the Romantic Movement and Manifest Destiny, these narratives contributed to Anglo collective memories as they created a mythological Spanish past, an imagined Franciscan 'errand into the wilderness.' Even Southern writers such as Sydney Lanier recommended to his readers a sublime, serene morning attending Mass. Numerous references to "Moorish" or "Oriental" design features created "Orientalized" missions in the collective memories, particularly of tourists (mostly Northern, and middle class or better). At the same time, the Tejano population of San Antonio was similarly "Orientalized" or otherwise colonized by these narratives. Local Bishop Odin's plans for the missions south of town hinged on recruiting either the Society of Mary or the Benedictines to move in so he could reclaim

the buildings for educational purposes. And that Mass was being sung at San José when the roof collapsed in 1874 attests that it was still used as sacred space.

Ivey presciently states, “The romantic view of the abandoned mission in the wilderness, prevalent in the late nineteenth century, would apparently have been diminished by such an observation [of people actually living in close proximity to or regularly using the missions for religious services].”<sup>354</sup> Nonetheless, it is precisely these romanticized views and depictions of the missions during this period that would be so effective in advertising the railroad and promoting travel to San Antonio as an attractive destination. It is this image of the lonely mission, then, that was passed down to the tourists; and after 1877, when the railroad finally arrived in San Antonio, it would be this image that persisted into the new era.

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<sup>354</sup> Ivey, “OVM,” 352.



## CHAPTER IV

### MYTHS AND LEGENDS: TOURISM IN GILDED AGE SAN ANTONIO, 1877-1912

This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.

*—The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*

On February 6, 1877, the *San Antonio Daily Express* crowed, “Achieved At Last—San Antonio A Railroad City,” as the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio (GHSA) rail line reached town.<sup>355</sup> One local journalist, playing the role of community booster to the hilt, invited “the world to our city,” which he dubbed an “Elysium Field” destined for greatness.<sup>356</sup> Two weeks later when regular passenger service opened, the celebration lasted several days and the town was flooded with dignitaries from the railroad offices as well as civic leaders from the state and municipalities along the line. The Menger Hotel, one of the finest in town played host to the main celebrations, and was appropriately illuminated and decorated for the occasion. A local reporter observed

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<sup>355</sup> *San Antonio Daily Express*, February 6, 1877. See also Donald E. Everett, “San Antonio Welcomes the ‘Sunset’ -1877,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (July 1961): 47-60, accessed July 29, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30236190>.

<sup>356</sup> *San Antonio Daily Express*, February 6, 1877.

that “even the dark and frowning old Alamo brightened up and seemed to come out of the gloom of its ancient tragedies and partake of the cheerful influence of” the festivities going on in the town.<sup>357</sup> During the celebrations, a number of the visitors, eager to see the notable sights of San Antonio, made their way to the missions. A local newspaper reporter observed that some of these tourists “inscribed their names upon the old grey walls.” Given the festive spirit of the time, however, the writer seemed willing to overlook the vandalism; suggesting that many years in the future their progeny might return and point with pride the proof their ancestors had been present for such a momentous occasion.<sup>358</sup>

The relative ease with which travelers of the time could hop a train from the cultured centers of the Northeast and just a few days later be deposited on San Antonio’s dusty streets brought more wide-eyed tourists to America’s Southwest frontier. Railroads and local boosters began promoting travel to the region through advertisements, brochures, and guidebooks, in the hopes of selling land to westward-bound emigrants in addition to tourists’ fares. People from the urbane Northeast consumed travel brochures, advertisements, and travel narratives, published as tourist guidebooks, and in popular periodicals and newspapers of the day. Based on the frequency with which San Antonio’s missions appeared in these published travel narratives, they obviously remained popular tourist attractions and provided ample opportunity the proliferation of collective memories. Through the expansion of both

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<sup>357</sup> *San Antonio Daily Express*, February 20, 1877.

<sup>358</sup> *San Antonio Daily Express*, February 22, 1877.

print culture and tourism, collective memories related to the missions acquired an increasing role in shaping the larger narratives related to the creation of an American national identity. In these collective memories, the missions represented a romanticized and exoticized past that Anglo Americans exploited as they attempted to shape a national identity during pivotal decades as the country lurched to a more urbanized and industrialized economy. During this time, Anglo tourists' continued to marginalize the local Tejano population who were often depicted as a colonialized and benighted Other.<sup>359</sup>

This chapter examines how increased visitation and exposure through travel narratives following the arrival of the railroad in 1877 affected the missions. In this chapter I will examine the intersection of print culture, tourism, and their contributions to American identity at the *fin-de-siècle*. The reactions of early railroad tourists and dignitaries such as Oscar Wilde and Stephen Crane illustrate the continued appeal of sentimental romance in these travel narratives. Between the boosters boasting and sentimental romance in much of this genre of literature, accuracy typically took second priority to superlatives and hyperbole. Some of the tales about the missions printed during this time became integral parts of mission legends. Also significant is how the

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<sup>359</sup> Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 2001), 280-281.

appeal of the Alamo tragedy as well as the idea of the Alamo as a “site of memory” extended well beyond Texas for Anglo-Americans nation-wide.<sup>360</sup>

A state of anxiety in the national psyche marked the *fin-de-siècle*. Radical changes in American industrial organization, socio-economic divisions, and ideas of nationhood took place. For much of the nineteenth century, small towns and rural villages resembled disparate “island communities” with little awareness of each other and even less (in the mindset of the denizens) to connect them together. As railroads expanded across the nation, information followed via both telegraph and print culture that began to incorporate these disparate hamlets into a more unified cultural sense of nationhood.<sup>361</sup> These changes were never smooth or benign; nor were they complete by the early part of the twentieth century. But the effects were felt nationwide.

The expansion of the railroad to San Antonio brought new opportunities and wealth to some, but discomforts to others, including San Antonio’s Tejano population. Historian David Montejano observes that local Mexican businessmen began selling the choice commercial lots around San Antonio’s main plazas at the time of the railroad’s arrival because, “they had fallen into debt or because they thought it best to move.”<sup>362</sup> Three years before the railroad had even arrived a correspondent for the *New York Times* claimed the “older Mexican families” of the city, upon hearing a rail line would be built

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<sup>360</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, English-language edition ed. and foreword by Lawrence D. Krizman. 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), v.1, xvii.

<sup>361</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 1-12; and Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* 25<sup>th</sup> edition. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 3-10.

<sup>362</sup> David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 92.

to the town, were predicting disasters including “epidemics, fevers and all manner” of similar evils. Rather than embrace new opportunities, the correspondent accused them of retreating to their bucolic estates to remain as the world passed by.<sup>363</sup> Montejano notes many Mexican-American businessmen removed their operations to west of San Pedro Creek, to avoid the “new business methods and banks” which enforced time limits on mortgages and other Americanized business practices.<sup>364</sup> Such retreats also had the unfortunate effect of reinforcing Anglo stereotypes of Tejanos as a backward people uninterested in commerce.

The same New York correspondent who accused the Tejanos of superstition and backwardness, at the same time issued a direct appeal for special care and preservation of the Alamo and the other missions. Evidently he recognized something picturesque and romantic in the old buildings. The approaching rail lines promised to bring tourists who would delight in visiting “one of the most celebrated of the shrines of American liberty,” and introduce “some of the most noted bits of architecture on the continent, and the finest in the United States.” The journalist implored, “If San Antonio must be transformed from a dreamy and charmingly antique town into a bustling fashion and health resort, . . . let the Missions, whatever happens to other remnants of the past, be saved.” This writer continued that while it was pleasant to dream that in remote parts of the United States, some “ghost of a dead romantic past lingered, never to be frightened away” by the inexorable advance of modernity, he warned that the attractions the

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<sup>363</sup> *New York Times*, November 17, 1874, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest Historical New York Times.

<sup>364</sup> Montejano, 92.

mission buildings held for tourists would only exist as long as the physical remains did.<sup>365</sup>

### **Travel Narratives, Print Culture, and American Identity at the *Fin-de-Siècle***

“Travel narratives,” in this chapter are understood to include guidebooks and published accounts of travel or travelogues appearing in popular magazines and newspapers. Often these travel narratives included many illustrations. Herbert Gottfried, a landscape architecture scholar, offers a profound observation regarding the scholarly value of travel narratives, noting that “Guide books and viewbooks are material manifestations of American culture.”<sup>366</sup> Many of the travel narratives used for this chapter also included historic-based articles and historic fiction (often romantic and embellished). Gottfried astutely notes these “historical references remind tourists that American places have a past, and those local historic persons, places, things and events have the capacity to add indications of authenticity to a location.”<sup>367</sup> Unfortunately, the information disseminated in these guidebooks was occasionally faulty or overly-embellished for dramatic effect.

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<sup>365</sup> *New York Times*, November 17, 1874, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest Historical New York Times. For much of the late nineteenth century, San Antonio had a reputation as a haven for people suffering from tuberculosis. See Char Miller, “Tourist Trap: Visitors and the Modern San Antonio Economy,” in *The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest*, ed. Hal K. Rothman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 206-228.

<sup>366</sup> Herbert Gottfried, *Landscape in American Guides and View Books: Visual History of Touring and Travel* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 2. Gottfried differentiates between “guidebooks” and “view books,” but for the purposes of this project they can both be considered types of travel narratives.

<sup>367</sup> Gottfried, 52-53.

This resulted in collective memories being constructed on false and unstable foundations. Despite the advances in transportation technology which railroads represented, actual travel for leisure continued to be limited to middle-, and upper-class whites. Nevertheless, aided by travel narratives published in popular illustrated magazines, newspapers, and illustrated guidebooks, the less fortunate could still enjoy the experience vicariously through armchair travel, and with similar influence on whatever identity they imagined for themselves.<sup>368</sup> “Travel,” according to urban historian Christine Boyer, whether it was physical or purely vicarious, “became a way to escape the tedium of everyday life, projecting oneself into an exotic milieu.”<sup>369</sup> Indeed, vicarious travel through the consumption of others’ travelogues became but one manner those without money and time for leisure travel could indulge in such luxuries.

Many of the travel narratives which mentioned the missions as interesting San Antonio tourist attractions appeared in popular magazines and major urban newspapers published in the Northeast. These periodicals, including *Scribner’s Monthly* (re-titled *Century Illustrated* shortly after it began publication), *Harper’s Weekly* (and *Harper’s New Monthly*), as well as *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated News*, brought news, opinion, fiction, and adventure, to increasing numbers of readers as advances in technology of

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<sup>368</sup> Shaffer, 4-5. See also M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainment* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 247 and 305; and Jamie Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial: Northern Travel Writers in the Postbellum U.S. South, 1865-1880,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95, no. 2 (June 2005): 394-395, accessed March 29, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3694125>.

<sup>369</sup> Boyer, 247.

printing, illustrating, and paper-making allowed print culture to expand exponentially.<sup>370</sup> Literary scholar Mark J. Noonan describes the goal of magazines such as *Century* and *Harper's* as an “attempt by northeastern elites to guide and improve the taste, manners, and behavior of America’s middle, and sometimes, lower classes.”<sup>371</sup> Unlike some of its competitors, Noonan asserts the editors of *Scribner's/Century* intentionally set out “to create a diverse yet unified image of America and to foster its native writers.”<sup>372</sup> However, this “diverse yet unified image of America” remained decidedly white, “middle- and upper-middle-class readers who shared the editors’ views and values.”<sup>373</sup> Even with this limited audience, Noonan believes the magazine alone easily circulated to nearly one million people.<sup>374</sup> Similarly, sociologist Matthew Schneirov asserts these “family house magazines” which included not only *Scribner's/Century*, but also *Harper's Monthly* and *Atlantic Monthly*, saw their circulation numbers triple between 1890 and 1905. He estimates in 1900, monthly magazines circulated 65 million copies total, while newspapers lagged behind rising to no more than 57 million. Schneirov suggests the effects of this expansion of print culture cannot be underestimated as, “Popular magazines, more than any other medium, seemed to represent ‘America’ itself.”<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 32-40.

<sup>371</sup> Mark J. Noonan, *Reading The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine: American Literature and Culture, 1870-1893* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2010), xi.

<sup>372</sup> Noonan, 21.

<sup>373</sup> Noonan, 23, and 27.

<sup>374</sup> Noonan, x.

<sup>375</sup> Matthew Schneirov, *The Dream of a New Social Order: Popular Magazines in America, 1893-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 2-5. Schneirov defined “family house magazines” as those



Readers of the illustrated press consumed a particular narrative which the magazines and newspapers offered; a narrative of American identity that was overwhelmingly Anglo, male, (mostly) Protestant, and middle- to upper- socio-economic class. Because of the potential for bias, historian Alan Trachtenberg's observation regarding the usefulness of these kinds of resources becomes much more important:

“As a student of culture, I am drawn especially to the figurative language by which people represent their perceptions of themselves and their worlds. Figures of speech, tropes, images, metaphors: I take these as materials of prime historical interest, for they are vehicles of self-knowledge of the concepts upon which people act.”<sup>376</sup>

Applying Trachtenberg's suggestions to this project requires a close and critical reading of the travel narratives and descriptions of San Antonio, the missions, and its multi-cultural population. The descriptions, images, and cultural references within the expanding print culture take on an added level of importance as these both illustrated and contributed to the creation of collective memories and related American identity. In much the same way American Studies scholar Martin Padget examines these “representations of travel” to better appreciate how “writers and artists” from the Eastern United states engaged with and comprehended the Southwest.<sup>377</sup> Travel and identity fed each other as literature scholar John Cox notes, “the process of modern nation-building must incorporate the exploration of the areas within the borders and the creation of a

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read by “educated middle-class Americans” which “helped shape the thinking and tastes of a generation of readers” between 1865 and 1900. Schneirov, 27.

<sup>376</sup> Trachtenberg, 8.

<sup>377</sup> Martin Padget, *Indian Country: Travels in the American Southwest, 1840-1935* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 12.

hegemonic national culture.”<sup>378</sup> Because the Southwestern Borderlands were seen as being foreign to begin with, the creation of Cox’s “hegemonic national culture” in that region of the country was not accomplished quite so easily; but as a foreign Other within the boundary of the nation, it was all the more important to incorporate this region into the national narrative.

Tourism, whether in the form of the nascent tourist industry of hoteliers, railroads, or steamboats, or in the form of actual tourists and armchair travelers, was an important connection between the missions and the creation of memories and identities. Historian Marguerite Shaffer warns not to underestimate the importance of this connection:

“As the tourist infrastructure expanded, public and private tourists advocates worked together to develop a canon of American tourist attractions that manifested a distinct national identity. They encouraged white, native-born, middle- and upper-class Americans to re-affirm their American-ness by following the footsteps of American history and tradition across the American landscape, defining an organic nationalism that linked national identity to a shared territory and history.”

The Alamo had already become a national icon, but this period cemented its position as an important ‘site of memory’ within the Anglo-American narrative; a narrative Shaffer argues was “part of a larger dialog about personal and public memory as well as individual and national identity.”<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> John D. Cox, *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 5-6 and 157.

<sup>379</sup> Shaffer, 4-5.

The *fin-de-siècle* is often described as a chaotic period of great unease. Schneirov describes the period as one in which “the emergence of a mass democracy, especially the rise of the big city machines” sustained by the purportedly ignorant immigrant labor class shook the elites’ power structure.<sup>380</sup> Labor violence and the rural Progressive impulse fed their apprehension. On the other hand, these elites found comfort in the travel narratives published in the pages of illustrated periodicals, or through their own active tourism. As Shaffer observes, in these travel articles, minorities and lower classes were characterized as “Others” who became part and parcel of the tourists’ “spectacle” which “further allowed tourists to define and distinguish their social status.”<sup>381</sup> If socio-economic changes in the North and East were part of the source of elite discontent at the turn of the century, where might solace be found? The West. Alan Trachtenberg points out the attraction of the mythic West in dime novels which “served as an image of contrast to Eastern society.”<sup>382</sup> Even if the elites were not the primary consumers for these dime novels, nevertheless historian John Sears notes “The American West that emerged in the latter third of the nineteenth century was a place of wonders and curiosities in which fact and fiction, history and theater, actual and staged events were blurred together. It was a tourist’s West . . .”<sup>383</sup>

The Alamo as ‘site of memory’ was primarily based on the 1836 battle that occurred there. The other San Antonio missions became ‘sites of memory’ based on

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<sup>380</sup> Schneirov, 28.

<sup>381</sup> Shaffer, 280.

<sup>382</sup> Trachtenberg, 24.

<sup>383</sup> John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 157.

something which would become a hallmark of the American Southwest, something derided by California journalist Carey McWilliams as a “fantasy Spanish heritage.” In this mythical history Anglo-Americans were the true heirs of a bounteous land where most aboriginal inhabitants had conveniently died off or assimilated as peons into the relatively more advanced Spanish society due to the saintly mission friars. The other Spaniards were dons, who lived as idle rich in the comfort of their extensive *haciendas*. The intervening Mexican period was often conveniently overlooked.<sup>384</sup>

### **Romantics at the Missions (Part Three)**

Once the railroad arrived, a web of iron and steel bound San Antonio to the rest of the nation bringing travelers and tourists in its cars. Although the Romantic Movement was beginning to wane, this early period of rail travel to San Antonio brought plenty of people still under its influence. They rhapsodized about the picturesque city, its foreign atmosphere, and the quaint ruins of the missions. Melodramatic tales of the Alamo massacre still held wide appeal despite an attempt by R. M. Potter in 1878 to publish a more accurate account. Even then, he felt compelled to preface his article with the disclaimer, “When horror is intensified by mystery, the sure product is romance.”<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, rev. ed. with added material by Matt S. Meier (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1990), 43-53.

<sup>385</sup> R. M. Potter, “The Fall of the Alamo,” *Magazine of American History*, January, 1878, 1.

The October, 1877 issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* introduced San Antonio, its new railroad, and its missions to the magazine's reading audience. The article contained eighteen high quality illustrations, many of which were of the missions. The luxurious prose described the romantic passage along the GHSA's "Sunset Route" from Houston to San Antonio as a journey through endless fields of innumerable flowers. Although still within the North American continent, the author assured readers "San Antonio is, in fact, a Spanish town today, and the only one where any considerable remnant of Spanish life exists in the United States," where "land is still measured here by the vara," and "Spain is at the foundation of the whole of it."<sup>386</sup> The town, its population, and the missions were thus wrapped up in the sentimental prose and presented to readers as a quasi-foreign and exotic place.

The missions were characterized in similar extravagant prose suggesting foreign Moorish origins and design.<sup>387</sup> Missions Concepción and San José were described in the most detail since more of those structures remained visible. Missions San Juan and Espada, by this time, were mostly in ruins, "a melancholy haunt of poetry and dreams."<sup>388</sup> The two dark towers and domed roof of Concepción contrasted with the "luminous" sky, "its existence is a romance, its condition a mystery, and a vague pathos haunts its broken arches."<sup>389</sup> The correspondent asserted San José was even more beautiful and intriguing, although she erroneously claimed the building's style originated

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<sup>386</sup> "San Antonio de Bexar," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, October, 1877, 838-839. The unsigned essay was later credited to Harriet P. Spofford. A "vara" is an old Spanish unit roughly equivalent to a distance of one yard.

<sup>387</sup> "San Antonio de Bexar," 839.

<sup>388</sup> "San Antonio de Bexar," 841.

<sup>389</sup> "San Antonio de Bexar," 840.

with the Jesuits culminating in Louis “Quatorze” (Louis XIV). San José’s ornate façade was described as intricately designed with a plethora of scrolls, cherubs, and flowers, but ruined by vandals over time. The walls still retained traces of what originally had been brightly colored frescoes of blue and vermillion. Divine service was held weekly in the sacristy since the sanctuary was in ruinous condition.<sup>390</sup>

Neither was the Alamo exempt from this inflated treatment. Indeed, as a place possessing the status as a ‘site of memory’ at the local and national level already established, it was essentially guaranteed to be romanticized. Although the *Harper’s* author incorrectly identified it as the last mission, and despite its status there as a storehouse for materials by the US Army, the writer felt that “the Texan visits it as a shrine, and thrills with pride in a history that is more to him than all the Monmouths and Lexingtons and Cowpens and Yorktowns of the Revolution.”<sup>391</sup> The correspondent elevated the tragedy of the Alamo martyrs and the glory of Sam Houston and his brave Texians at San Jacinto to the level of a Homeric epic.<sup>392</sup>

The correspondent painted a glowing and romantic picture of the missions, but also emphasized the importance of the missions for reasons beyond merely the aesthetic:

“These missions have an interest for us quite apart from their beauty, for they stand up in their solitude and decay, still giving silent testimony to the immense debt that we, as a people, owe today to the old conquistadores of Spain. They are a part of the visible romance of our country too; . . . The monks of these missions, moreover, were those who opened to the world the resources of this

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<sup>390</sup> “San Antonio de Bexar,” 840-841.

<sup>391</sup> “San Antonio de Bexar,” 842-843.

<sup>392</sup> “San Antonio de Bexar,” 844-846.

great empire of the West; with their patience and labor . . . They cleared the way for a new power among the peoples of the earth. . .”<sup>393</sup>

Although the author acknowledged the Spanish contributions to the new American Empire, her understanding and her descriptions for her audience were nonetheless filtered through this lens of the mythological Spanish past. And the missions were examined through this filter.

Five years later, the Southern Pacific Company reproduced this *Harper’s* piece almost in its entirety in a booklet describing the sights and scenes to thrill tourists travelling its Star and Crescent as well as its Sunset lines from New Orleans to California.<sup>394</sup> These melodramatic descriptions retained enough appeal that Southern Pacific was willing to negotiate with *Harper’s* for permission to reproduce it in their own marketing literature. Historian Richard Orsi noted that Texas was, “portrayed as an incipient paradise where civilization was replacing the fading frontier.”<sup>395</sup> Twenty-first century readers may sneer at this purple prose, or dismiss it as sentimental, but for this time period, such embellishment was the mode of the day. Were this *Harper’s* article the only discussion of San Antonio’s missions that treated them to such romanticized descriptions, it might be possible to write it off as one author’s flight of fancy. However, many of the descriptions found for this study tend to be variations along similar themes,

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<sup>393</sup> “San Antonio de Bexar,” 839-840.

<sup>394</sup> Southern Pacific Company, “*Eden*”, *An Excursion from New Orleans to the Pacific by Rail, Through Texas & Mexico via the “Star and Crescent” and “Sunset” Route* (Houston: T. W. Peirce, Jr., 1882), 28-40.

<sup>395</sup> Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 498-499.

suggesting through a preponderance of evidence that the romanticized image of the missions would dominate the collective memories.

Other groups besides the railroads published materials aimed at promoting travel to San Antonio and beyond. Some of the Southern Pacific materials offered purely basic demographic, climatological, and economic data about the major stops along the way. Others took a different approach, going so far as creating a fictional group of tourists, and using dialogue between characters to convey the same type of encyclopedic data. Author Ben Truman, who had previously published other titles highlighting the golden bounty that awaited tourists and emigrants to California, concocted a travel narrative of a fictional upper class family of five, who along with a family friend, traveled Southern Pacific's Sunset Route to California to spend the winter months.<sup>396</sup> The party dedicated forty-eight hours layover to explore San Antonio, and "enjoy the exquisite sunshine and lovely surroundings of this highly-romantic place—so long an outpost of Western civilization." Along the list of attractions San Antonio had to offer were quality hotels, churches, libraries, clubs, gardens, theatre, and even a casino.<sup>397</sup> However, Truman proclaimed the "greatest of all attractions" were the missions, second only to the warm climate. Some of the historical highlights mentioned were the arrival of the Canary Islanders in the mid-eighteenth century, the work of the Franciscans to "induce the milder Indians to cultivate rich lands, improve their own condition, and enlarge the revenues of the Church, without any doubt performing a great work of civilization." The

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<sup>396</sup> Ben C. Truman, *From the Crescent City to the Golden Gate via the Sunset Route of the Southern Pacific Company* (New York: Liberty Printing Co., 1886).

<sup>397</sup> Truman, 24.



Alamo was the first mission the fictional traveling party visited and “Col. King,” the most experienced traveler of the group read an account of the 1836 battle from an earlier guide book entitled “Eden” (published just four years prior by the GH&SA railroad). The description of the battle was typical melodrama which pandered to the patriotism of the party members.<sup>398</sup> These guidebooks and similar promotional materials are just the sort of “representations of travel” to which Martin Padget referred that introduced and contextualized the West for an Eastern traveling public.<sup>399</sup>

Although Irish celebrity and dandy Oscar Wilde may not properly be part of the Romantic Movement in literature and the arts, his visit to San Antonio in 1882 inspired comments which could easily fall into a ‘romantic’ category. Wilde was a flamboyant personality and outspoken proponent of aesthetics, and embodied some of the cultural unrest associated with the *fin-de-siècle*. In June, 1882, Wilde arrived in San Antonio as part of a lecture tour of the United States. In an interview with the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* shortly after his Texas adventures, he gushed over how much he enjoyed San Antonio. In the city he “found more to please [him] in the beautiful ruins of the old Spanish mission churches and convents, and in the relics of Spanish manners and customs impressed upon the people and the architecture of the city.”<sup>400</sup> The archaic mission ruins struck him as being in such contrast to a youthful American national

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<sup>398</sup> Truman, 24-28. See also Southern Pacific Company, “Eden”, *An Excursion from New Orleans to the Pacific by Rail, Through Texas & Mexico via the “Star and Crescent” and “Sunset” Route* (Houston: T. W. Peirce, Jr., 1882).

<sup>399</sup> Padget, *Indian Country*, 12.

<sup>400</sup> *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), June 25, 1882, accessed November 18, 2013, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers. See also Dorothy McLeod MacInerney, William Warren Rogers, and Robert David Ward, “Oscar Wilde Lectures in Texas, 1882,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 106, no. 4 (April 2003): 550-573, accessed December 2, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30239392>.

character. He exclaimed, “Those old Spanish churches with their picturesque remains of tower and dome, and their handsome carved stonework, standing amid the verdure and sunshine of a Texas prairie, gave me a thrill of strange pleasure.”<sup>401</sup> Although Wilde endured constant criticism throughout his American tour, his comments regarding the beauty of the Spanish missions were in agreement with the sentiments expressed by many ‘romantics’ who came before as well as many who followed.<sup>402</sup>

During the decades of the 1880s and 1890s, more people came to San Antonio and continued publishing romantic descriptions and images of the missions. In its July, 1883 issue, *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly* author, Mrs. V. T. Polk proclaimed, “To those interested in antiquities and art, perhaps there is no field in our country which presents greater attraction than the historic city of San Antonio and vicinity.”<sup>403</sup> Polk gave a slightly embellished history of the missions before describing the aesthetic qualities and features of interest. Based on the mention of names of Spanish officials and details including the names of Indian tribes which entered into the missions, she had evidently seen some Spanish-era documents (or translations thereof) which gave her article a more authentic air than earlier depictions, most of which mentioned indigenous peoples and Spaniards only in the abstract.<sup>404</sup> She claimed the overall aesthetic of the missions was “Spanish Moresque [*sic*]” and referenced San José’s ornate façade

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<sup>401</sup> *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), June 25, 1882, accessed November 18, 2013, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>402</sup> MacInerney, Rogers, and Ward, “Oscar Wilde Lectures,” 572.

<sup>403</sup> Mrs. V. T. Polk, “San Antonio and its Old Missions,” *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly* (July, 1883), 40. Accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest American Periodical Series Online. Polk’s definition of “art” is understood to include architecture.

<sup>404</sup> Polk, “San Antonio and its Old Missions,” 41.

(lamenting the damage wrought by vandals) as being “one of the most beautiful pieces of ornamental stonework to be seen anywhere.”<sup>405</sup> Polk contributed to some of the mythology surrounding the missions noting that according to church legend, the stone intended for the façade of San José, had been “transported overland from some distant port, probably Vera Cruz, on the shoulders of the faithful Indians, who vied with each other in claiming the privilege of transporting material for the erection of a temple to the Almighty God.”<sup>406</sup>

Polk also complemented the architecture and design of Mission Concepción. She was particularly impressed with the acoustic qualities of the large dome and proclaimed, “a whisper can be heard in almost any part of the room.” She also noted that there were “quite a number” of Mexican families living on the grounds and that services were still conducted, although on an occasional basis.<sup>407</sup> The instances of Mexican-Americans living on mission grounds have generally been mentioned as a casual observation in many of these nineteenth-century sources. However, it reveals to modern historians a measure of how the missions’ physical remains continued to serve as houses of worship and centers for the communities of families living in the immediate vicinity. The buildings still retained importance to the current residents.

Popular magazines such as *Harper’s* and *Frank Leslie’s* were not the only periodicals to print travel narratives which mentioned the missions. Newspapers also

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<sup>405</sup> Polk, “San Antonio and its Old Missions,” 41-42.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid. Her claim is unsubstantiated as most other sources suggest the stone came from local quarries. Curiously, the name “Huizar” is conspicuously absent from her descriptions of the décor of San José.

<sup>407</sup> Polk, “San Antonio and its Old Missions,” 42.

printed such material. Sometimes a citizen of a given town who happened to be traveling to, or through, San Antonio would send a write up to their local newspaper. Themes of romance came through even if the ad hoc journalists were not intentionally embellishing their story to appeal to a larger audience. Such was the case of a Baptist missionary from Georgia who described San Antonio's verdant beauty and foreign character. The city was "a Spanish town yet, and the only one in the United States where any considerable remnant of Spanish life exists."<sup>408</sup> The journalist also described the missions, emphasizing their defensive roles which led to a recounting of the 1836 Battle of the Alamo. In this particular rendition of the battle, Travis and his compatriots of fewer than 150 men inflicted the astounding casualty rate of over twenty-five percent on Santa Anna's army of 4,000 just in the siege alone, even before the final storming of the fortress. The seemingly obligatory comparison to Thermopylae was repeated, and the author claimed the State of Texas had recently purchased the Alamo building to preserve it from relic-hunters (which included a member of the journalist's own party).<sup>409</sup>

Major newspapers including the *New York Times* also printed articles from travelers, but whether they commissioned the travel narratives or simply received them from tourists is rarely discernable. Such was the case for an 1887 visit to San Antonio by a correspondent. Although the printed article suffered from glaring inaccuracies, it

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<sup>408</sup> *Macon (GA) Telegraph and Messenger*, June 10, 1883, accessed February 6, 2007, Readex America's Historical Newspapers. This quote is lifted nearly verbatim from Harriet Spofford's 1877 *Harper's New Monthly* article (see page 838), which was also reprinted with permission by the Southern Pacific for their tourist booklet, "Eden", *An Excursion from New Orleans to the Pacific by Rail* (see page 32).

<sup>409</sup> *Macon (GA) Telegraph and Messenger*, June 10, 1883, accessed February 6, 2007, Readex America's Historical Newspapers.

nevertheless had the effect of bringing San Antonio, the Alamo, and the missions of San José and Concepción to a significant reading public. The Alamo's aesthetics originally made a negative impression in that the "building attracts by its ugliness." But the heroic sacrifice made up for its lack of beauty even if the author mistakenly asserted the 1836 "fight of extinction ended on the roof."<sup>410</sup> Later, when describing San José, the writer claimed "In some of the arches is found a red brick and the curious feature about it is that such brick is not made to-day, as it is not known where the clay is to be found. . . They are a constant source of wonder to Texans."<sup>411</sup>

Minor factual errors aside, this correspondent for the *New York Times* captured the nightlife on Alamo Plaza by emphasizing its exotic and foreign looks, smells, and tastes. Most local Tejanos were relegated to the lowest caste with the men described as dark and threatening of violence while the women were beguiling and sultry. Both stereotypes "in equal measure is due the strong flavor of antique romance that lingers about in San Antonio and maintains its quaintness."<sup>412</sup> Additional "strong flavor" comes from the fiery and mysterious chili-con-carne, sold at impromptu stands on the plaza in the evenings. Readers were reminded that "San Antonio is a frontier city," and the economic hub for the region. Nevertheless, as a "frontier city," it was a very "cosmopolitan" community made of Anglo-Americans, Mexicans, Germans, African-

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<sup>410</sup> *New York Times*, June 12, 1887, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.* Most likely these red bricks date to renovation work begun in 1860 by the diocese of San Antonio to house a group of Benedictine friars and restore a greater degree of functionality. National Park Service archaeologist James Ivey suggests the Gothic arches in which the bricks were placed are not original, but late-nineteenth-century in origin. See James E. Ivey, "Of Various Magnificence: The Architectural History of the Missions of San Antonio, Texas in the Colonial Period and the Nineteenth Century" with contributions by Marlys Bush Thurber and Santiago Escobedo (Santa Fe, NM: National Park Service, ca. 2006), 363-366, unpublished manuscript in the author's possession.

<sup>412</sup> *New York Times*, June 12, 1887, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Americans, and “Bohemians,” to name a few. The correspondent admitted a trip to the “poorer Mexican quarter” did not have any specific attractions other than it was “quaint and curious to American eyes.”<sup>413</sup>

Nightlife aside, this particular journalist offered some interesting comments on the missions as a notable point of interest. Travelers from Europe, the author opined, had long been want to look down their nose at the youthful American nation and its lack of “ruins.” However, this author believed San Antonio’s mission ruins gave Americans more credibility and a greater sense of history to throw back in the face of visitors from the Old World. “A more complete set of ruins than the old Mexican missions of San Antonio it would be difficult to find in the most debilitated state in Europe,” the journalist boasted, although at the same time intimated that the missions had not originally been built within United States’ boundaries, but in territory which was later captured through military conquest. Nonetheless, the missions, particularly as ruins, appeared much older than they were as the writer observed, “if [Concepción] stood on the banks of the Rhine the guide book might quote its age as 500 or 1000 years and be believed.”<sup>414</sup> Similarly appealing was the ornate façade of San José with its “carvings and paintings.” Finally, the correspondent assured readers, “the ruins are worth seeing, and visitors often spend days in examining them.”<sup>415</sup> The allure of “missions as ruins” reinforces theories put forward by National Park Service archaeologist James Ivey and by historian Phoebe Kropp, who posits, “the more anachronistic the missions appeared,

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<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid.

the more precious was their romance, and thus the more popular they became. This kind of tourism exoticized the past by casting missions as products of a distant age and a foreign people.”<sup>416</sup> Although Kropp was writing about the California missions, it worked just as well for Texas missions.

An author named Margaret Kennedy visited San Antonio and subsequently published her travel narrative in *Peterson's Magazine*, beginning by assuring her readers that “No city in the United States is so quaint and picturesque as San Antonio, Texas.”<sup>417</sup> As proof of its venerable condition, she offered as a basis for comparison that the missions were erected in 1718, “fourteen years before the birth of Washington.”<sup>418</sup> As readers thoughts were directed to US Founding Father, George Washington, at the same time, San Antonio’s foreign-ness was also emphasized. Flores Street conjured thoughts of Venice, and on all streets, “queer Mexican customs” and habits of dress could be observed by tourists.<sup>419</sup> “But the object of most general interest in San Antonio,” Kennedy states, “is the Alamo, fitly called ‘The Thermopylae of Modern Times.’”<sup>420</sup> Her altering the original “Thermopylae of Texas” away from a regional icon to a more general period served to widen the appeal of the Alamo heroes among Anglo-Americans and brought this frontier outpost back under United States’ control. Her reminder of the “wholesale butchery” that accompanied the fall, including seven survivors was another

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<sup>416</sup> Ivey, “Of Various Magnificence,” 352; and Phoebe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 76.

<sup>417</sup> Margaret Kennedy, “Picturesque San Antonio,” *Peterson's Magazine* (December, 1889), 544. Accessed December 15, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series online.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.* “Queer,” in this context has no homosexual connotations, but reverts to its older qualities of being “odd” or “eccentric.”

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 546.

‘bloody shirt’ justifying Anglo conquest. She assured readers the battle damage had been repaired and “the carvings on the façade are still beautiful.”<sup>421</sup>

Kennedy proclaimed “No one should leave the ‘Alamo City’ without visiting Concepcion and San José Missions.” She described Concepción’s architectural design as “Christianized Moorish” and that this mission had been built on a “far more magnificent scale than the Alamo,” to the point of being considered, “one of the noblest churches ever erected in America.”<sup>422</sup> She noted that services were again being conducted in the church. Overall, Kennedy was so overcome by Concepción, “Words cannot describe the beauty of a lofty dome . . . although severely plain, such is its grace and majesty that one stands enchanted and can scarcely leave it!”<sup>423</sup> Nevertheless, she did manage to tear herself away from Concepción and made her way to San José, which again inspired a torrent of purple prose. This mission, she informed her readers, had been proclaimed “the finest of all these edifices . . . One of the most famous Parisian architects, visiting this mission, pronounced it the finest piece of architecture in the United States.”<sup>424</sup> Kennedy also asserted the King of Spain had sent “a genius named Huizar to superintend its construction. He spent several years in carving the various ornamentations of the building.”<sup>425</sup> San José inspired Kennedy to spare no superlative, “Nothing can exceed the loveliness of the fruit and flower and arabesque—nothing more seraphic can be imagined than the many angel faces, and the Virgin Mary just above the

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<sup>421</sup> Ibid, 547.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid. The source from which Kennedy lifted her quote has yet to be found.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid, 548.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid, 549. The identity of this French architect and date of his visit to San Antonio remains a mystery, but Kennedy was not the only source consulted to mention this declaration.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid. Albeit, there is no mention of “Rosa” as inspiration for the elaborate carvings.



door.” Tourists visiting San Antonio with its beauty, architecture, and history, would retain these, the “loveliest pictures in memory’s gallery.”<sup>426</sup>

Travel narratives also appeared in newspapers published outside the Northeast metropolis, such as Atlanta and Philadelphia. A journalist for the *Atlanta Constitution* traveled to San Antonio in 1891. His illustrated article referenced the Alamo’s identity as “Thermopylae of the Texans” as well as the Spanish crown’s role in building the missions, which included sending “the celebrated artist Huica,” who “devoted several years to carving its various ornamentation.”<sup>427</sup> Two years later, another Atlanta correspondent described visiting “quaint old Santone, . . . one of the quaintest towns on the continent.”<sup>428</sup> This journalist, perhaps reflecting a streak of nativism, was less than pleased with the cosmopolitan and multicultural population encountered and offered a couple of disparaging remarks on the observed lack of personal and public morals. But, the journalist claimed, the Alamo was the “first resort of every stranger” who visited the city.<sup>429</sup> The Alamo’s claim as a tourist attraction of national interest remained. A Philadelphia journalist concurred as he traveled on the Southern Pacific line from New Orleans to San Francisco, “San Antonio is the city of the Alamo, and the visitor is not allowed to forget it during his stay . . . Alamo stores, Alamo saloons, Alamo relics and

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<sup>426</sup> Kennedy, “Picturesque San Antonio,” 549. This particular image of Mary is as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

<sup>427</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, July 12, 1891, accessed October 2, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>428</sup> “Quaint Old Santone,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 13, 1893, accessed October 2, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*

Alamo gimmicks meet him at every turn.”<sup>430</sup> Marketers were learning to take advantage of associations with the town’s most famous landmark.

### **San Antonio and the Missions According to William Corner’s 1890 Guidebook**

In 1890, San Antonio bookseller and civic booster William Corner published one of the earliest locally-produced tourist guidebooks on the city. Part local history and part city directory, this book offered maps, keen observation, relatively well-researched history, interviews with local celebrities, as well as typical booster propaganda to introduce San Antonio to travelers and tourists and highlight its many interesting sights and scenes, particularly the missions.<sup>431</sup> Just as Southern Pacific bought the rights to use Harriet Spofford’s *Harper’s* article in their own promotional travel literature, Corner purchased and reprinted the history of the city written in the early 1870s by Sidney Lanier. By reproducing Lanier’s historical sketch for a new audience his florid prose (as well as a few historical inaccuracies) were perpetuated for a new generation of tourists.<sup>432</sup>

By 1890, San Antonio had three railroad lines providing service to the city, each with its own separate depot: the Southern Pacific (which had merged with the GHSA in

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<sup>430</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 20, 1892, accessed February 6, 2007, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>431</sup> William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar: A Guide and History* (1890; repr., San Antonio: Graphic Arts, 1977).

<sup>432</sup> Corner, 68-94.

1883), the International and Great Northern, and the San Antonio and Aransas Pass.<sup>433</sup>

Of these, the Southern Pacific, with its “Sunset Route” from New Orleans to San Francisco, was the most important especially in its production of tourist literature. Tourists arrived in San Antonio by rail by north and south, in addition to the original east-west lines. Corner’s guidebook offered these new arrivals directions from whichever depot they arrived to the best hotels, boarding houses, and restaurants via streetcars and horse drawn carriages. Under the heading “What There is to See and How to See It,” he recommended:

“The Alamo of course leads the list, that is a shrine before which every pilgrim to San Antonio bows. The First and Second Missions should not be missed, and the Third with its substantial old Aqueduct, and the Fourth with its more perfect fortification, if time allow, should be visited. All four Missions have different points of interest and will repay a thousand times in pleasure any difficulty in getting to them.”<sup>434</sup>

An additional experience worthy of tourists’ attention included the “Plazas, the curious custom of the all-night outdoor Supper on the Plazas. The stranger should certainly take a Mexican supper. The Mexican quarter and its denizens, trans-San Pedro Creek, should be done.”<sup>435</sup> Corner reinforced San Antonio’s Mexican-American citizens as exotic “Other,” and the tourists’ experience would not be complete without its consumption.

Corner’s recommendations, which so facily turned San Antonio’s Tejano population into a tourist attraction, merely served to whet tourists’ appetite. Later in the

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<sup>433</sup> Corner, 3-4, and Orsi, 22-23.

<sup>434</sup> Corner, 7. The “First Mission” was Concepción, the “Second” was San José, the “Third” was San Juan, and the “Fourth” was Mission Espada, in order travelling south from town.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid.

book, he further elaborated on his recommendations. Unlike so many guidebooks and other travel narratives, Corner's own description of the Alamo did not wallow in the gory details of the 1836 siege and subsequent massacre other than to call attention to the "sublime recklessness" the Alamo defenders showed in choosing to remain with Travis, Bowie, and Crockett.<sup>436</sup> Although Corner mentioned some of the subsequent repairs and restoration work performed on the Alamo chapel, including Major E. B. Babbitt's 1849 work, he was stingy on details and left little to modern scholars regarding the gabled parapet and the building's now familiar façade. Corner also reported the sale of the chapel in 1883 to the State of Texas for \$20,000 as "the right and proper thing to do" to recognize the heroism of the Alamo defenders of 1836.<sup>437</sup>

Corner began his chapter on the other missions quoting from William Shakespeare's epitaph, "Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear, . . . [spare] these stones," as a condemnation of the rampant vandalism tourists (and perhaps some locals) inflicted upon the missions' walls. He observed that travelers to San Antonio make "anxious" inquiries regarding directions to the missions, and he admonished visitors that just seeing one did not equate to seeing all. Similarly, he warned that unless one was an experienced horseman, visitors would enjoy the trip more by carriage.<sup>438</sup> Corner provided readers with excellent maps of the mission compounds, as well as descriptions of the décor of the chapels. Like so many other chroniclers, he seemed convinced that all domed ceilings of Concepción's chapel and San José's sacristy were necessarily of

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<sup>436</sup> Corner, 8.

<sup>437</sup> Corner, 8-12.

<sup>438</sup> Corner, 13.

Moorish origins and the detailed carved façade at San José was Renaissance (instead of Baroque). Corner also explained the incongruous Gothic arches at San José as having been rebuilt in the late 1850s by a group of Benedictines from Pennsylvania, recruited to re-occupy the mission.<sup>439</sup> Instead of being “rebuilt” at this time as Corner claimed, National Park Service archaeologist James Ivey asserts this was actually the point at which the Gothic arches were initially installed.<sup>440</sup> At San Juan, Corner observed numerous frescoes despite decades of neglect. He quoted the resident priest, Father Francis Bouchu, who speculated the frescoes were created well after the chapel had been completed. The clergyman also mused that the frescoes were probably created “to satisfy the Indian nature’s love of color.”<sup>441</sup> While earlier narratives had briefly mentioned remnants of these frescoes at the missions, Corner’s descriptions are the most detailed found to date.

Corner’s narrative is influential as one of the earliest guidebooks written by a local specifically for tourists. The work nevertheless has some curious anomalies. Corner did not mention Pedro Huizar, or credit anyone else as the master sculptor at San José. A photograph of “Rosa’s Window,” is simply identified as the “South Window of Baptistry, Mission San José,” with no mention of the doomed romance between Huizar and Rosa.<sup>442</sup> Corner informed his readers not to expect too much in the way of information regarding Concepción from the family that lived on the premises, “To them

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<sup>439</sup> Corner, 13-19.

<sup>440</sup> Ivey, “Of Various Magnificence,” 363-366.

<sup>441</sup> Corner, 20.

<sup>442</sup> Corner, page of photographs between pages 20 and 21.

the past of the Mission is as a sealed book and it has no romance for them.”<sup>443</sup> While the dwellers may have been unimaginative, Corner implied it need not be the case for his readers, who were encouraged to indulge in meditations of an imagined past. He also recorded that local tradition claimed Mission San Francisco de la Espada (“St. Francis of the Sword”) was so named because the bell tower was supposedly shaped like the hilt of a sword.<sup>444</sup> However, this bit of local collective memory is challenged by James Ivey who notes the church had been named “of the Sword” well before the building had even been constructed. Similarly, Ivey describes Espada’s “bell-tower,” or more correctly an *espadaña*, as being identical to the one at Mission San Juan, having both built by maestro Salazar in 1790.<sup>445</sup>

### **Father Francis Bouchu: Renaissance Man and Savior of Espada**

Father Francis Bouchu is a figure that deserves more than a cursory glance. Corner credited Fr. Bouchu with being a true Renaissance man, “Priest, lawyer, bricklayer, stone mason, photographer, historian, printer,” and asserted Mission Espada would have been lost without his tireless efforts.<sup>446</sup> Born in Ste. Colombe, France, in 1829, he landed in Galveston, Texas, in December, 1854. Just three months later, Bishop Jean Marie Odin ordained him. By April, 1855 Bouchu had arrived in San Antonio. He was

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<sup>443</sup> Corner, 15.

<sup>444</sup> Corner, 21-22.

<sup>445</sup> Ivey, “Of Various Magnificence,” 271-272, and 300.

<sup>446</sup> Corner, 22.

assigned to assist Fr. Claude Marie Dubuis at the San Fernando church. Bouchu and a fellow assistant priest were sent out to the missions for several weeks at a time to minister those who lived away from the city. Around 1867, Bouchu was appointed to Mission Espada as priest. According to his obituary in a Texas Catholic newspaper, he lived very simply and frugally, echoing the poverty of his parishioners. The paper noted that “when asked why he did not seek a more lucrative” position that his years of experience might secure, he replied “if he did not remain and attend to his poor Mexican people, no one else would be likely or able to do so.”<sup>447</sup> Bouchu may have lived simply, but he was not himself poor. In his last will and testament, Bouchu bequeathed to the parish church of Mission Espada the three bells in the *espadaña*, along with the sacred vessels, vestments, and accoutrements for Divine Service which he had purchased, “the church having nothing of its own.” Additionally, he wrote off an estimated \$825 debt the parish owed to him for his work in “rebuilding, repairing and adorning” the church building.<sup>448</sup>

It is no exaggeration to suggest that without Bouchu’s efforts and talents, Mission Espada as seen today might have been lost. According to Ivey, Bouchu began much of the restoration at Espada in 1884. (See Figure 4.1.) He paid for the materials by purchasing Church-owned properties and after selling them, ploughed the profits back

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<sup>447</sup> “Death of Father Bouchu,” *Southern Messenger*, August 22, 1907. Priest File—Bouchu, Francis. Catholic Archives of San Antonio. San Antonio, Texas. Hereafter cited as CASA.

<sup>448</sup> “Last Will and Testament,” Estate of Francis Bouchu, deceased. No. 4702, #41/587-589. Scanned copy obtained from the Special Collections and Texana Collection, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word archives, J.E. and L.E. Mabee Library, University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, TX. Bouchu had a niece who was a member of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and he left a considerable amount of property from around the mission (over 31 acres valued at more than \$2000 in 1906) for the Sisters’ use as they established their school.

into the restoration work. As he rebuilt the Espada chapel, Ivey asserts Bouchu added transepts to the original design. While Ivey believes Bouchu kept a diary, it along with the bulk of his personal papers is lost.<sup>449</sup> Although without critical sources directly attributable to Bouchu, historians can only surmise at his motivations, but clearly his long tenure of service and devotion to his flock suggest he recognized that Espada was important to the parishioners and those living nearby, both as sacred space as well as center for the local community.<sup>450</sup> In this respect, Mission Espada was a vital ‘site of memory’ for those residing in its immediate vicinity.



Figure 4.1 Fourth Mission [Mission Espada], ca. 1892, attributed to photographer Mary E. Jacobson. Texas: Photographs, Manuscripts, and Imprints Digital Collection, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX. Accessed: <https://digitalcollections.smu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/tex/id/1753/rec/4>, March 23, 2016.

<sup>449</sup> Ivey, “Of Various Magnificence,” 383-385.

<sup>450</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, translated by Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (1950; repr., New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980), 151-152.



## **“Madame” Candelaria’s Tales and Alamo Myths**

In addition to Fr. Bouchu, Corner interviewed local celebrity Señora Candelaria before she passed away in 1899. Who this lady was, and why her passing warranted mention in newspapers across the nation only adds to the national-level infatuation with all things Alamo-related. Señora Candelaria purported to having been an eye-witness to that formative event in Texas history, even supposedly receiving a cut on the chin by a Mexican bayonet as she cradled the dying Bowie in her arms.<sup>451</sup>

Corner reported Andrea Castañon was born at Laredo, in November, 1785. She was twice married and her second husband was Candelario Villanueva, by whom she became known as “Señora Candelaria” to many locals. She asserted that she was within the Alamo chapel during the final Mexican assault on the compound; she was giving Bowie, whom she claimed was dying of typhoid fever, a drink of water when Mexican soldiers burst in and bayoneted the bed-ridden commander. Additionally, Candelaria recalled that Crockett died early in the final assault as he ran to his post, rather than toward the end of the battle. Corner asked about other specific individuals associated with San Antonio during Texas’ war for independence, including Ben Milam and fellow Alamo survivor Mrs. Susanna Dickinson. Milam’s name did not evoke any association,

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<sup>451</sup> Corner, 117.

but she remembered with “an expression of considerable repugnance” the name Dickinson, who according to the elderly Tejana, “hated Mexicans.”<sup>452</sup>

Corner was not the only correspondent to interview Señora Candelaria. In the late 1890s, she made a small subsistence recounting the glorious sacrifices of the Alamo martyrs and her own harrowing escape. In 1891 she petitioned the Texas Legislature for a pension which they granted.<sup>453</sup> Other journalists found their way to her humble abode and through one of Cadelaria’s English-speaking relatives, she recounted her tales. However, perhaps because of her advanced age and failing health or for some other reason, her stories were not consistent. While she generally confirmed the legend of Travis drawing the line in the sand, she told Corner and another journalist that Crockett died early in the final assault, while at other times she claimed he died toward the end. Similarly, Corner reported Bowie died from Mexican bayonets as he lay in Candelaria’s arms, but in at least one telling she asserted a fever had killed Bowie hours before the final assault. In yet another tale, she danced with a young and dashing cadet Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana who came to San Antonio in 1813, to quell a rebellion. And why,

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<sup>452</sup> Corner, 117-119. Corner’s guide also printed 166 names of Anglos who died at the Alamo which were inscribed on a monument in Austin. He amended this list with four Mexican names Sra. Candelaria gave him for a total of 170. See Corner, 124. See also, George O. Coalson, “Villanueva, Andrea Castañón,” *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fvi20>), accessed August 8, 2016. Published by the Texas State Historical Association. Coalson gives her dates as 1785-1899. Attempts to find Castañón in the census records were inconclusive. An “Andrea Gastanon,” was listed on the 1860 census as being 41 years old, but it gave her birth year as 1785 (a 34 year discrepancy!). See *1860 United States Federal Census*. San Antonio Ward 1, Bexar, Texas, Roll: M653\_1288, Page: 361, Image: 249. Accessed August 8, 2016, Ancestry.com.

<sup>453</sup> *Austin American Statesman*, March 1, 1891, accessed February 9, 2016, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

despite her unquestionable Spanish-Mexican origins, was she sometimes referred to as “Madame” Candelaria, even by a local newspaper?<sup>454</sup>

Several of those who interviewed Candelaria, or reprinted earlier interviews, remarked on her talent as a raconteur and printed the tales with little or no critique. Why then, should modern historians care about the inconsistencies and embellishments? In their books on memory, myth, and the Alamo, anthropologists Richard Flores and Holly Beachley Brear inexplicably make no substantial mention of Señora Candelaria and her reminiscences.<sup>455</sup> Historians Randy Roberts and James S. Olson briefly mention her claims to quickly cast doubt on her veracity.<sup>456</sup> Whether she was or was not present at the Alamo that fateful morning will likely never be known for certain and is ultimately irrelevant for this project. The real significance is how far and wide beyond San Antonio’s city limits her tales traveled. Through the magazine articles and newspaper obituaries people in Chicago, Baltimore, St. Louis, and elsewhere read of this poor,

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<sup>454</sup> Corner, 117-119. *St. Louis Republic*, October 1, 1892, accessed April 9, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers. Mena Kemp Ogan, “The Heroine of the Alamo,” *The National Magazine*, May/June, 1893, 23-28. Accessed October 2, 2015, ProQuest American Periodical Series Online. Henry G. Tinsley, “Remember the Alamo,” *Current Literature*, May 1898, 422-425. Accessed October 2, 2015, ProQuest American Periodical Series Online. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 19, 1899, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. *Idaho Daily Statesman*, February 11, 1899, accessed April 9, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers. *Las Novedades* (New York), February 16, 1899, accessed April 9, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers. *Savannah Tribune*, February 18, 1899, accessed April 9, 2014. *The Baltimore Sun*, February 14, 1899, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 13, 1899, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. *San Antonio Daily Express*, February 11, 1899, accessed February 11, 2016, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers. Also, Walter B. Stevens, *Through Texas: A Series of Interesting Letters* (St. Louis: General Passenger Department of the Missouri Pacific Railway, 1892), 72-78. Stevens’ letters had been written for and published in the newspaper, *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* in the Fall of 1892.

<sup>455</sup> Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, & the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); and Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

<sup>456</sup> Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, *A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 154-155.

elderly Mexican woman who had given succor to the patriots and martyrs for the nascent nation of Texans. Such widespread coverage reveals a significant degree of fascination on the part of the American reading public with the Alamo that went far beyond Texas' borders. Then there is also the inconvenient issue of her ethnicity. In a time when Tejanos were often seen as traitors and blamed for the Alamo massacre, Señora Candelaria was celebrated as a battlefield angel for her service and pensioned by the State. Her ethnicity may challenge certain contemporary and monolithic interpretations of race and ethnic relations, nonetheless, her contributions to the collective memories regarding the Alamo should not be ignored by modern scholars interested in collective memory.

### **Southern Pacific's "Propaganda Machine"**

Between the late 1880s and 1890s land sales became significantly smaller parts of the Southern Pacific railroad's overall business. The Passenger Department was then given the task of promoting California (home of Southern Pacific) as well as the other regions throughout the Southwest where the rail line operated. Rail travel was improving with the introduction of Pullman sleeper cars and greatly lowered fares as the Southern Pacific competed against the Santa Fe line to bring tourists through the American

Southwest.<sup>457</sup> With tourists responsible for increasing company revenue, the Passenger Department became the main publishing arm for promotional materials. As Orsi notes, “One of the major results of the enlarged role of the Passenger Department was an expanded publications program by the railroad, particularly the issuing of pamphlets, magazines, and books aimed at tourists, as well as those seeking new homes and farms.” Little wonder Orsi describes the Passenger Department as the rail company’s “propaganda machine.”<sup>458</sup>

One of these Gilded Age publications is interesting enough to warrant further scrutiny. The book, *Through Storyland to Sunset Seas*, by H. S. Kneedler, was essentially a guidebook with factual information, climatological data, economic statistics, and points of interest. However, it was told in the form of a fictional narrative of four characters who traveled from New Orleans to California along the Sunset Route. With over two hundred pages and many photographs printed on high-quality paper, it was much more substantial than many pamphlets and travel guides, including Truman’s fictional traveling family from 1886. In addition to the factual data and sights to be seen, the book had the added interest of a romance story between two of the characters: Jack (the primary narrator), who by the end of the book had become engaged to fellow traveler, “the Girl” (the unnamed and only female character). The other two characters were worldly travelers and primarily served to dispense encyclopedic facts relating to places and sights along the route: the Colonel (father of the Girl), and the Growler (a

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<sup>457</sup> Orsi, 156-157.

<sup>458</sup> Orsi, 157.

rather pessimistic and cynical male sometimes used as a foil).<sup>459</sup> The narrative, as might be expected, reflects typical prejudices of the time regarding gender as well as racial and ethnic minorities.

The chapter describing the party's stopover in San Antonio emphasized the missions and the Alamo. By the time they were shown their hotel rooms, the Colonel had already hired a carriage. The first priority on their tour was out to see the missions. As the four explored Mission Concepción, the Growler pointed out existing traces of "gaudy yellow frescoes . . . ornamented with red and blue quarterfoil crosses."<sup>460</sup> While the Colonel described the richly carved décor of San José, he made no mention of Huizar, and gave an erroneous date for the completion of the San José church seen today. The party made their way to each of the missions south of town, briefly visiting San Juan and finishing their tour with Mission Espada. The narrative mentioned the tireless and effective work of Fr. Bouchu in repairing and restoring Espada back to useful service. Upon the party's return to town, they visited the Alamo, about which the Colonel proclaimed, "If deeds of daring sanctify the soil that witnesses them that should be to every American one of the sacred places of the land," and recounted for the book's readers the story of the 1836 battle and glory heaped upon the Alamo martyrs.<sup>461</sup> Later that evening, "we did what all tourists do—made a trip through the Mexican quarter of town." There they looked upon the poorly constructed *jacales* of mud and sticks, and the Tejano population "in characteristic attitudes of idleness" as "picturesque" sights to

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<sup>459</sup> H. S. Kneedler, *Through Storyland to Sunset Seas: What Four People Saw on a Journey Through the Southwest to the Pacific Coast* (n.p.: Passenger Department Southern Pacific, 1895).

<sup>460</sup> Kneedler, 61.

<sup>461</sup> Kneedler, 64-65.

be enjoyed as part of the overall experience. They also partook of the popular Tex-Mex cuisine in Milam Plaza.<sup>462</sup>

The interest in this particular guidebook lies in the quality of its printing, including the photographs, and the inclusion of a fictive romance story. Although not high literature, and the fact the romance is subordinate to the descriptions of points of interest and exotic sights to be experienced along the route, a review of this publication in the “Literary Notes” column of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* described the book in glowing terms. The reviewer opined this book had become the “high-water mark” and “one of the best books of the kind ever issued.”<sup>463</sup> A similar glowing review appeared in the *Austin Daily Statesman*, and one advertisement for the book described it as “printed on fine enameled paper,” it was the “story of the romance of the country traversed by the Southern Pacific.”<sup>464</sup>

Richard Orsi claims that in the early 1900s, “Southern Pacific was issuing heroic quantities of pamphlets and other materials advertising opportunities for travel” and emigration to the American Southwest.<sup>465</sup> Besides the romance by Kneedler, there were more traditional types of books offering basic factual data on the cities and towns along the Sunset Route. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, the Southern Pacific’s Passenger Department issued several editions of a book called, *Wayside Notes*

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<sup>462</sup> Kneedler, 67.

<sup>463</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 19, 1895, accessed February 23, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

<sup>464</sup> *Austin Daily Statesman*, November 19, 1895, accessed February 23, 2016, ProQuest Historical Austin American Statesman; and *Atlanta Constitution*, January 26, 1896, accessed February 23, 2016, ProQuest Historical Atlanta Constitution.

<sup>465</sup> Orsi, 158.

*on the Sunset Route*. It was a profusely illustrated guide book with brief descriptions of cities, towns, and interesting geographical features that could be seen along the route. The 1908 edition listed San Antonio as having a population of 105,000, and being the economic hub for livestock, cotton, and farm produce. Visitors would find “a most salubrious climate” and a hotel featuring a hot sulfur spring and spa “with hundreds of cures to its credit.”<sup>466</sup> However, the booklet stressed that “San Antonio cannot be so engrossed in its present glories as to forget that it holds the Alamo. Historic and patriotic interest largely centers in its immortal Alamo.” What followed was the usual paeon to Travis, Bowie, and Crockett, and the rest of their fellow Thermopylaen martyrs.<sup>467</sup>

One more publication type during this turn-of-the-century period from Southern Pacific’s Passenger Department worthy of note strictly focused on the missions of the Texas and Juarez, Mexico region. This view book is distinctive for its early date and the multicolored photographic prints of Texas missions. Although unclear, the title page suggests it was complimentary. Another feature of this particular view book is that two other missions are included besides those in San Antonio: La Bahia near Goliad, and Mission Iglesia Guadalupe in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.<sup>468</sup> The text described the missions as being “speaking monuments” that tell of the faith and persistence of the Spanish

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<sup>466</sup> Southern Pacific Company. Passenger Department. *Wayside Notes on the Sunset Route*, (San Francisco: Southern Pacific Company, 1908), 92-93. Accessed online, January 22, 2016, Internet Archive, <http://www.archive.org/details/sunsetwaysidenot00soutrich>.

<sup>467</sup> Southern Pacific, *Wayside Notes*, 93-94.

<sup>468</sup> Passenger Department, *The Missions of Texas on the Sunset Route* (Houston: Cumming & Sons, n.d. est. between 1900 and 1909). Title page marked “Compliments of Passenger Department, Houston, Texas.” Conspicuously absent are the mission and presidio churches on the American side of the Rio Grande near El Paso, Texas (the present Socorro, Ysleta, and San Elizario).



“priests and monks” who came to proselytize “among the savage tribes.” However, despite the noble cause for which the missions toiled, with the decline and fall of the Spanish empire, the crumbling walls are all that remain to tell “the long, long story of a dead past.”<sup>469</sup> (See Figure 4.2.)

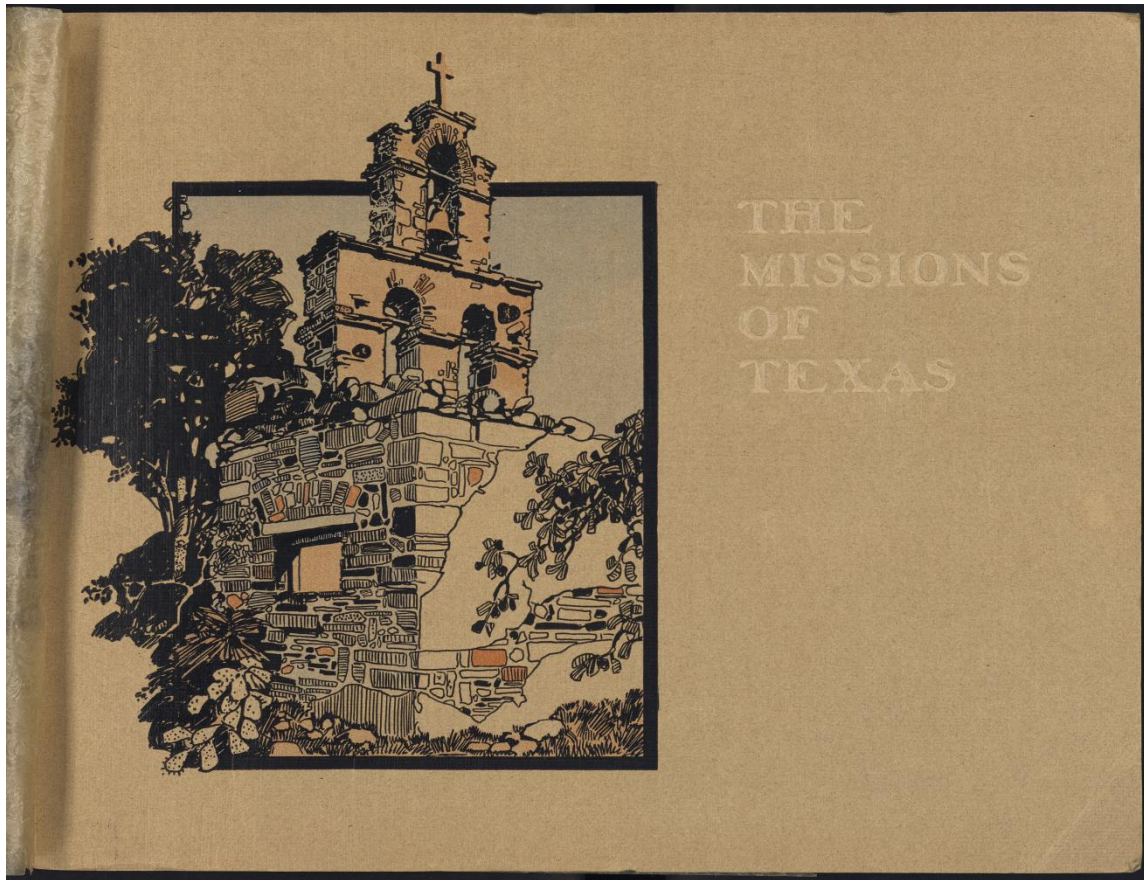


Figure 4.2 View book cover, *The Missions of Texas*. The cover image is Mission San Juan Capistrano from the rear. Scanned image courtesy of the Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.

<sup>469</sup> Passenger Department, *Missions of Texas*, 2.

The description of the Alamo begins with the claim that it was the story “of the bravest of the brave.”<sup>470</sup> As is often the case with these tourist guidebooks, some of the facts presented were erroneous, which further supports the argument that collective memories are so often at odds with historical fact. The description of Mission San José was similarly problematic. The text credited the Spanish sculptor “Huica,” who came “across the seas for the purpose” of carving the ornate façade and oaken doors. It also claimed the work was completed within eight years of the founding date of the mission. Finally, the description missed most of the names of the various saints adorning the façade. Conversely, the description mentioned that Oscar Wilde had proclaimed the sculptural ornamentation as “unsurpassed by anything in the old monasteries of Europe.”<sup>471</sup> Minor errors these might seem, but the cumulative effects are seen in the clashes between history and memory. Orsi claims that over a three-year period in the early 1900s, Southern Pacific’s Passenger Department distributed some 10 million pieces of promotional literature.<sup>472</sup>

### **Visitors Issue Early Calls for Preservation of the Missions**

In the closing decade of the nineteenth century, tourists continued to come to San Antonio. Some found the romantic sights they sought; others seemed rather dismayed at

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<sup>470</sup> Passenger Department, *Missions of Texas*, 4.

<sup>471</sup> Passenger Department, *Missions of Texas*, 12. A frequent misconception among tourists is that the stone mission churches they see were completed just a few years after the missions’ founding dates.

<sup>472</sup> Orsi, 158.

what they found. Indeed, the latter took San Antonio's city fathers to task for allowing such a revered building as the Alamo fall into such a state of decay. These complaints highlight some of the tensions within San Antonio between those who wanted to present the city as a modern city open for business and investment versus those who wanted to portray the town as remaining on the frontier with visible remnants of a romantic and exotic past. Both groups could find material to reinforce their position in travel narratives written by outside observers which appeared in a variety of media outlets.

During this time period, the prose style of the narratives themselves underwent a significant change. There was less of the florid, romantic hyperbole of the previous decades; nevertheless, the descriptions of the missions still pandered to readers' emotional sympathies. While part of that change may have reflected changing tastes on the part of the reading public, it also have reflected that the West was itself changing. Historian Frederick Jackson Turner observed in 1893 that the frontier, conceived as the open range of the West and long considered an endless commodity, had closed.<sup>473</sup> With the closing of the frontier, the taming of the Wild West began; although Herbert Gottfried notes that Southern Pacific's promotional literature promised travelers the Wild West as well as domesticated Mild West, both open for business.<sup>474</sup> Just the previous year, Richard Harding Davis, journalist and managing editor of *Harper's Weekly* magazine, published a series, "The West from a Car Window," narrating his three month journey via rail through Texas, Oklahoma, and Colorado. The people and

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<sup>473</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays*, with commentary by John Mack Faragher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 31-60.

<sup>474</sup> Gottfried, 44.

landscape Davis encountered both confirmed and challenged his preconceived notions about the American West. He found simpletons, country bumpkins, as well as Ivy Leaguers. He found dusty, arid, plains and snow-peaked mountains. He did not find a monochromatic, archetypical “West” which could be neatly described and explained to his Eastern audience.<sup>475</sup> That same year, Walter B. Stevens travelled across Texas for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. His narratives were then collected and published by the Passenger Department of the Missouri Pacific Railway. Prior to the turn of the century, famed novelist and journalist Stephen Crane found San Antonio and the West similarly difficult to explain, as did another *Harper’s Weekly* correspondent, Kirk Munroe. One common facet that struck all of these men was the recognition of the appeal of San Antonio’s Spanish missions, and the need to protect and preserve them.

As his train rolled across south Texas, Davis, an Eastern dandy, described with some apprehension his observation of one of his fellow passengers nonchalantly opening a window and firing his pistol at the passing telegraph poles. A train official calmed passengers’ fears by identifying the shooter as a local deputy sheriff and his actions as nothing more than an impromptu target practice session.<sup>476</sup> Davis’ anecdote suggested a certain contradictory nature about the West where reality and legends were frequently at odds. This contradiction led him to scold San Antonio’s citizenry who, “do not, as a rule, appreciate the historical values of their city.” He felt San Antonio “possesses historical and picturesque showplaces which in any other country but our own would be

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<sup>475</sup> Char Miller, “Proving Ground: Richard Harding Davis in the American West,” *Southwest Review* 90, no. 1 (2005): 13-28, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43472407>.

<sup>476</sup> Richard Harding Davis, “The West from a Car Window,” *Harper’s Weekly*, March 5, 1892, 221. Accessed November 19, 2013, HarpWeek. Also, Miller, “Proving Ground,” 14-15.

visited by innumerable American tourists prepared to fall down and worship.” But the San Antonio city fathers, to Davis’ chagrin, seemed more proud of their newest and largest buildings, the new Post Office and City Hall, and riding their new cable car system, taken together as indicators of Gilded Age economic progress. Progress was all well and good for Davis, and he stated the town just lacked a first-rate hotel, but also a proper appreciation of its past. He rebuked city authorities, “But the missions which lie just outside of the city are what will bring the Eastern man or woman to San Antonio, and not the new water-works.”<sup>477</sup> He also admitted that it was “impossible to write comprehensively about southwest Texas . . . and say nothing of the Alamo.” Davis compared the old mission chapel to “what Independence Hall is to the United States, and Bunker Hill to the East.” More importantly however, he claimed, “the pride of [the Alamo] belongs to every American, whether he lives in Texas or in Maine.” The Alamo as a national ‘site of memory’ was once again reinforced by tourists visiting from the East. Davis closed his visit to Texas by noting that one tended to forget the minor inconveniences, discomforts, and isolation from traveling along the frontier, and “remembers only the Alamo.”<sup>478</sup> Davis emphasized to his readers that the Alamo and the missions were the true and primary attractions to see in San Antonio.

Davis was not alone in 1892 as he sojourned through Texas. Walter B. Stevens, a special correspondent for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* visited the state and published a series of letters describing his adventures. In San Antonio he interviewed Sra.

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<sup>477</sup> Davis, “West from a Car Window,” 222.

<sup>478</sup> Davis, “West from a Car Window,” 222. Davis referenced Corner’s guidebook and Sidney Lanier’s history as being especially informative for visitors.

Candelaria regarding her role at the 1836 Battle of the Alamo, as well as Tom Rife, the acting custodian of the Alamo building, who challenged the elderly woman's recollections. One observation Stevens made was that the State of Texas had recently come around to the notion that the Alamo deserved some sort of protection. Stevens' descriptions broke from the usual "saintly missionaries" of so many other contemporary travel narratives and accused the "priests" of forced conversions and enslavement of the Native Americans.<sup>479</sup> Stevens also noted that at Concepción, "the chapel has been used in recent years for a service by a bishop who venerates the past." As so many of his fellow travel writers, Stevens believed Concepción's dome to be Moorish, an observation that reflects a limited understanding of architectural history, and characterizes the mission builders as Orientalized Other.<sup>480</sup>

Stevens suggested there was some competition in decorating Mission Concepción and Mission San José. He described Concepción as having been ornamented with frescoes which could yet be seen in his time. San José, on the other hand, had been decorated with skilled hands, hammer, and chisel "in the most wonderful manner."<sup>481</sup> Stevens credited "Huica" as the Spanish artist who travelled such a great distance to "do the finest of chiseling on the San Jose portal and windows" which took several years to complete.<sup>482</sup> As he travelled the mission trails, Stevens described San Juan as a complete ruin with little to see since the Spanish gave up on the mission

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<sup>479</sup> Stevens, *Through Texas*, 79-80.

<sup>480</sup> Stevens, *Through Texas*, 80. For more on Orientalism, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition with a New Preface by the Author. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

<sup>481</sup> Stevens, *Through Texas*, 80.

<sup>482</sup> Stevens, *Through Texas*, 82.

system before the main church could be completed. Mission Espada, on the other hand, he described as having been restored to such a fine degree, “it has lost its interest as a ruin.”<sup>483</sup> Ultimately, Stevens considered the Alamo and four other missions to be “the wonder of all strangers who visit San Antonio.”<sup>484</sup>

In 1897 another *Harper's Weekly* correspondent, Kirk Munroe, made his way to Texas and described San Antonio as “a very Mecca of American pilgrims who visit [the city] not for its present, but for its past. They go to be thrilled by the story of its Alamo.” Munroe, like Davis before, chastised the “apathetic neglect” of the Alamo and declared “the battle-scarred structure should have been sacredly preserved as an enduring monument.” He later compared it to Independence Hall, Mount Vernon, and Sutter's Fort, reminders of “the glorious past, to be reverently cared for by an association of native sons and daughters.”<sup>485</sup> Munroe was particularly offended by the “atrocious wooden building, used as a grocery [which] at once hides and degrades [the Alamo].” Despite the architectural horror perpetrated upon the chapel, it sat “defaced, shorn of its once stately proportions, and degraded by its environment, [the Alamo] is of such remarkable character . . . [that it] commands [visitors'] attention to the exclusion of all surrounding objects.”<sup>486</sup> And while the Alamo was the city's “chief attraction to the visiting pilgrim,” there were others. The other four missions, “present examples of ancient ecclesiastical architecture unexcelled for beauty and design and exquisite detail”

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<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>484</sup> Stevens, *Through Texas*, 79.

<sup>485</sup> Kirk Munroe, “San Antonio de Bexar,” *Harper's Weekly*, September 25, 1897, 957-958. Accessed November 19, 2013, HarpWeek.

<sup>486</sup> Munroe, “San Antonio de Bexar,” 957.

in the United States. Particularly noteworthy was the “carved ornamentation of which the artist Huica, sent out from Spain for the purpose, devoted many years of his life. The west portal of the chapel affords ample proof of his genius while one window on the south side of the baptistery has been named the finest thing of its kind in America.”<sup>487</sup> Munroe’s narrative was accompanied by five illustrations, four of which illustrated the Alamo, the façade and south sacristy window of San José, and the twin towers of Concepción. And five years after Davis called for one, Munroe concurred, the city still needed a “first-class tourist hotel.”<sup>488</sup>

Novelist and correspondent Stephen Crane also visited San Antonio prior to the turn of the century and published his take on the city. He likewise recommended the city needed to do more to preserve its historical heritage. His astute observations regarding the appeal of the Alamo, as well as San Antonio, are instructive for modern historians. Crane asserted that before his arrival in San Antonio, all that he heard about the place suggested the city symbolized “the poetry of life in Texas.”<sup>489</sup> Crane’s expectations seemed to rely upon some “eloquent description of the city which makes it consist of three old ruins and a row of Mexicans sitting in the sun.” However, once he arrived in San Antonio, he was “astonished” by the “totally modern aspect” of the city. Instead of a sleepy little frontier cow-town, he found “principal streets are lanes between rows of handsome business blocks” and the local populace engaged more in commerce to such a

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid. However, there was no mention of “Rosa” or any other lady who might have served as inspiration.

<sup>488</sup> Munroe, “San Antonio de Bexar,” 958.

<sup>489</sup> Stephen Crane, “Stephen Crane in Texas,” *The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane*, vol. 8 *Tales, Sketches, and Reports*. Edited by Fredson Bowers, with Introduction by Edwin H. Cady (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1973), 468.



degree that “the victorious derby hat of the North spreads its wings in the holy place of legends.”<sup>490</sup>

Crane effectively captured the conflict between the progressive economic forces characterized by the Anglo population in fashionable bowler hats versus the earlier, slower, pre-industrial time of the Spanish missions. He noted that despite the construction of business blocks and telegraph wires strung into a web over the streets, there remain “little old buildings, yellow with age, solemn and severe in outline, that have escaped by a miracle or by importance, the whirl of the modern life.” However, he cautioned these old buildings faced a new and serious danger for “trolley cars are merciless animals. They gorge themselves with relics. They make really coherent history look like an omelet.”<sup>491</sup> And while trolleys threatened historic sites in town, the missions south of town were “besieged” by mesquite and “Relic hunters with their singular rapacity have dragged down little saints from their niches and pulled important stones from their arches. They have performed offices of destruction of which the wind and rain of the innumerable years was capable.”<sup>492</sup> Even though he acknowledged the admonitions from Corner’s guidebook against damaging the old buildings, he mused it would take a supernatural army of all the ghosts of Spanish friars and soldiers, to scare off the vandals and prevent further damage.

Crane’s observations and descriptions reflect a changing nature of writing styles about the Alamo and San Antonio’s missions. While he acknowledged the piety and

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<sup>490</sup> Crane, 468-469.

<sup>491</sup> Crane, 469.

<sup>492</sup> Crane, 469-470.

dedication of the Spanish friars who founded the missions, he also suggested a resorting to violence as the same friars were “cudgeling their Indians in and out of the church,” and when more souls for conversion were needed, sending out the soldiers to drag more into the mission.<sup>493</sup> Some of his observations seemed even more sardonic, suggesting “Literary aspirants of the locality as soon as they finish writing about Her Eyes, begin on the Alamo. Statistics show that 69,710 writers of the state of Texas have begun at the Alamo.”<sup>494</sup> Nonetheless, Crane asserted that “the Alamo remains the greatest memorial to courage which civilization has allowed to stand.” Although Crane did not wallow in the gory details of the 1836 siege and battle, he noted the building “maintains a dignity amid the taller modern structures” as “the tomb of the fiery emotions of Texans, . . . Whether the swirl of life, the crowd upon the streets, pause to look or not, the spirit that lives in this building, its air of contemplative silence, is as eloquent as an old battle flag.”<sup>495</sup> His commentary dovetails nicely with ideas posited by Maurice Halbwachs regarding the importance to the faithful of religious edifices which they may see on a regular basis, even if no services are at that moment being conducted.<sup>496</sup> Crane’s essay appeared in newspapers across the nation in cities such as Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., and Salt Lake City.<sup>497</sup> His astute observations, coupled with his celebrity status, lent a certain credibility and interest to his admonitions to preserve the

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<sup>493</sup> Crane, 469-471.

<sup>494</sup> Crane, 471.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, 152.

<sup>497</sup> Crane, 1131. The newspapers were: *Pittsburgh Leader*, January 8, 1899; *Savannah Morning News*, January 8, 1899; *Omaha Daily Bee*, January 8, 1899; *Louisville Courier-Journal*, January 8, 1899; and the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, January 8, 1899. Additionally to these newspapers, a search of the Library of Congress’ digital newspaper project, “Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers,” revealed two additional sources; accessed online, February 17, 2016, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>. Those titles were: *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), January 7, 1899 and *Salt Lake City Herald*, January 8, 1899.

missions of San Antonio. However, extensive preservation work would have to wait until the next century.

The *fin-de-siècle* was a time of significant change not just in San Antonio, but for the Southwest and nation as a whole. Despite the national economy lurching from the incipient moves to an industrial-based economy and concomitant economic crises, the population continued to migrate from the farms to the towns and cities. With the drastic changes in the nation, people looked for something tangible to preserve their sense of identity. One significant manner in which people could reinforce their sense of identity was through travel, exploration, and the consumption of the nation. Those who benefitted from the Gilded Age economic shifts travelled the railroad and its ever-increasing steel web that connected major urban centers to the remote frontiers. Once in San Antonio, these travelers made pilgrimages to the Alamo as a shrine of heroism and icon of Anglo empire. Even those without means could take advantage of revolutions in print technology which allowed them to follow along vicariously with the accompanying illustrations giving them a graphic idea of what the scenery looked like. However, sometimes the narratives and illustrations were not accurate as authors and engravers embellished scenes, taking artistic license or relying on local folklore for source material. These inaccuracies and other legendary tales became part and parcel of the collective memories which grew about San Antonio's missions.

## CHAPTER V

### IN HER OWN IMAGE: WOMEN PRESERVING THE MISSIONS, 1890-1950

The cult of the past calls for illusion rather than authenticity.—Yi-Fu Tuan,

*Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.*

In the spring of 1886, American operatic soprano Miss Clara Louise Kellogg visited San Antonio and its missions. She told a local journalist how delighted she was to visit and opined that San Antonio was the most “quaint” city on her travels. Part of her local itinerary included the missions, “the most interesting ruins I have ever seen.” Nonetheless, she was horrified “to see how neglected they are and the vandalism exhibited by that wretched creature, the tourist, whose rude hands have damaged in minutes that which took years to perfect.”<sup>498</sup> She announced her intention to take up the matter with Governor John Ireland on her next trip through Austin, and “to exhort him to protect these fine ruins from further destruction.” The journalist who interviewed Kellogg noted that other Northern visitors echoed her sentiments, and expressed hope

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<sup>498</sup> *San Antonio Daily Light*, April 5, 1886, accessed November 26, 2014, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metataph144811/>.

the State would take care of the missions.<sup>499</sup> However, it would be many years before the State of Texas directly involved itself with caring for the missions.

During the latter nineteenth-century and well into the twentieth-century, women often led the heritage preservation movement by adopting as an agenda the raising awareness and money to save a particular old building (usually the home of a famous personage) from deterioration or destruction due to urban and commercial ‘progress.’ In San Antonio, preserving the missions was the agenda for a number of women whether acting as individuals or as part of a larger group. In the opening decade of the twentieth century, Adina De Zavala and Clara Driscoll quarreled over how best to preserve the Alamo and control of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT). Despite losing what is generally called the “Second Battle of the Alamo,” De Zavala remained active in researching, writing, and preserving her interpretation of Texas history for decades afterward. Rena Maverick Green led the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS) during the 1930s in efforts to preserve the granary and other buildings at Mission San José. Another SACS member, Ethel Wilson Harris, as the first park manager for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s state historic site at Mission San José in the 1940s, decorated the grounds based on her own notions about the way things appeared during the colonial era, and with the collusion of the Catholic hierarchy, imposed her own notions of authenticity onto the mission. Although they had their differences, common traits among these women were strong wills, dogged persistence, and an unquenchable love for San Antonio’s unique and historic built environment. Sometimes

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<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

their agendas clashed with others who also claimed to have a stake in the missions (e.g. the Diocese of San Antonio, or even each other). The historical interpretation of the missions during the first half of the twentieth century reflected the building collective memories of a romanticized and mythological Spanish past.<sup>500</sup>

As Texas historians Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner astutely observe in the Introduction to their excellent book on collective memories in Texas history, “Women were particularly involved in the creation of these collective memories in Texas.”<sup>501</sup> Despite having very little opportunity for engagement outside the domestic sphere of hearth and home, many elite women found their public voice through preserving the past. In San Antonio, women had a significant impact regarding the preservation of the missions. This impact in turn, directly shaped the collective memories of the missions, since the memories are based upon the visible remains. However, memory and historical accuracy (or authenticity) are frequently at odds. The disparity prompts a question from Cantrell and Turner regarding how one creates a “usable past” considering this inconsistency.<sup>502</sup> To this end, these Texas women and their attempts at preservation reflected more of their own illusion of an imagined past instead of an authentic one.

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<sup>500</sup> See Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, rev. ed. with added material by Matt S. Meier (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1990), 43-53, for more on Anglos’ propensity to create a “fantasy Spanish heritage” in the Southwest.

<sup>501</sup> Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, “Introduction: A Study of History, Memory, and Collective Memory in Texas,” in *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas* eds. Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 6.

<sup>502</sup> Cantrell and Turner, “Introduction,” 3.

## Women and Preservation in the Progressive Era

From the mid-nineteenth century well into the twentieth, women frequently spearheaded efforts at preserving historical sites and buildings. Part of the reason women led the way was, as historian Michael Kammen claims, between 1870 and 1915 the US government “refused (with a few exceptions) to assist in historic preservation activities.”<sup>503</sup> A greater reason for women’s leadership in the historic preservation movement harkens back to the previous chapter and what historian Barbara J. Howe calls a “cult of domesticity” by which elite women used the “virtues of piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness” to define their sphere of influence in community improvement.<sup>504</sup> According to historian James Lindgren, in earlier periods of American history the “ideal of republican motherhood encouraged women to learn history for their children’s education, as well as their own edification.” Additionally Lindgren notes, by the Progressive Era, women were using historical preservation as a means to counter the “excessive materialism” and impersonal commercial interests that dominated the male world.<sup>505</sup> Historian Judy Mattivi Morley asserts, these ideals “gave women the moral

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<sup>503</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 263-264.

<sup>504</sup> Barbara J. Howe, “Women in the Nineteenth-Century Preservation Movement,” in *Restoring Women’s History through Historic Preservation*, ed. Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 17.

<sup>505</sup> James M. Lindgren, “A New Departure in Historic, Patriotic Work’: Personalism, Professionalism, and Conflicting Concepts of Material Culture in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *The Public Historian* 18, No. 2 (Spring, 1996): 46, accessed March 4, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3377912/>.

authority to preserve the nation's heritage."<sup>506</sup> Similarly, historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage argues that "many white middle-class and elite women found in history an instrument for self-definition and empowerment." The women's general *modus operandi* included asserting "a cultural authority over virtually all representations of the region's past."<sup>507</sup>

Women challenging, or pushing forth their own critique against the male business-oriented model occurred in Texas, just as in other parts of the country. Anthropologist Holly Beachley Brear asserts the DRT's claims on the Alamo and other historic preservation projects within San Antonio stems from a charge given by an early president of the organization, Mrs. Anson Jones. Jones exhorted her sister Daughters to stake their claim as guardians of the State's "holy past" and pass the reverence for it down through the generations. Brear opines that based on societal norms of the time, the appropriate domain of women was to protect and preserve the "sites of memory" created by men.<sup>508</sup>

Even before the arrival of the railroads and exponential increase in the number of tourists arriving in San Antonio, outsiders had been admonishing locals of the Spanish missions' attractiveness and importance of preserving them as relics of historic

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<sup>506</sup> Judy Mattivi Morley, *Historic Preservation & the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, & Seattle* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>507</sup> W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "No Deed But Memory," in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 14.

<sup>508</sup> Holly Beachley Brear, "We Run the Alamo and You Don't: Alamo Battles of Ethnicity and Gender," in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 301.



architecture.<sup>509</sup> In the case of the Alamo, disagreements over what parts of the compound should be saved and what pieces could be torn down became ugly, lasting several years. The specifics regarding the conflict frequently called “the Second Battle of the Alamo” which pitted two factions of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) against each other have been told elsewhere.<sup>510</sup> Rehashing the legal minutiae of this internecine conflict between Adina De Zavala and Clara Driscoll and their respective supporters is not relevant to this project. More important for this dissertation are the facts that the internal quarrels between two blocs of a Texas women’s heritage organization played out in the national press, and that the winner of this contest ultimately decided what part of the Alamo compound was preserved and thus, directly shaped the formation of collective memories. This clash becomes more significant given the level of interest outside of Texas, especially considering it occurred prior to women having a meaningful political voice in Texas or the United States. Conversely, during the Progressive Era, historic preservation could be seen as a safe pastime for women of a certain socio-economic level, and a place where more than one found her public voice.<sup>511</sup>

By 1900, a flickering interest in protecting San Antonio’s missions was beginning to take hold. A *San Antonio Express* reporter noted that the De Zavala

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<sup>509</sup> *New York Times*, November 17, 1874, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest Historical New York Times.

<sup>510</sup> For example see: L. Richard Ables, “The Second Battle for the Alamo,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (Jan., 1967): 372-413, accessed July 29, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30237905>; Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Precarious Preservation of a Heritage* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1996), 53-60; Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, & the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 61-92; and Scott Zesch, “Adina De Zavala and the Second Siege of the Alamo,” *CRM Journal* 5, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 31-44 (this essay was also available online: <http://www.nps.gov/history/crmjournal/Winter2008/article2.html> as of March 1, 2016).

<sup>511</sup> Brundage, “No Deed But Memory,” 14.

chapter of the DRT had begun efforts toward preserving the missions. The writer considered it “a most laudable enterprise and should have the encouragement and substantial aid of everybody. Neglect and vandalism have pretty much destroyed one of the old missions and without such attention as is proposed to be given there would soon be nothing left of it.”<sup>512</sup> Two years later, De Zavala and the DRT were still soliciting money to preserve San Antonio’s missions, and as another *San Antonio Express* reporter observed, the money was still sorely needed, “Strangers visiting the Alamo City have frequently expressed surprise that more care has not been taken to preserve the ancient missions which stand as decaying memorials of” early attempts to Christianize area Native Americans.<sup>513</sup> The *Express* journalist then held up as an example Miss Helen Gould, socialite, philanthropist, and eldest daughter of rail baron and financier, Jay Gould. Miss Gould was quite impressed by the missions and contributed \$50 toward the DRT’s preservation efforts. The journalist expressed gratitude for her donation and appealed to locals’ sense of “patriotic citizenship” to materially assist De Zavala and the DRT in its efforts.<sup>514</sup> Outside of Texas, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* took an interest in the preservation work and published stories highlighting De Zavala’s efforts. One of the stories included photographs of four of the missions and one of Miss De Zavala. In return, De Zavala expressed her gratitude to the St. Louis correspondent for publicizing their labors to a much wider audience. She commented they had received letters of

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<sup>512</sup> *San Antonio Express*, August 20, 1900, accessed December 3, 2013, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>513</sup> “Preserve the Missions,” *San Antonio Express*, February 3, 1902, accessed March 8, 2016, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*

encouragement from across the country, including an endorsement from the Federation of Women's Clubs.<sup>515</sup>

Part of the Federation's willingness to adopt this cause may also have been based on the impassioned appeal Mrs. Adele B. Looscan of Houston, and Historian for the DRT gave at the Federation's meeting the week before. In her address, Looscan claimed the missions were a "sacred heritage of Texas" and excited "the interest of every intelligent traveler" who visited the State. She also reminded the women that preserving the sacred heritage of the nation fell within their bailiwick as she repeated the accounts of Mrs. Mary Hemenway of Boston and Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham of Virginia, both of whom organized preservation projects within their respective localities.<sup>516</sup> In claiming preservation of historic sites as women's milieu, Looscan challenged her audience to work diligently on the missions "to show to the appreciative tourist or offer for the study of the historian and archaeologist." She exclaimed, "we have still within our borders the finest examples of old Spanish architecture in the United States, if not the continent. The missions of Texas are unique both in the manner and material of their construction." Comparing the loss of one of the missions to neglect to "the destruction of a sole surviving member of a race," she reminded the listeners, of the Spanish artist, "Hincar, who came from Spain to execute the carvings on the Mission San José and with

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<sup>515</sup> *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 9, 1902; October 26, 1902; and November 30, 1902, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>516</sup> "Our Duty to the Old Missions," *Dallas Morning News*, December 8, 1902, accessed March 19, 2014, Readex America's Historical Newspapers. Hemenway's timely and generous donation was credited with saving Boston's old South Church, and Cunningham led the efforts to save George Washington's Mount Vernon home.

the difficulties encompassing their erection in the midst of a wilderness inhabited by the most savage of Indians.”<sup>517</sup>

It should be noted that Looscan, De Zavala, and the DRT, were pleading for the missions generally, not just the Alamo during this time. Despite the Alamo’s direct role in Texan independence, there was a recognition that the earlier Spanish period merited efforts at saving its art and architecture. In 1903, Looscan and De Zavala rode out to Mission Espada and visited with Father Bouchu to learn about his work in restoring the mission’s chapel. The two women declined his offer to share his meager noontime repast of fried onions, cream cheese, and bread, but once he finished his meal, he took them on a tour of the surviving structures around the compound. Some of the surviving fortifications were used as a school. The women also noted that at Mission San Juan, bells once again rang from the mission’s *espadaña*.<sup>518</sup> In this same article which highlighted the local accomplishments of the De Zavala Chapter of the DRT, Looscan noted that the wife of the Alamo’s custodian was a direct descendant of the Spanish artist “Huicar” sent specifically to carve Mission San José’s ornamentation. She also commented on the value as tourists’ attractions the Alamo and missions held for San Antonio.<sup>519</sup>

The DRT, along with similar organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and the Society of the Colonial Dames of America were,

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<sup>517</sup> “Our Duty to the Old Missions,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 8, 1902, accessed March 19, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>518</sup> *San Antonio Express*, October 25, 1903, accessed January 19, 2016, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*

as Howe claims, “examples of hereditary patriotic groups organized in the late nineteenth century which included preservation on their agenda.” She incisively observes that white (Anglo), middle-class Americans traced their ancestors in an attempt to burnish their American credentials, and thus distinguish themselves over the large numbers of immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe during the Progressive Era. Howe notes these women’s clubs “flourished throughout the country in the early twentieth century, providing a readily available pool of educated, organized women, who could be mobilized easily for preservation efforts.”<sup>520</sup>

### **The DRT and the “Second Battle of the Alamo”**

The controversy which became known as the ‘Second Battle of the Alamo’ pitted two formidable and strong-willed women against each other in the opening years of the twentieth century. Miss Adina De Zavala, granddaughter of Republic of Texas’ first vice-president, Lorenzo de Zavala, founded the De Zavala Chapter of the DRT in San Antonio in 1893, just two years after the DRT itself began. Preserving historical sites celebrating the history of the State of Texas in glorious fashion was her life’s passion. Miss Clara Driscoll was the daughter of Robert Driscoll and spent her early childhood on a large ranch near Corpus Christi, Texas. Despite being something of a tomboy from

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<sup>520</sup> Barbara J. Howe, “Women in Historic Preservation: The Legacy of Ann Pamela Cunningham,” *The Public Historian* 12, No. 1 (Winter, 1990): 35-38, accessed March 4, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3378321>.

her time out on the range, she attended private schools in San Antonio, but received additional education in New York, as well as France. A socialite in New York, Driscoll wrote short stories, novels, musical plays, and later married H. H. Sevier, a newspaper publisher and Texas legislator.<sup>521</sup> What brought the two women together and ultimately drove them apart was the condition of the Alamo.

The crux of De Zavala and Driscoll's feud was differing opinions over which portions and buildings remaining of the original Alamo compound deserved preservation, and which were later additions and could be torn down. Driscoll and her supporters argued that the chapel, the building with the strongest walls, would have been the logical "last stand" of the Alamo heroes and as such was sacred ground; anything else that remained was of secondary importance. De Zavala and her followers, on the other hand, believed that the worst fighting and heaviest Texan casualties occurred in and around the *convento*, now known as the 'Long Barracks;' but their definition of 'Alamo' included this and all of the original compound. The trouble was that over the intervening decades, the walls of the Long Barracks had been incorporated into a warehouse for a local grocery wholesale firm. Other walls had been destroyed to build streets and other buildings needed at the time. The chapel, although it too had seen considerable renovation for use as a storehouse for the US Army, had the distinctive façade which had become so familiar. Nevertheless, as Cantrell and Turner observe, the DRT "devoted themselves to [the Alamo's] preservation, not with an eye to accuracy or

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<sup>521</sup> Ables, "Second Battle," 372-375. Although Clara Driscoll had married Mr. H. H. Sevier in 1906, when the marriage broke up three decades later, she went back to using her maiden name. This dissertation will use "Driscoll" for the sake of clarity.

archaeological authenticity, but to the re-creation of a dreamlike ‘national’ shrine, imbued with the idyllic.”<sup>522</sup> De Zavala had been, when given an opportunity, acquiring Alamo relics, such as purchasing what was represented as the Alamo’s original bell.<sup>523</sup> She had also managed to negotiate a ‘right of first refusal’ purchase option with the firm of Hugo-Schmeltzer, then owners of the building which included the Long Barracks. Trouble developed when the Hugo-Schmeltzer firm received an offer in 1903 to buy the building and De Zavala could not match the \$75,000 asking price. In what eventually became a Faustian bargain for De Zavala, she connected up with Driscoll, and the wealthy heiress fronted the money for the DRT to acquire the Alamo property, including both the chapel, as well as the Long Barracks.<sup>524</sup>

In faraway Olympia, Washington, a news headline read, “Historic Alamo: Texas Ladies Save It From Destruction.”<sup>525</sup> Perhaps either premature or optimistic, but correspondent Adelaide E. Byrd claimed the threat to the Alamo had been very real until De Zavala and the DRT bought the buildings. Also interesting in Byrd’s article was emphasis on De Zavala and no mention of Driscoll actually offering the money used to buy the property. She admonished Texans for neglecting the Alamo “until the women of the state took up its cause.” Likewise, she claimed there was no state in the US “so interesting as Texas. With its old Spanish missions and forts and its up to date oil wells

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<sup>522</sup> Cantrell and Turner, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>523</sup> *New York Times*, August 23, 1900, accessed March 1, 2016, ProQuest’s Historical New York Times; and *The Sun* (Baltimore), September 1, 1900, accessed March 1, 2016, ProQuest’s Historical Baltimore Sun.

<sup>524</sup> Ables, “Second Battle,” 378 and 381-382.

<sup>525</sup> *Morning Olympian* (Olympia, WA), September 2, 1904, accessed March 19, 2014, Readex America’s Historic Newspapers.

and real estate boomers it is more of a link between today and four centuries ago than almost any other state.”<sup>526</sup> Byrd hoped “rich Americans all over the Union will ‘Remember the Alamo’ financially and aid the patriotic ladies in their object;” but she especially challenged “All the women of the United States” to “sympathize with” the DRT. Byrd closed relating that De Zavala presented a paper to a meeting of the state federation of women’s clubs which reiterated her stance that it was the building adjoining the Alamo chapel in which the Texans made their last stand; thus implicitly endorsing De Zavala’s position regarding the Long Barracks.<sup>527</sup> Byrd’s impassioned article suggests that collective memories of the Alamo heroes had expanded to the west coast and held an interest. Moreover, by challenging all American women to support the DRT, Byrd was reiterating the Progressive Era women’s claim on historical preservation as a proper platform for women.

Meanwhile, tensions within the DRT over control of the preservation efforts began mounting. Earlier statements by Driscoll and De Zavala indicated marked differences in their goals for the Alamo property and what should properly be considered “the Alamo.” Historian L. Robert Ables claims the annual meeting of the DRT in 1905 “was the last in which harmony ostensibly ruled before the DRT was sundered into two combat corps.”<sup>528</sup> The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* followed this power struggle with some curiosity. In late November, 1905, it published an article describing how custody of the Alamo property had been given to Driscoll, who was leaving Texas for New York, but

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<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

<sup>528</sup> Ables, “Second Battle,” 384.



was usurped by De Zavala. The correspondent stated both De Zavala and Driscoll shared many important qualities necessary for leading the fight to save the Alamo, but whereas Driscoll had put up hard cash and was being “feted” within and outside of Texas, De Zavala was portrayed as more jealous and bitter that her earlier toils had gone mostly unrecognized.<sup>529</sup> Modern historians should also consider whether De Zavala was being given short shrift because of her Spanish name versus Driscoll’s advantages in terms of whiteness and socio-economic class.

Or, was there more of a financial motivation? One reason the major newspaper from St. Louis found this internal feud in San Antonio worthy of attention was the commercial stake a local hotel group had in property near the Alamo. In 1906, St. Louis investors associated with this interest began buying lots adjoining the Alamo property. The group also contacted De Zavala offering to build a splendid hotel worth nearly \$500,000 next to the Alamo; but there was a catch: the Hugo-Schmeltzer warehouse (built over the Long Barracks) had to be razed to the ground. The St. Louis firm offered to pay for the destruction, all the DRT had to do was give assent. This information was also shared with the head of San Antonio’s Business Men’s Club.<sup>530</sup>

Early in 1907, the *Post-Dispatch* reported that the proposal by the “St. Louis promoters” to tear down buildings and improve their property next to the Alamo “has aroused the fighting spirit” of the DRT. The St. Louis group offered to pay to take down walls and construct a “beautiful park” next to the chapel along with their hotel. De

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<sup>529</sup> *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 26, 1905, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; and Ables, “Second Battle,” 385-388.

<sup>530</sup> Ables, “Second Battle,” 394-396.

Zavala's reply was predictable, "Tear down the Alamo! Why even the school children know better and would rise to the defense of the Alamo against the would-be perpetrators of such a sacrilegious act!"<sup>531</sup> De Zavala invoked Texan patriotism and the "sublime sacrifice" of the Alamo martyrs, and emphasized "the building occupied by the Hugo Schmeltzer Co. is the Alamo." While De Zavala admitted some San Antonio citizens who had recently arrived in the area would not be expected to know the history of the Alamo; once acquainted however, they would certainly feel similar pride and "caring for that sacred shrine, the Alamo."<sup>532</sup> But, she proclaimed, "these sacred buildings and grounds were not purchased for the purpose of making a park." The DRT, De Zavala declared, had been charged by the State of Texas to maintain the site "as a sacred memorial to the heroes who immolated themselves upon that hallowed ground," and would continue that work "for the advancement and interest and glory of Texas, her children and citizens."<sup>533</sup>

An article in the *Dallas Morning News* briefly mentioned that a group of businessmen were petitioning the Texas Legislature to "tear down the walls of the Mission San Antonio de Valero, adjoining the Alamo." The paper noted the petition "has raised a storm" in the DRT who charged that the men signing the petition owned property next to the Alamo and that the walls to be removed were part of the Alamo as

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<sup>531</sup> *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 24, 1907, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; and Ables, "Second Battle," 397-398.

<sup>532</sup> *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 24, 1907, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*

well. The writer predicted a vigorous fight, with De Zavala leading the charge.<sup>534</sup> A week later an editorial appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* which described the controversy in much greater detail, and gave De Zavala much needed support. The author stated while the Alamo was located in the city of San Antonio, “it is the treasured property of the people of all Texas,” and again predicted an “uprising against any scheme to commercialize any part of it.”<sup>535</sup> The editorial warned both the DRT and “the people of Texas” not to fall for the “insidious song that is being sung to them by ‘St. Louis capitalists’ who preach about parks and monuments.” The *News* included much of De Zavala’s reply to the St. Louis crowd and closed the issue stating “there is really no room for argument in a case in which commercialism is thus arrayed against the patriotic sentiment and purpose of a great people.”<sup>536</sup> Here was the Dallas newspaper applauding Progressive Era women’s blistering critique on men’s excessive material interests usurping patriotism distilled to its most basic elements.<sup>537</sup>

The next month, the *Dallas Morning News* reported Driscoll’s endorsing the removal of the Long Barracks on the basis it obscured the view of the chapel, and was never really part of the Alamo proper. The article noted that “the proposition to remove the walls of the old mission originated with St. Louis parties who purchased a lot in the

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<sup>534</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, February 16, 1907, accessed July 11, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>535</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, February 25, 1907, accessed July 11, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>537</sup> Lindgren, “A New Departure,” 46.

rear on which to build a hotel and who desired to face on Alamo Plaza.”<sup>538</sup> In April, De Zavala received a letter of encouragement from George Wharton James, a noted expert on the Spanish missions of California. He excoriated the hoteliers for wanting to destroy any portion of the Alamo compound for the sake of commercial interests. While the hotel might be attractive, Wharton declared the loss of a single Alamo stone was too great of a price, for “Every stone of the Alamo is sacred property, consecrated by the blood of heroes,” not just for Texas, but beyond. He considered the Alamo compound to be in a similar category as Westminster Abbey, Notre Dame, and St. Peter’s in Rome, “sacred to the heart of the world.”<sup>539</sup>

As religious scholars David Chidester and Edward Linenthal astutely observe, “Sacred space is often, if not inevitably, entangled in politics. Since the nineteenth century, the most potent mythic orientations have linked sacred space with nationalism, celebrating the ‘sacred nation’ as the most encompassing spatial symbol of inclusion (and exclusion) in the world.”<sup>540</sup> In their defense of the Alamo against the incursions of the St. Louis hotel interests, De Zavala and her supporters appealed directly to Texan pride and nativism. They claimed the blood of the Alamo martyrs had anointed the very bricks and saturated the soil to make them holy ground. Public statements by De Zavala

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<sup>538</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, March 26, 1907, accessed July 11, 2014, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers. Also with this article, courtesy of De Zavala, was an artists’ conjecture based on “measurements and descriptions” of what the Alamo would have looked like. The chapel façade maintained the anachronistic 1849 renovations by the US Army. The *convento* with its arched walkways appears twice the width of the chapel.

<sup>539</sup> George Wharton James to Adina De Zavala, April 22, 1907, Adina Emilia De Zavala Papers, 1766 (1831-1955), Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin (hereafter cited as “Briscoe Center”); and “Comments Upon the Alamo Improvements,” *Austin American Statesman*, May 2, 1907, accessed March 10, 2016, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>540</sup> David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, eds. *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 15.

and her followers invoked a ‘civil religion’ of Texas nativism and the memory of the ultimate sacrifice paid by Travis, Crockett, Bowie, and the rest of their band at the Alamo. For the DRT, and those who sympathized with their cause, this became the dominant narrative of the Alamo for decades, passed down through Anglo collective memories. As Cantrell and Turner observe, “Texas women used gender power to gain authority over the symbolic representation of white collective memory.”<sup>541</sup> Chidester and Linenthal also note, “Sacred places are always highly charged sites for contested negotiations over the ownership of the symbolic capital (or symbolic real estate) that signifies power relations.”<sup>542</sup> The Alamo as sacred space (and “symbolic capital”) has been contested by numerous individuals and groups for nearly three centuries.

By the end of their annual meeting in April, 1907, the DRT found itself in nothing less than a Great Schism between the De Zavala faction and the Driscoll faction, each side claiming to be the legitimate DRT, and hurling excommunications at the other. From St. Louis, a correspondent urged the Legislature to take back control of the Alamo property from the DRT and give it to a state-appointed commission (this eventually happened on July 10, 2015). However, the correspondent also recognized that the Governor and Legislators embarked on such a drastic action at their peril, “The situation is interesting and the Governor and other State officials are handling it delicately, as to get some of the leading women of Texas against one of them would come near meaning

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<sup>541</sup> Cantrell and Turner, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>542</sup> Chidester and Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*, 16; also Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 145.

political defeat in the future.”<sup>543</sup> Ultimately, the Driscoll faction resorted to the courts, who decided in their favor, and legally recognized them as the governing body of the DRT.<sup>544</sup>

With legal recognition, Driscoll’s party gained much clearer title to the Alamo property and the right to take over daily operations as caretakers. De Zavala had not given up, however, and taking advantage of a few days between the end of the Hugo-Schmeltzer occupancy, and that of Driscoll’s DRT, stole a march on her rivals and seized the building herself on February 8, 1908. By barricading herself in the building against civil authority (the local sheriff had tried to execute a legal injunction against her), and by being a petite female, De Zavala gained attention and sympathizers nationwide. The story made banner headlines across the country: “Fair Texas Girl Holding Alamo Against Odds” (*Atlanta Constitution*); “Alamo in Siege Again; Defended by Lone Woman” (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*); “Another Siege at Historic Alamo” (*Louisville Courier-Journal*); and “Defending the Alamo” (*New York Times*).<sup>545</sup> For three days De Zavala refused to allow the sheriff or his deputies serve the injunction or take control of the building. Unfortunately for her, the sheriff and his deputies

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<sup>543</sup> *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 28, 1907, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. A brief description of the conflict appeared in the *Indianapolis Morning Star*, May 28, 1907, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Also Ables, “Second Battle,” 400-402. For the DRT relinquishing control over the Alamo, see Scott Huddleston, “DRT’s Days at Alamo Numbered: Group’s Management of Shrine Ends July 10,” *San Antonio Express-News*, March 13, 2015, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>544</sup> Ables, “Second Battle,” 402-403.

<sup>545</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, February 12, 1908, accessed March 1, 2016, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 12, 1908, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; *Courier-Journal* (Louisville), February 12, 1908, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; *New York Times*, February 12, 1908, accessed March 1, 2016, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

refused to allow her friends to supply her with food and drink.<sup>546</sup> Despite the chill and lack of nourishment, her indomitable will remained. She responded to a telegram sent to her from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, which she addressed to the “Women of St. Louis.” She defended her position invoking her renowned ancestors, “who suffered every privation to defend the freedom of Texas. I, like them, am willing to die for what I believe is right.” She claimed the battle was for more than just mere possession of the building, but for the “immortal principle of liberty and right,” and believed women stood with her in her defense.<sup>547</sup> The attention paid by the varied newspapers guaranteed that people across the United States would remember the Alamo and the theatrics of one woman in particular.

After three days of negotiations, De Zavala struck her flag, but as the *Atlanta Constitution* states, “She’ll March From Fort With Her Colors Flying.”<sup>548</sup> According to the terms agreed upon, De Zavala turned the Alamo over to Mr. W. C. Day, State Superintendent of Buildings, sent by Governor Campbell to defuse the situation. The *New York Times* reported that as De Zavala left the building she was cheered by friends and supporters, although she nearly too weak to stand. A second article described her actions had been a source of amusement to tourists. The journalist noted De Zavala had “been heroically reviving memories of the bloody incident that gave the fort its name,” but questioned whether the merits of the case warranted such a strong reaction as the

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<sup>546</sup> Ables, “Second Battle,” 403-404; *New York Times*, February 13, 1908, accessed March 1, 2016, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>547</sup> *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 13, 1908, accessed December 31, 2013, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>548</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, February 14, 1908, accessed March 1, 2016, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

State of Texas was unlikely to permit the complete destruction of the Alamo.<sup>549</sup>

However, as eminent cultural geographer, Yi-Fu Tuan presciently observes, when a people believe changes to their surroundings are occurring too fast for them to control, “nostalgia for an idyllic past waxes strong.”<sup>550</sup> De Zavala, Driscoll, and the DRT needed the Alamo as part of their Texan identity and collective memories; their disagreement centered on which parts were the authentic Alamo. Hence, as Tuan also suggests, “The passion for preservation arises out of the need for tangible objects that can support a sense of identity.”<sup>551</sup>

Although De Zavala won the battle of popular opinion, she lost the war. Several more years of court battles went against her and she lost her control of the DRT in addition to custody of the Alamo. Ultimately, she even lost the Long Barracks. In late December, 1911, Colquitt led a meeting between the warring factions during which he offered to return the Alamo to its appearance just after the 1836 battle (which could have demolished the now familiar façade). However, both factions seemed to take from the meeting what they wanted and went away appeased.<sup>552</sup> De Zavala believed she had the assurance of Governor Oscar Colquitt that the State would do nothing in terms of dismantling the Long Barracks. Unfortunately for her, while Colquitt was out of state, local city authorities, with the acquiescence of the lieutenant governor, took down the

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<sup>549</sup> *New York Times*, February 14, 1908, accessed March 1, 2016, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>550</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 195.

<sup>551</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place*, 197.

<sup>552</sup> *San Antonio Express*, December 29-30, 1911 (microfilm); and *Dallas Morning News*, December 25, 1911, and December 31, 1911, both dates accessed May 11, 2016, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers; and Gregg Cantrell, “The Bones of Stephen F. Austin: History and Memory in Progressive-Era Texas,” in Cantrell and Turner, *Lone Star Past*, 59-61.



second story walls of the Long Barracks in 1913.<sup>553</sup> Cantrell argues Colquitt represented the male side of Progressivism, who was less affected by appeals to nostalgia, but more driven to take control of the “Alamo away from the female amateurs of the DRT and place its fate in the hands of modern, professionally trained, male archaeologists, architects, and historians.”<sup>554</sup> As a result of this ‘Second Battle of the Alamo,’ the Alamo chapel with its distinctive façade remains the dominant feature of the compound to this day.

### **Adina De Zavala Strikes Back . . . the Mythography of the Missions**

Although by 1913 Adina De Zavalla had lost control of the DRT and the Alamo, her efforts on behalf of the other missions of San Antonio in addition to the Alamo continued. One individual wrote to De Zavala confirming his interest in preserving San Antonio’s old missions recommended that she “restore them to their original form and protect and preserve them for all future time, as sacred relics of a most interesting and pathetic period of our early settlement.”<sup>555</sup> Besides working to preserve local landmarks, she spent much of her time in research and writing. In 1917 she published her book, *History and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions in and around San Antonio*,

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<sup>553</sup> Ables, “Second Battle,” 404-413. See also, Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 240-242.

<sup>554</sup> Gregg Cantrell, “Bones of Stephen F. Austin,” 61-62; and Lindgren, “A New Departure,” 53.

<sup>555</sup> George W. Tyler to Adina De Zavalla, October 15, 1908, Adina Emilia De Zavala Papers, Briscoe Center. Tyler was writing from Belton, TX and predicted the missions could be used as museums.

which was part guide book, part history, and much folklore. Herbert Gottfried observes that guide books in general “remind tourists that American places have a past, and those local historic persons, places, things and events have the capacity to add indications of authenticity to a location.”<sup>556</sup> Her book, and particularly its ability to add the sense of authenticity which Gottfried described, was a paean to the Alamo and the other missions as “sites of memory.”<sup>557</sup> While she did her research well for the time and made use of a number of primary sources (including some colonial Spanish materials), her narrative was predictably hagiographic in terms of the Franciscan friars and the Alamo martyrs. However, given the historiography of that time rarely engaged in deep critical reading of sources, her work must be judged as more a product of its time.

In his Introduction to a 1996 reprint of De Zavala’s *History and Legends of the Alamo*, anthropologist Richard Flores undertakes a very critical examination of Adina De Zavala and her complex relationship with Tejanos, Anglos, and Texas history.<sup>558</sup> He asks, “Why would this woman, a descendant of one of Mexico’s political elites, spend her life in pursuit of all things Texan, and knowing today how the Alamo was used to fuel anti-Mexican sentiment, why was she consumed with it?”<sup>559</sup> He concludes De Zavala was, consciously or not, suppressing her Mexican heritage in favor of a larger “American” identity which claimed the heroic Anglo-Texan Alamo martyrs sacrificed

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<sup>556</sup> Herbert Gottfried, *Landscape in American Guides and View Books: Visual History of Touring and Travel* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 52-53.

<sup>557</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, English-language edition ed. and foreword by Lawrence D. Kritzman. 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), v.1, xvii.

<sup>558</sup> Richard R. Flores, “Adina De Zavala and the Politics of Restoration: Introduction” in Adina De Zavala, *History and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions in and around San Antonio*, ed. Richard R. Flores (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1996), xxviii-iii.

<sup>559</sup> Flores, “Adina De Zavala,” xxviii. De Zavala was of Mexican and Irish heritage.

their lives to transition Texas from the Spanish-Mexican past to a glorious American future. Flores argues that by researching and including in her book several examples of Spanish-Mexican folklore related to the Alamo and the missions, she was acknowledging, even celebrating her own Mexican heritage, but at the same time sublimated it to Texan heroism and American progress.<sup>560</sup> De Zavala's backstory and Flores' critique gives modern readers some insight and ideas for contemplation regarding the convoluted relationships she had with her subjects, beyond merely looking at it as the worshipping of the Anglo heroes at the Alamo.

One facet of the 'Second Battle of the Alamo' that should not be lost is that De Zavala was probably more correct from a historical standpoint than Driscoll. We will never know if the Long Barracks was indeed the site of the heaviest fighting and casualties; but as the *convento* of Mission San Antonio de Valero, De Zavala's position that the Long Barracks was part of the original Alamo becomes much more defensible. With this in mind, modern readers can see her righteous indignation showing up in the text of the book. De Zavala's descriptions of the mission compounds included maps showing exterior walls and related buildings, not solely the chapels (a swipe at Driscoll's interpretation). Another jab at Driscoll appeared in the legend of the map of the Alamo and surrounding area where De Zavala pointedly reminded readers "C. Front of the Main Building of the old Alamo Fort [to which we now refer as the Long Barracks]. The Alamo proper, where the heroes died, which together with the Church (1) is all that is

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<sup>560</sup> Flores, "Adina De Zavala," xxxiii-xlix. For more on the suppression of inconvenient historical truths by elites see, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

left of the original Alamo.”<sup>561</sup> The *San Antonio Express* held up her book as having “supplied a long felt want” that was both “authentic” and portable for tourists visiting the missions.<sup>562</sup> Three days later came a more extensive description recommending the book to the larger than normal body of soldiers stationed at Ft. Sam Houston (in preparation to the United States’ entry into the First World War), in addition to interested readers nationwide. The reviewer concluded there was “a wealth of romance and history and folklore” within the book and readers would “not rest content until he or she has come to the spots bathed in the blood of heroes or golden with the chronicles of adventure and romance.”<sup>563</sup>

Early travel narratives and guide books often included one or two abbreviated mission legends, but generally did little to differentiate myth from documented history. De Zavala at least inserted a degree of separation between the two in her work. Of the twenty-nine chapters, eighteen are either poetry (typically maudlin) or legends. The legends are ‘true’ in the sense that they are not the products of De Zavala’s own imagination. She recorded them, but did not create them. Having her factual history coupled with the legends gave tourists more information that, as Gottfried stated, imbued a greater sense of authenticity to what they saw, what they told their friends back home, and the collective memories formed about the Alamo and the missions.<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> Adina De Zavala, *History and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions in and around San Antonio*, ed. Richard Flores (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1996), 16-17.

<sup>562</sup> *San Antonio Express*, December 21, 1917, accessed May 11, 2016, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph433837/>.

<sup>563</sup> *San Antonio Express*, December 24, 1917, accessed May 11, 2016, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph434331/>.

<sup>564</sup> Gottfried, *Landscape in American Guides*, 52-53.

## **Rena Maverick Green and SACS at Mission San José**

Mary Rowena (Rena) Maverick Green, like Adina De Zavala, exhibited a love for San Antonio, a high level of independent thinking, and more than a little resourcefulness. Although Green may have started down a traditional path for elite women of her time, by the age of thirty-three she was a widow with four children. However, she added the role of community activist, suffragette, artist, and historian to her curriculum vita. With a handful of other women, she formed the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS) in March, 1924, and during the early 1930s served as its president.<sup>565</sup> One of SACS' early and most unusual tactics to raise civic awareness for historic preservation was a puppet show presented to a meeting of San Antonio's city commissioners.<sup>566</sup> The puppets had been made to resemble the sitting commissioners. Green and another SACS member regularly attended previous meetings and sat quietly in the back sketching each commissioner. The script of the puppet show was based on the ancient fable, "The Goose that Laid the Golden Eggs." In the SACS retelling, a couple was fighting over the fate of the Goose. Mr. San Antonio wanted to eliminate the Goose as an impediment to modern prosperity while Mrs. San Antonio wanted to save the Goose that gave them such golden eggs as "Beauty," and more importantly, an egg named "Missions." The

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<sup>565</sup> Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Precious Preservation of a Heritage* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1996), 93; and Anne Leslie Fenstermaker, "Green, Mary Rowena [Rena] Maverick," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fgr36>), accessed April 13, 2016. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

<sup>566</sup> Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 2-9.

Goose represented the city's "peculiarities" which brought forth a bounty in the form of tourists' gold.<sup>567</sup> While the impact this little play had at the time could be debated, it is obvious that SACS viewed the missions as a "Golden Egg;" an irreplaceable part of the community which added value and attracted additional wealth.

In addition to raising community awareness regarding the importance of the missions to San Antonio, SACS reached out to see how other missions in other states had been preserved and incorporated into the economy of a given locale. In the fall of 1924, still in its first year and hoping to make a significant and positive impact in the community, SACS contacted the Southwest's greatest living booster, Charles Fletcher Lummis, and the Landmarks Club of California, to inquire how their Spanish missions were being preserved and promoted. Lummis responded that he viewed the missions as an expression of the designing artist's vision, as historical relics, as well as "the embodiment of a great spiritual idea."<sup>568</sup> By early 1925, Green had been made Chair of SACS' Standing Committee on the Missions and was in more frequent communication with Lummis and others on how best to preserve the mission buildings. Additionally, SACS was in contact with Arthur J. Drossaerts, then Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Antonio (elevated to Archbishop of San Antonio in 1927). Drossaerts initially seemed amenable to SACS's endeavors and promised to contact his clerical counterparts in California regarding their missions. One of the ideas that came from their discourse with the Californians was that the Landmarks Club leased the missions

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<sup>567</sup> SACS "Minutes" folder, August 2, 1924, Rena Maverick Green Papers, Briscoe Center; and Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 3-8.

<sup>568</sup> SACS "Minutes" folder, October 4, 1924, Rena Maverick Green Papers, Briscoe Center.

for ten years at a time from the Church for a token amount. The lease allowed the Club to supervise any architectural repairs and improvements, and the Club eschewed modifications that were not authentic, or might harm the buildings' role as sacred space. SACS was also able to acquire copies of contracts between the Diocese of the Los Angeles area and the Landmarks Club preliminary to restoration projects at three of the California missions. SACS sent the copies to their lawyers for further study.<sup>569</sup>

Despite suggestions by the lawyers from both SACS and the Diocese of San Antonio that with only minor alterations an arrangement similar to the one the Landmarks Club held with several dioceses in California could be hammered out, Drossaerts stalled. Although the exact nature of the opposition has not been found, the Bishop declined in 1927 to agree to lease any of the mission properties to SACS.<sup>570</sup> In the late 1920s Drossaerts was in communication with Franciscan organizations outside the state, trying to recruit some "Sons of St. Francis" to return to "THEIR CITY: the City of the Franciscan Missions of Texas."<sup>571</sup> If Drossaerts had designs on restoring the missions to functional church properties, he may not have wanted SACS to be in the way of his plans. Within a couple of months however, the situation became even more complicated.

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<sup>569</sup> SACS "Minutes" folder, January 10, February 7, May 2, and October 3, 1925, Rena Maverick Green Papers, Briscoe Center; and Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 148-151.

<sup>570</sup> Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 151.

<sup>571</sup> A. Drossaerts to Fr. Vincent Schremp, O.F.M., January 19, 1928, Arthur Drossaerts Papers, Catholic Archives of San Antonio (hereafter cited as CASA). Emphasis in the original.

At 3:30 in the morning on Friday, March 9, 1928, the bell tower of Mission San José split asunder “as if it had been separated by a giant cleaver” and collapsed.<sup>572</sup> Fortunately, San José’s greatest artistic treasures, the sacristy’s Rose Window and the chapel’s ornate façade were left unharmed. Archbishop Drossaerts issued instructions that would immediately restore the tower “exactly as it was. The same stone which came out of the tower will be put back in, and where replacements are necessary, stone like that formerly used will be used. Even the same ornaments will be used wherever possible.”<sup>573</sup> The next day the archbishop declared, “Services will be held as usual in Mission San José while repairs are being made.”<sup>574</sup> The *Express* correspondent reported that mission church had been “under constant repair” for eleven years, and just two months prior to the collapse, the tower itself had been “repaired and everything considered necessary was done at the time.”<sup>575</sup> Evidently, the repairs either were insufficient, or did more harm than good. Through the *Express*, SACS took the occasion to urge citizens of San Antonio to dedicate themselves, as the SACS members had done, to the preservation of the missions. SACS chided those they believed should have taken more tangible steps to “save our historic, romantic, and artistic monuments.” In a not-so-subtle jab at Drossaerts for vacillating on the negotiations over the leases, SACS vowed to “re-double efforts to gain the legal position that will enable us to control the permanent preservation work of the community.”<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> *San Antonio Express*, March 10, 1928.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>574</sup> *San Antonio Express*, March 11, 1928.

<sup>575</sup> *San Antonio Express*, March 10, 1928.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*



According to San Antonio's Spanish-language newspaper, *La Prensa*, in early April of 1928, Mrs. Perry J. Lewis, president of SACS, indicated that they hoped to be able to preserve all four missions, beautify the grounds with gardens, and suggested they were still negotiating with Archbishop Drossaerts. She also stated that while two of the missions had keepers, SACS hoped to provide similar custodians for the other two.<sup>577</sup> Two days later, however, *La Prensa* reported that there was opposition to the idea that SACS should be allowed to care for the missions. Unfortunately, *La Prensa* did not give names or specify where this opposition came from beyond "members of the local Church."<sup>578</sup> Drossaerts told *La Prensa* the Church had already allocated \$11,000 to repair the collapsed bell tower at San José, and while he did not object to SACS planting gardens around mission properties, he firmly declared that the missions were the property of the Catholic Church which would look after their own, and any necessary preservation work was best left "in our hands."<sup>579</sup> Mrs. Lewis' replied that SACS was offering a similar proposal to that which allowed a non-sectarian group to care for the "famous missions of California," an agreement which seemed to be working to the satisfaction of both parties.<sup>580</sup>

*La Prensa* indicated powers beyond the local church opposed the plan, which would suggest it came from within the archdiocesan hierarchy, but why? Was it over SACS's secular status? SACS had been very open about their ecumenical membership

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<sup>577</sup> *La Prensa*, April 4, 1928, accessed April 18, 2016, Readex America's Historical Newspapers. Translation is mine.

<sup>578</sup> *La Prensa*, April 6, 1928, accessed April 18, 2016, Readex America's Historical Newspapers. Translation is mine.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*

roster.<sup>581</sup> Perhaps some of the other priests and bishops within the archdiocese lobbied Drossaerts to keep the missions fully under Catholic control. This explanation has some appeal, particularly since Drossaerts was trying to recruit Franciscans to return the San Antonio area and set up ministries at the missions. Drossaerts may have thus valued the missions more as sacred space than tourist attractions. Did Drossaerts not believe a group of society women could be trusted with a project of this magnitude? Although women led the historic preservation movement early on, by the twentieth century there was a move to put professional architects (overwhelmingly male) in charge.<sup>582</sup> The best answer may be “all-of-the-above,” as complex historical questions rarely have simple answers.

Despite opposition from the Church, SACS had a backup plan. They simply began purchasing the land surrounding the missions from private owners. This strategy even allowed them to purchase land within the original mission compounds and ultimately the granary of Mission San José. Although some parcels were sold back to the Church, SACS assured Drossaerts relinquishing title to these properties did nothing to end their work for the old mission.<sup>583</sup> SACS’s unsuccessful attempts to lease the mission properties from the Catholic Church, and the purchase of surrounding plots of land, removed them from the open market and effectively commoditized the sacred space. Chidester and Linenthal mention such commodification as one of the ways

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<sup>581</sup> Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 148-151.

<sup>582</sup> Lindgren, “A New Departure,” 53.

<sup>583</sup> Archbishop Drossaerts to SACS, March 26, 1931, Rena Maverick Green Papers, Briscoe Center.

“American historical experience has shaped the production of sacred space.”<sup>584</sup> Despite De Zavala’s attempts to keep the Alamo free from commercial interests, even space recognized as sacred also has value as a limited commodity and risks being profaned.

In his book on historic preservation in the city during the twentieth century, former journalist Lewis Fisher states that raising money to make these purchases in the midst of the Great Depression was not at all easy to do; but through creative fund raising, calling in debts, rummage sales, loans, and government assistance, the women of SACS persevered. One of those debts had been owed by the DRT and Green expressed some amazement when despite the hard financial times to pay off the \$100 owed.<sup>585</sup> Their primary accomplishment during the first half of the 1930s was the reconstruction of the granary at San José. They managed this through much lobbying for donations in the form of materials and labor. Additional labor came from Depression-era relief programs and expertise from architect Harvey Partridge Smith. Despite these many travails, SACS managed to restore the granary and its unique flying buttresses at San José. Their success led to greater cooperation from Bexar County and the Church in getting US federal assistance for rebuilding the rest of San José.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> Chidester and Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*, 28.

<sup>585</sup> Rena Maverick Green to Mrs. Taylor, February 23, 1934, Rena Maverick Green Papers, Briscoe Center. This letter was probably sent to Amanda Taylor, SACS President, and mentioned receiving \$100 from the DRT which was then used for stone. And Amanda C. Taylor to Mrs. Robert McGarraugh, June 10, 1935, “Dear Mary,” Rena Maverick Green Papers, Briscoe Center.

<sup>586</sup> Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 151-160.

## **Ethel Wilson Harris and Archbishop Robert E. Lucey: Saving San José**

One SACS member wound up living at Mission San José for over twenty years and developed a deep appreciation for the old buildings, even if she had some eccentric ideas on how life at the mission during pre-American times may have been. In his collection of oral histories of people associated with the missions, historian Luis Torres introduces Ethel Wilson Harris as one of those people who “attain mythical proportions during their own lifetimes.”<sup>587</sup> Harris was born in Sabinal, Texas, but moved to San Antonio as a young girl. With encouragement from her husband, a former Army officer, she founded and served as president of three important decorative art tile companies in the San Antonio area from 1931 to 1963: Mexican Arts and Crafts, San José Potteries (established next to the mission compound), and Mission Crafts (which operated on the grounds of San José beginning in 1941). In addition to these business ventures, she was “the technical supervisor of the Arts and Crafts Division” of the Works Progress Administration (WPA, later renamed the Work Projects Administration) in San Antonio.<sup>588</sup> Examples of tiles and pottery from her companies were exhibited in the Chicago World’s Fair of 1933 and the Texas Centennial of 1936. By 1941 Harris was then a widow and along with her two youngest children moved onto the grounds of Mission San José when it was named a Texas State Park and she was named the first

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<sup>587</sup> Luis Torres, *Voices from the San Antonio Missions* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1997), 194.

<sup>588</sup> Susan Toomey Frost, *Colors on Clay: The San José Tile Workshops of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2009), 3-4.

manager.<sup>589</sup> Throughout her long and productive life, she was a tireless promoter of the art tile and pottery created by traditional Mexican-American craftsmen.

Ethel Wilson Harris also exemplifies many of the complexities swirling around San José and its multivariate role as tourist attraction, commercial space, sacred space, and performance space for those of Mexican-American ethnicity. Harris cultivated a close relationship with the local Catholic hierarchy (Drossaerts' successor, Archbishop Robert E. Lucey) which allowed her to impose her will over individual priests serving the San José community. Through her commercial tile enterprises, she promoted traditional Mexican crafts and provided a paycheck, creative outlet, and a means of expressing their ethnic identity to her Mexican-American employees during a time of great economic hardship. Many of the pottery and tile designs portrayed romanticized Mexican folk scenes or images of San Antonio nightlife including the legendary "Chili Queens."<sup>590</sup> However, Harris was not of Tejano or Mexican-American ethnicity herself. It is difficult, though, to view the relationship she had with her artisans simply as an exploitive one. While there was a definite hierarchy, art historian Susan Toomey Frost argues there was also a significant amount of respect that Harris held for the craftspeople who worked for her.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Frost, *Colors on Clay*, 4-5; and Torres, *Voices from the San Antonio Missions*, 194-213.

<sup>590</sup> Frost, *Colors on Clay*. Frost's book is richly illustrated with several decades' worth of examples of the tiles that came from Harris' kilns. This was a time when traditional Mexican art and designs enjoyed a period of keen interest in American culture; see Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992).

<sup>591</sup> Frost, *Colors on Clay*, 10-21, 165-171, and "Ethel Wilson Harris," Bexar County Historical Commission, Oral History Program, Interview with Ethel Wilson Harris by Esther MacMillan, September 17, 1976. Copy in the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo (hereafter cited as DRT

Frost also observes Harris' relationship with SACS "was particularly close and mutually beneficial," and Harris served as Society president in the 1950s.<sup>592</sup> After SACS had acquired and rebuilt San José's granary in the 1930s, they allowed Harris to open up a gift shop within the building to sell art tiles from her Mexican Arts and Crafts company (located near the mission compound). That Harris was also a SACS member and being onsite could easily look after SACS' interests likely figured heavily into the equation.<sup>593</sup> This close relationship did not, however, prevent SACS and Harris from occasionally clashing over aesthetic interests, such as when Harris wanted to build a large, modern kiln on the grounds of San José mission. Rena Maverick Green vetoed the idea arguing, "Can you imagine smoke stacks as a background to the San José."<sup>594</sup>

Harris' relationship to the Catholic Church was one of the more curious facets of her time at Mission San José. By 1941, a rebuilt Mission San José was both a Texas State Park, as well as a National Historic Site and Harris was tapped to be the first manager of the site for the State. Additionally, a new Archbishop, Robert E. Lucey had succeeded Drossaerts that same year, and the younger prelate seemed more open to the ideas of the missions as tourist attractions. Lucey was a firm believer in social justice, particularly for Mexican-Americans, and yet equally committed to exercising his

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Library), in folder, "Biography—Harris, Ethel Wilson," 4001102, page 43. Hereafter cited as "EWH Oral History, DRT Library."

<sup>592</sup> Frost, *Colors on Clay*, 48.

<sup>593</sup> Frost, *Colors on Clay*, 148-149.

<sup>594</sup> Rena Maverick Green to Harvey P. Smith, December 3, 1937, Rena Maverick Green Papers, Briscoe Center. Also Frost, *Colors on Clay*, 48-49.

authority within the Church hierarchy.<sup>595</sup> Harris and Lucey developed a very close working relationship lasting nearly three decades. In an oral history interview from 1976, Harris spoke fondly of Lucey as “a man I love and admire.”<sup>596</sup> On the other hand, Harris did little to endear herself to the parishioners who attended church at San José. The Archbishop lent valuable assistance to SACS’ efforts to close a county road that passed through the old walls and ran just a few yards from the San José chapel. The priest at San José objected to the proposed road closure as his parishioners were accustomed to parking next to the church. Harris stated Lucey expressed shock that the priest would push against Church hierarchy over parking spaces; she remarked this priest was reassigned shortly afterward. Similarly, Harris complained to Lucey that some parishioners were on the mission grounds hawking guidebooks and “junk-crosses, and junk this and junk that. Cheap, cheap stuff.” Lucey put an end to this practice and assured Harris, “there’ll be no more selling of these books . . . The only person who can sell anything . . . you can sell them, but nobody” else. Little wonder Harris reminisced that the local parishioners refused to speak to her after Lucey stopped them from marketing their wares. Harris had eliminated the local competition for tourists’ dollars so she could engage in her own type of commercialism through sale of her art tiles.<sup>597</sup> In summing up their relationship, Harris bragged that Lucey once assured her that he would

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<sup>595</sup> Saul E. Bronder, *Social Justice & Church Authority: The Public Life of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 4-5.

<sup>596</sup> EWH Oral History, DRT Library, 29.

<sup>597</sup> EWH Oral History, DRT Library, 31-32. See also Thomas S. Bremer, *Blessed With Tourists: The Borderlands of Religion and Tourism in San Antonio* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 79.

“get rid of them [the priests at San José] until I find one that will work with you.” As she recalled it took six priests being replaced.<sup>598</sup>

For Harris, an active parish at San José seemed more inconvenience than opportunity for educating tourists about Mexican-American culture and religious expression. Tourists having a positive experience appeared to trump the role of ‘mission as sacred space.’ Harris adamantly believed “whenever anyone entered that park that they were guests of the State of Texas,” and as the park’s representative, it was her duty to ensure they left with a positive impression of the park and the State.<sup>599</sup> Given her low opinion of the guidebooks sold by locals, not surprisingly she wrote her own. Harris’ version was profusely illustrated, including a pretty Mexican-American woman in a traditional *china poblana*, sitting in the Rose Window being serenaded by her guitar-wielding lover with a large *sombrero*.<sup>600</sup> Although she included one version of the Huisar-Rosa story of star-crossed lovers, she also engaged with some colonial Spanish sources to give it a modicum of historical accuracy.<sup>601</sup> Still, as Harris strove to provide tourists with an ‘authentic experience,’ she hired strolling minstrels and dancers demonstrating Mexican folk music; she also moved two of her Mexican-American craftsmen out on to the grounds so visitors could watch pots being thrown and tiles made; there were women making traditional tortillas; decorations (water jugs, an ox-cart,

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<sup>598</sup> EWH Oral History, DRT Library, 31.

<sup>599</sup> EWH Oral History, DRT Library, 39.

<sup>600</sup> Ethel Wilson Harris, *San José Mission: Queen of the Missions* (San Antonio: Accurate Litho, 1942), 29. On the last page, outlining activities at the Mission, Harris included “Pottery and tiles are made and sold within the Mission walls by the Mission Crafts, using native clays and craftsmen.” Ibid, 33.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid, 27 and 29.



etc.) gathered her from numerous trips into Mexico, and as her youngest son recalled, there were her peacocks strolling around making raucous sounds.<sup>602</sup>

If meandering guitarists and peacocks strike modern scholars as incongruous with the labor required of eighteenth-century mission life, and if Harris' pulling strings to push out the purveyors of what she considered crass, commercial, kitsch, in favor of her own enterprise appear hypocritical, Harris ultimately defies efforts to pigeonhole her and her work. Her son remembered her taking him and his siblings on numerous trips into the Mexican quarter of San Antonio to watch the traditional Christmas pageants. He also recollected his mother producing the performance of *Los Pastores* play at Mission San José (and insisting that it was performed in its traditional Spanish).<sup>603</sup> Harris used her deep interest in Mexican culture and craftwork to create a romantic and exotic atmosphere at Mission San José for the tourists' pleasure at the expense of authenticity and local parishioners.

Feisty, strong-willed, and resourceful women helped preserve San Antonio's missions during the first half of the twentieth century when women generally had little public voice, and despite global war and economic disaster. Whether acting as individuals (as Adina De Zavala did with her book, or as Ethel Wilson Harris did at San José), or collectively with larger organizations such as the DRT and SACS, their efforts significantly contributed to the development and dissemination of collective memories

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<sup>602</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 78-80, and 93; and Torres, *Voices from the San Antonio Missions*, 207-208.

<sup>603</sup> Torres, *Voices from the San Antonio Missions*, 201-208. *Los Pastores* is a traditional Mexican play that recounts the story of the shepherds' journey to visit the newborn Christ Child in Bethlehem.

by preserving the missions for multiple generations of tourists. These women often made their contributions in the face of opposition, particularly when certain male authority figures tried to displace them with trained (male) professionals. On the other hand, the women could and would cultivate working relationships with men such as architect Harvey P. Smith, and Archbishop Robert Lucey. Whether imposing their own interpretations of 'authenticity' or marshalling resources for much-needed repairs, women had a direct impact on how the missions were seen and interpreted by tourists. In no small ways did each of these women strive to re-create the missions in her own image.

## CHAPTER VI

### SAN ANTONIO AS 'THE CITY OF MISSIONS:' MARKETING MYTH AND MEMORIES, 1900-1968

I have said that Texas is a state of mind, but I think it is more than that. It is a mystique closely approximating a religion. —John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*

“San Antonio: A foreign tour on American soil!” the advertisement proclaimed, and to underscore the foreign and exotic attractions, a drawing of the bell tower of Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo appeared alongside the text. “Even Continental Europe,” the claims continued, “cannot show you more interesting ruins and relics of medieval times than are here.”<sup>604</sup> Using both text and illustration to good effect, the advertisement’s creator hoped to capitalize on interests in the historical, the quaint, and the picturesque, in addition to the mild winter climate, to bring northern tourists to this Borderland city. By the time this advertisement appeared, San Antonio’s five extant eighteenth-century missions were in dilapidated condition and needed repairs. Thus for tourists under the influence of romanticized guide books and with little sense of

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<sup>604</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 5, 1911, accessed April 2, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

chronology, the buildings probably did resemble archaic relics more than functional churches.

Illustrations as well as textual descriptions of the missions continued to be employed during this time by various entities and in multiple media formats to market a romanticized and exoticized portrait of the city. Some images emphasized romance and nostalgia while others appealed more to heroic and patriotic sympathies. Overall, images of the missions reinforced the notions of a mythological Spanish past which became ingrained in Anglos' constructed collective memories. Memories take their cues from a variety of sources, but architecture and visual images are vital. This chapter explores how travelogues and advertising descriptions of San Antonio's missions informed the Mission Revival movement, the defining style of architecture in the Southwest for much of the twentieth century. Likewise, in the opening years of the twentieth century, "See America First!" became a mantra of sorts from the nascent tourist and transportation industries. Sun, fun, and romantic history have been San Antonio's stock-in-trade for decades, and pictures of the missions helped lure travelers south and their money into city coffers. Advertisements promoting tourism, as well as guide books frequently mentioned the missions and legends associated with them, further enhancing their roles as sites of memory. In 1955 Walt Disney combined three made-for-television-movies featuring actor Fess Parker as Davy Crockett and released it on the big screen, culminating of course, with the famous 1836 siege of the Alamo. Five years later, actor John Wayne playing the same role released his own take on the siege and battle. Both of these movies weighed heavily in the American public's memory for

decades following. In addition to these media, two major events, the Texas Centennial celebrations of 1936, and the 1968 HemisFair, held in San Antonio and showcased the entire Western Hemisphere, served as impetus for repairs and renovations at the missions, some directed and led by the Archdiocese of San Antonio which still found uses for the mission facilities. The public discourse surrounding the Centennial celebrations revealed just how deeply ingrained collective memories of the missions had become.

As the twentieth century dawned, San Antonio was entering a new era. Historian Richard Garcia asserts, “San Antonio in 1900 was a city of contrasts, a wide open frontier town, a city of southern hospitality and racial deference, a gateway to Mexican culture, a symbol of Texas pride and tradition, a military center, and a booming urbanizing city.”<sup>605</sup> In October, 1910, George A. Schreiner, publicity agent for San Antonio’s chamber of commerce, published an article in *Bankers’ Magazine* touting the cornucopia of advantages the city offered to investors. All that were needed to insure a profitable future were “men and capital.”<sup>606</sup> Tourism remained an important staple of the local economy and Schreiner boasted how San Antonio’s mild winter climate and interesting mission ruins made the city a popular tourist destination.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>605</sup> Richard A. Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 24.

<sup>606</sup> George A. Schreiner, “San Antonio, Texas: A Progressive Commercial Center,” *Bankers’ Magazine*, October 1910, 521. Accessed May 19, 2016, ProQuest American Periodical Series Online. See also “San Antonio, Texas,” *The North American Review*, October, 1903, 641-644, accessed September 29, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series Online; and Jerome Farbar, “Investment in the Greatest State: What Texas Needs and What She Offers,” *Sunset*, November, 1912, 584-584.

<sup>607</sup> Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class*, 30; and Schreiner, “San Antonio,” 523-525.

The complex racial climate in San Antonio during the first half of the twentieth century endured as well. Although the city could never be mistaken as a utopia where all races and ethnicities lived in harmony, when compared to other parts of Texas, the city did appear to be relatively progressive. In his seminal examination of Mexican-Anglo relations, historian David Montejano observes that “local politics” had greater impact on the racial landscape in Texas than the rigid, monolithic system that ruled the Jim Crow South. He notes that in urban areas such as San Antonio, “Mexican-Anglo relations were more relaxed” than where Anglos held more economic control.<sup>608</sup> A significant demographic shift between 1900 and 1940 further complicated the situation. The Mexican population of San Antonio grew from 13,722 to 103,000; or from 25.7 per cent to 46.3 per cent. During this same period, the Anglo population increased from 32,000 to 131,221. Although this represented a sizable increase, as a percentage, it was a net loss, falling from 60 per cent to just 46.7 per cent.<sup>609</sup> Part of the increase in the Mexican population can be explained as an influx of refugees fleeing the political violence in Mexico.<sup>610</sup> Nonetheless, as an observer for the progressive-leaning magazine *The New Republic*, wrote at the time, “Is there a race prejudice against the Mexicans? A little, of course, toleration comes hard with the Anglo-Saxon. But ask an old San

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<sup>608</sup> David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 253-254.

<sup>609</sup> Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class*, 29.

<sup>610</sup> Edward Hungerford, “The City of Little Squares: The Charm of San Antonio, Texas, Where Revolution Breeds,” *Harper’s Weekly*, November 9, 1912, 11-12. Accessed November 19, 2013, HarpWeek database.

Antonio resident whether he dislikes the Mexicans. ‘No, I couldn’t do that. I’ve been with them all my life.’”<sup>611</sup>

### **Marketing San Antonio’s Missions in Southern Pacific’s *Sunset* Magazine**

Southern Pacific’s *Sunset* magazine, launched in 1898, became the company’s premier lifestyle and promotional publication. Although Southern California was the primary field of interest for *Sunset*, its articles informed readers nationwide about the Spanish origins and mission period in other parts of the American Southwest as well. Some early articles introduced San Antonio and its missions to *Sunset* readers in general, nearly encyclopedic language or as reminiscence.<sup>612</sup> One correspondent for *Sunset*, H. M. Mayo, claimed as early as 1899 that San Antonio had the sobriquet of “City of Missions” for “the many Spanish churches in the city and vicinity;” which would become a common moniker in tourist literature for San Antonio for years.<sup>613</sup> Similarly, G. C. Collingwood’s 1906 essay read much like the booster tracts of earlier times boasting of low taxes, fertile soil, plentiful game, and clean water. Collingwood

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<sup>611</sup> Alvin S. Johnson, “Mexico in San Antonio,” *The New Republic*, June 24, 1916, 190. Accessed May 19, 2016, EBSCO New Republic Archive.

<sup>612</sup> William B. May, “Chronicles of a Highway: El Nuevo Camino Real,” *Sunset*, December, 1898, 21-25, in the HathiTrust Digital Library, accessed June 8, 2016, <http://www.hathitrust.org/>; and C. A. Scott, “San Antonio Texas in 1867,” *Sunset*, December, 1900, 59-66, in the HathiTrust Digital Library, accessed June 8, 2016, <http://www.hathitrust.org/>.

<sup>613</sup> H. M. Mayo, “Travelers Pen Sketches of Cities in the South and West: El Paso to New Orleans—Marfa, San Antonio, and Houston,” *Sunset*, December, 1899, 59, in the HathiTrust Digital Library, accessed June 13, 2016, <http://www.hathitrust.org/>.

additionally acknowledged and complemented both Adina De Zavala and Clara Driscoll for their preservation work of the old Alamo.<sup>614</sup> However, journalist Alice Keatinge used more descriptive and colorful language to describe the city and its missions to *Sunset*'s readers. San Antonio owned "an inheritance greater than any other in the United States in her richly carved and sculptured old missions."<sup>615</sup> She observed local officials had constructed a street-car line to "take you within a block of this mission [Concepción]," suggesting the city recognized the appeal of the missions to tourists. She also described Concepción's "twin towers and Moorish dome rising out of the brush and small timber in the vicinity fill one with a mixture of wonder akin to the mystery of fairies, with a delight of the picturesque." Keatinge built the sense of mystery by asserting local tales of underground passages connecting all of the missions were true.<sup>616</sup> She also rhapsodized over the Moorish domes at San José and reported a conversation with Fr. Francis Bouchu, priest at Mission Espada. While she lamented the missions were in such poor condition, the elderly priest offered a different perspective suggesting the \$25,000 needed to restore the missions would go much further to feeding and caring for his local Mexican parishioners who lived in dire poverty.<sup>617</sup>

In a series of articles appearing in multiple issues in 1913, author Agnes Laut rhetorically asked her *Sunset* readers, "Why go abroad?" Her articles romantically described different points of interest in the Southwest. Through colorful and florid

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<sup>614</sup> G. C. Collingwood, "The City of the Alamo: How the Romance of San Antonio's Past Blends with its Present Marvelous Development," *Sunset*, April 1906, 532-552.

<sup>615</sup> Alice M. Keatinge, "Texas Missions Today," *Sunset*, April, 1905, 591.

<sup>616</sup> Keatinge, "Texas Missions Today," 592.

<sup>617</sup> Keatinge, "Texas Missions Today," 592, 594-595.



descriptions, she invited readers to imagine visiting a distant land, comparable in exotic charms to the Holy Land, Persia, and the Alhambra of Spain, and even characterized the people living there as “Orientals” (despite the fact she was writing about Mission San Xavier del Bac and the Papago Indians just outside Tucson, Arizona).<sup>618</sup> Similarly, her reference to San Antonio, as “America’s Egypt,” did not reflect much progression of style. The city was “the gateway city to the land of play and mystery.”<sup>619</sup> She remarked on the clashes between the old and the modern styles as both “Spanish-Moorish ruins” and “sky-scraper hotels that are the last word in modernity” flanked the “Spanish plazas.”<sup>620</sup> Her articles were well illustrated with photographs of the Alamo, Concepción, and drawings of the bell tower at San José.

Despite the examples of modernity all around it, Laut implored visitors to the Alamo to approach in solitude and silent reverence: “Let the mysticism and wonder and mystery of it sink in your soul! Soak yourself in the traditions of the past! Let the dead hand of the past reach forward and touch you! You will live over again the heroism of the Alamo; the heroism that preceded the Alamo—that of the Franciscans who tramped 300 leagues across the desert of Old Mexico to establish these missions.”<sup>621</sup> Historian T. J. Jackson Lears argues the mystical and supernatural appealed to a middle class disenchanted with the dramatic social and economic changes wrought during the *fin-de-siècle*. Lears suggests those disillusioned with modern and industrial America sought refuge in “more intense forms of physical or spiritual experience supposedly embodied

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<sup>618</sup> Agnes C. Laut, “Why Go Abroad? The Mission in the Arizona Desert,” *Sunset*, January 1913, 27-32.

<sup>619</sup> Agnes C. Laut, “Why Go Abroad? Historic San Antonio,” *Sunset*, April 1913, 397.

<sup>620</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>621</sup> Laut, “Historic San Antonio,” 400.

in medieval or Oriental cultures.” Through these experiences, they believed they might gain “an ability to cultivate fantastic or dreamlike states of awareness, an intense otherworldly asceticism.”<sup>622</sup> Laut’s rhetoric seemed to encourage readers to wrap themselves in the thick blanket of just this kind of mystique, which might further enhance their tourist experience.

Several years later, Paul Ewing described a “Thrilling Trip—to Borderland Missions this time—for Western Autoists [*sic*] and Visitors to the West” which meandered from Texas, through New Mexico, to Arizona.<sup>623</sup> The first page of the article featured a large photograph of Mission San José of San Antonio, Texas. Ewing offered some interesting observations for modern readers. He began with the Alamo, which “symbolizes to Texas everything that’s glorious in her history,” and as a public shrine, was “cherished by all Texas quite as reverently as Virginians cherish the home of Washington.”<sup>624</sup> Ewing characterized San Antonio as “the place ‘where the Southwest begins.’” He opined travelers from the Northeast might expect to find the arid climate, “the heavy proportion of Spanish-speaking people, . . . the old missions and the irrigation works built by the Spanish priests and still in use” further west instead of finding them at San Antonio. Also, Ewing suggested that the stories of the missions in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, were no less “colorful,” the missionaries no less courageous, and “the churches were no less influential in shaping the course of later

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<sup>622</sup> T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), xiii, and 142.

<sup>623</sup> Paul A. Ewing, “The Borderland Missions,” *Sunset*, October 1927, 24-26.

<sup>624</sup> Ewing, “Borderland Missions,” 24.

events,” than Fray Junipero Serra and the California missions.<sup>625</sup> Besides the Alamo, Ewing described San José as the most popular of the Texas missions, “largely because of its famous window” (Rosa’s Window).<sup>626</sup> His comments are noteworthy because he addressed his article to both motorists and train passengers, perhaps recognizing the halcyon days of rail travel were numbered. Additionally he raised the missions outside of California to a level on par with those in California, in a magazine published by a California railroad company (Southern Pacific).

### **San Antonio and Mission Revival Architecture**

As historian Richard Orsi astutely observes, “*Sunset* also helped to popularize the Spanish colonial revival, a movement after the 1890s to romanticize the mission period and to create a distinctive regional architectural and artistic style for the California and Southwest borderlands.”<sup>627</sup> In Texas, this style was often called “Alamo Revival” for the frequent use of the familiar gabled parapet motif, particularly on railroad stations.<sup>628</sup> *Sunset* magazine was not the only publication touting the missions as architectural muse. As sources of inspiration for design, images and descriptions of the Southwestern missions appeared in professional architectural and building trade journals and

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<sup>625</sup> Ibid.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>627</sup> Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 158-159.

<sup>628</sup> Jay C. Henry, *Architecture in Texas, 1895-1945* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 144-145.

magazines nationwide, carrying the romanticized ideas of the missions to an important audience who would incorporate motifs and themes from the missions into the designs for their clientele. Train stations, government buildings, and even private residences designed and constructed in the Southwest after 1890 frequently incorporated stylistic motifs and features originally seen on a mission chapel. And whether the missions were in California or in Texas, mentioned in professional journals or lifestyle magazines, they were effectively romanticized into what historian and journalist Carey McWilliams described as a “fantasy Spanish heritage.”<sup>629</sup> San Antonio’s missions were frequently illustrated in Southern Pacific advertisements and other promotional literature during this period, thus continuing the construction of collective memories.

Even before *Sunset* began glamorizing the mission period and the mythological Spanish past, architects and builders had begun looking at the missions. In 1897, the year prior to *Sunset*’s initial publication, journalist Arthur Howard Noll published his commentary on the Texas missions with some comparisons to those in California.<sup>630</sup> Noll opined the Alamo was the only San Antonio mission worth preserving, although he considered San José worthy of note as “one of the finest examples of mission architecture on the continent,” for its Churrigueresque façade, expertly carved by the famous Spanish artist “Huica” sent from Spain for that sole purpose. Noll declared, “This elaborately sculptured façade is one of the marks differentiating the style of this building from that of the missions of the Pacific coast, though all the Texas missions are

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<sup>629</sup> Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, new edition, updated by Matt S. Meier (New York: Praeger, 1990), 43-53.

<sup>630</sup> Arthur Howard Noll, “The Texas ‘Missions,’” *The American Architect and Building News*, August 28, 1897, 71. Accessed October 2, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series Online.

more distinctly Mooresque [*sic*] than those of California.”<sup>631</sup> Noll’s assertion that the Texas missions exhibited greater Moorish influence helped Orientalize both the missions and the eighteenth century builders. It also reinforced the foreign and exotic attraction of mission architecture to American architects, builders, and their clients.<sup>632</sup>

Noll was neither the first nor the last author to make the connection between Moorish influences on mission art and architecture. In 1903, architectural historian Olaf Cervin proclaimed, “The Christians in Spain showed repeatedly that they had learned a lesson in architecture from the Moors. In fact they learned it so well they never quite forgot it,” and brought what they learned across the Atlantic to a new world.<sup>633</sup> Like many visitors before, Cervin was enamored with the extensive decoration surrounding Rosa’s Window; and while he repeated speculative comments that the work was carved in Spain and then transported and reassembled in San Antonio, he listed “Huicar” as the most likely artist.<sup>634</sup> In 1904 *Builder* magazine correspondent William S. Rice suggested the “wonderful” mission buildings around San Antonio, Texas, were a “rare treat” for artists and architects alike.<sup>635</sup> Despite a lurid recounting of the 1836 Alamo massacre, his comments remained somewhat more detached than other journalists. Rice observed

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<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> For more on Orientalism, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition with a New Preface by the Author. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

<sup>633</sup> Olaf Z. Cervin, “The Spanish-Mexican Missions of the United States,” *The Architectural Record*, September 1903, 191. For more information on how the long Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula informed art and architecture in the Americas, see Manuel Toussaint, *Colonial Art in Mexico*, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth Wilder Weismann. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 5, and 125-128; and George Kubler and Martin Soria, *Art and Architecture of Spain and Portugal and Their American Dominions, 1500-1800* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959), 124-125.

<sup>634</sup> Cervin, “The Spanish-Mexican Missions,” 189.

<sup>635</sup> William S. Rice, “The Texas Mission Buildings,” *Builder*, March 1, 1904, 19. Accessed October 13, 2015, ProQuest American Periodicals Series Online.

that missions Concepción, San José, and Espada still hosted religious services. He also praised the “gorgeous frescoes,” and “graceful and daintily carved scrolls,” on San José’s “grand façade.” Rice lamented it “really seems too bad to see these picturesque old buildings falling in ruins without a hand lifted to preserve what in point of architectural beauty many Americans *would cross the Atlantic to see.*”<sup>636</sup> Rice challenged his fellows in the construction industry that inspiration from many exotic and picturesque sights could be found within the United States borders, rather than travelling abroad.

Harvey Partridge Smith arrived in San Antonio in 1915 and quickly became enamored with the romanticized interpretation of the city’s past. He reminisced on being appalled the early chamber of commerce booklets promoting San Antonio did not mention the history of the missions.<sup>637</sup> In 1918, he took it upon himself to write a corrective, which he published as *Romantic San Antonio*.<sup>638</sup> His descriptions of the city and the missions were running over with superlatives and his description of the 1836 Alamo siege and battle bordered on the fantastic (how could he be so authoritative of Crockett’s actions and final moments?). In the original version of his book, Santa Anna’s troops are derided as “greasers,” but by the 1936 edition, Smith omitted the racial slurs for more neutral “Mexicans” or “soldiers.”<sup>639</sup> Meanwhile, Mission San José

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<sup>636</sup> Ibid. Emphasis mine.

<sup>637</sup> Untitled and undated newspaper clipping, Vertical File-Biography- Smith, Harvey P., Sr. DRT Library.

<sup>638</sup> Harvey P. Smith, *Romantic San Antonio* (San Antonio: Jackson Printing Co., 1918). The book went through multiple editions.

<sup>639</sup> Smith, *Romantic San Antonio* (1918), 5; and Harvey P. Smith, *Romantic San Antonio: A Descriptive Journey to the Many Picturesque and Romantic Places In and Around Old San Antonio*, Rev. Ed. (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1936), 15-16.

went from being the “Pearl of all the missions in New Spain,” to being the “Queen of all the Missions of New Spain.”<sup>640</sup> Smith, who had been hired to rebuild San José as part of the Depression-era relief projects, proclaimed with little apparent modesty, “What is now the finest and grandest Spanish Mission in the United States once more takes on the appearance of its more glorious and prosperous days when San Jose was known as the ‘Queen of all the Missions in New Spain!’”<sup>641</sup> San José retains the cognomen “Queen of the Missions” into the twenty-first century as an indelible part of its mystique and aura.

Rexford Newcomb, a young professor of architecture, opined visitors would find that, “nothing holds more fascination for lovers of history and romance than the old Franciscan missions in and about the city.”<sup>642</sup> He limited his study to intricately carved façade of the Alamo, which he put on par with “Rosa’s Window” at San José or the California missions. Despite damage from time and battle, he described the column capitals as being “half Spanish, half Moorish in style, with perhaps even a touch of Indian;” something unique in his experience with Mission architecture. Newcomb was fascinated with the building’s façade to the point of ignoring the Alamo’s distinctive roofline. He estimated the church was never completed and included a drawing of what he speculated the original designer was trying to achieve.<sup>643</sup> Newcomb’s commentary reveals an early level of scholarly interest in the Texas missions, suggesting a closer relationship between popular and academic publications. Meanwhile, the missions were

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<sup>640</sup> Smith, *Romantic San Antonio* (1918), 10; and Smith, *Romantic San Antonio* (1936), 21.

<sup>641</sup> Smith, *Romantic San Antonio* (1936), 21.

<sup>642</sup> Rexford Newcomb, “A Remnant of Spanish Renaissance Architecture in Texas,” *Western Architect*, January 1919, 3. Newcomb would write several books on Spanish architecture in the United States.

<sup>643</sup> Newcomb, “Spanish Renaissance Architecture,” 4.

indeed neglected, but despite numerous assertions to the contrary, they were never completely forgotten, at least by architecture scholars and professionals.

Another local architect, Atlee B. Ayers, published one of the more comprehensive descriptions of the San Antonio missions, also in the trade journal, *The American Architect and The Architectural Review*.<sup>644</sup> Unfortunately, while Ayers' descriptions were indeed comprehensive, they were not the most accurate. He relied upon earlier works and wound up perpetuating some of the inaccuracies others had made, such as assigning Spanish ethnicity to the mythical Huicar (instead of Huizar), and crediting him with the design of all five San Antonio missions. On one hand, Ayers was not a historian, but an architect and businessman with a vested interest in keeping some of the myths alive; potential clients might be interested in the then-popular Mission Revival style. On the other hand, modern readers could wish he had employed better local sources. Nonetheless, at the time Ayers' essay had the authority of a practicing architect from San Antonio behind them. He opined San Antonio's five missions were the "most beautiful survivals of Spanish American architecture on this continent." These buildings represented "Eloquent memorials of the opening battle of the great conquest of the American wilderness, they remind is of a heroism and religious devotion now little remembered." Ayers emphasized the missions were built in a "quaint and peculiar style" and he noted their "Moorish" qualities that highlighted their exotic nature which might appeal to potential clients and fellow architects.<sup>645</sup> Ayers claimed the intricate

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<sup>644</sup> Atlee B. Ayers, "The Earliest Mission Buildings of San Antonio, Texas," *The American Architect and The Architectural Review*, August 27, 1924, 171-178. Harvey Smith worked for Ayers from 1915 to 1916.

<sup>645</sup> Ayers, "Earliest Mission Buildings," 171.



façade ornamentation was “considered by connoisseurs to be the finest gem of architectural ornamentation existing in America” and experts had averred the decoration around the renowned south sacristy window was “as perfect in form and workmanship as anything found in the cathedrals of the Old World;” a reminder that exotic sights could be found on this side of the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>646</sup>

The next year, F. S. Laurence toured the American Southwest and named San Antonio as one of two locales where visitors were enchanted by an “atmosphere of an ancient past.”<sup>647</sup> Although a photograph of the Alamo appeared with the article, Laurence omitted any mention of the 1836 battle and limited his attention to the aesthetic nature of the missions. He did indulge his imagination in conjuring a romantic scene and invited readers to “see the white robed monks of the old orders who ventured into this one time savage wilderness,” addressing an assembly of “their aboriginal wards garbed in all the brilliant coloring of their” blankets and headdresses, as a “Spanish sentry in mediaeval breastplate and helmet with his glittering halberd” stands watch: “Truly a subject for the palette of a Titian!”<sup>648</sup> Readers with equally vivid imaginations and less sense of anachronism for the armor and artist could be drawn into his construction of a mythological Spanish past at the missions.

Laurence opined San Antonio’s missions were something of a hidden gem; that not enough of the American populace and particularly too few professional architects

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<sup>646</sup> Ayers, “Earliest Mission Buildings,” 172-174.

<sup>647</sup> F. S. Laurence, “The Old Spanish Missions in and About San Antonio,” *The American Architect and the Architectural Review*, November 21, 1923, 445. Laurence was the Executive Secretary of the National Terra Cotta Society.

<sup>648</sup> Laurence, “Old Spanish Missions,” 448.

were aware of their existence. He considered the missions could “be the pride of any country and the source of superb inspiration for an architectural style” which was both native to the soil and well-suited to the climatic conditions of the southern tier of the country.<sup>649</sup> Later, Laurence concluded by reiterating his challenge to other architects working in the Southwest that the San Antonio missions were just as inspirational as those in California, and perhaps, he mused, even more so.<sup>650</sup> Here was an invitation to his professional brethren to draw upon San Antonio’s missions as they created buildings in the Mission Revival style. And while tapping into the missions to fuel one’s muse seems innocent enough, modern scholars must bear in mind the endemic Orientalism and cultural appropriation of the period. Conversely, Laurence and other architectural experts asserted Mission Revival was a native style, created within the boundaries of the United States, and thus an important part of the American stylistic heritage.<sup>651</sup>

### **Advertising “Romantic San Antonio” and Enticing Tourists to “See America First”**

From the closing decades of the nineteenth century, throughout much of the twentieth,

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<sup>649</sup> Laurence, “Old Spanish Missions,” 446.

<sup>650</sup> Laurence, “Old Spanish Missions,” 450.

<sup>651</sup> “The Spanish Tradition of the South,” *Architectural Forum*, November 1931, 586. This short article had more photographs than text, but all were of the Alamo and San José. For more on the historiographic debate over issues of racism and post-colonialism in Mission Revival (also known as Spanish Colonial Revival) architecture, see David Gebhard, “The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California, 1895-1930,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 26, no. 2 (May, 1967): 131-147, accessed June 7, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/988417>; and Abigail A. Van Slyck, “Mañana, Mañana: Racial Stereotypes and the Anglo Rediscovery of the Southwest’s Vernacular Architecture, 1890-1920,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 5 (1995): 95-108, accessed June 7, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3514248>.

drawings, pictures, photographs, and textual descriptions of the missions were used for commercial purposes. The images most frequently appeared on the printed page, which included advertisements appearing in newspapers and magazines, in addition to pamphlets and guide books. American Studies scholar Martin Padgett suggests sources such as guidebooks (and by extension advertisements) are “representations of travel” and are thus legitimate sources for the insight on possible motivations and expectations of the traveling public.<sup>652</sup> These images sold travel and tourism to San Antonio and the American Southwest; they additionally sold the particular modes of travel besides the specific companies specializing in the modes. As the public consumed these images, the advertisements encouraged the formation of collective memories based on the concept of a mythological Spanish past. About this same time, many of the same companies that created these advertisements pushed the idea that Americans should “see America first” as opposed to taking their vacations (and money) across the ocean to Europe. On January 25, 1906, in Salt Lake City, Utah, the initial “See America First” conference opened with “125 delegates representing boosters, businessmen, and politicians” from across the American West.<sup>653</sup> The goal of the organization that grew out of this meeting was to inculcate among Americans a sense of “virtuous consumption;” that by touring (and thus consuming) the nation, they would make themselves better Americans, with a

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<sup>652</sup> Martin Padgett, *Indian Country: Travels in the American Southwest, 1840-1935* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 2-4, 11-12, and 171-172. See also Herbert Gottfried, *Landscape in American Guides and View Books: Visual History of Touring and Travel* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 2.

<sup>653</sup> Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2001), 26.

stronger sense of national identity.<sup>654</sup> Those involved in the nascent tourist advertising industry colluded with boosters in producing advertisements that compared and contrasted American attractions with those in Europe.

Railway historian Michael Zega examined the advances in advertising made in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, especially the ad campaign used by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (better known as the Santa Fe). He notes that from the beginning, the “printed page” was the centerpiece. Advertisements placed in the mass media of the day (newspapers and magazines) were supplemented by tens of thousands of printed booklets, constituted the campaign’s “driving force.”<sup>655</sup> Zega additionally states that “the campaign’s creators sought to portray the landscape through which their line passed as *a land apart*—an exotic and romantic prelude to reaching California.” He also claims the Santa Fe was unique in linking “a mythic West” to marketing southern California.<sup>656</sup> Despite the “strikingly beautiful” view of the Southwest revealed in the advertising images, Zega astutely raises a serious issue: the images’ “foundation stem from a pervasive climate of thoughtless cultural appropriation that characterized the era” and calls modern viewers’ attention to the “exploitative attitude” that created them.<sup>657</sup> Although Zega makes some valid points, I believe his assertion that the Santa Fe was “unique” is mistaken, for the Southern Pacific Railroad was using a very similar strategy of illustrated advertisements in mass media

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<sup>654</sup> Shaffer, *See America First*, 4-6.

<sup>655</sup> Michael E. Zega, “Advertising the Southwest,” *Journal of the Southwest* 43, no. 3 (Autumn 2001):281.

<sup>656</sup> Zega, “Advertising the Southwest,” 283. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>657</sup> Zega, “Advertising the Southwest,” 282.

supplemented by booklets selling an equally romantic and exotic vision of a different part of the American Southwest that included Texas.

Because the Southern Pacific's premier line, the Sunset Route, ran further south than the Santa Fe, the images used in the advertising frequently emphasized the Spanish and Mexican character of the land, as opposed to images of the Pueblo Indians that made up the bulk of ads created for the Santa Fe. The graphic advertisements and booklets created to promote the Sunset Route could be just as exploitive of San Antonio's Mexican-American population, and just as easily portrayed San Antonio as a romantic and exotic playground for American elites from the more sophisticated Northeast. In 1911, Charles S. Fee, Southern Pacific's Passenger Traffic Manager described for *The Graphic Arts* magazine some of the various methods they used to get their message to consumers: from 1910 to 1911, thirty-one booklets with "artistic covers, beautiful photographs, and interestingly accurate information," had been issued with a combined print run of 1,358,000 copies. Fee asserted these booklets were available worldwide. (See Figure 6.1.) The booklets were used in conjunction with "post-cards, sky-signs, photographs, lantern slides, and motion pictures;" and although these were advertisements, Fee described them as "the highest examples of photographic art."<sup>658</sup> Orsi suggests the Southern Pacific enjoyed considerable marketing success from the power and value of advertising.<sup>659</sup> The Southern Pacific Passenger Department was responsible for the bulk of advertisements whether they appeared in the mass media or

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<sup>658</sup> Charles S. Fee, "How the Southern Pacific Advertises," *The Graphic Arts: A Magazine for Printers and the Use of Printing*, December 1911, 420. See also *Louisiana and Texas for the Winter Tourist* (New Orleans: Southern Pacific Company, 1911).

<sup>659</sup> Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 157-163.

as printed booklets. Fee did not mention any budget figures, but Orsi notes that between 1888 and 1911, Southern Pacific's advertising and printing budget ballooned from \$150,000 to \$1.8million.<sup>660</sup>



Figure 6.1 *Louisiana and Texas for the Winter Tourist*. Published by Southern Pacific. Scanned image courtesy of the Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.

<sup>660</sup> Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 163.

Large transcontinental railroads such as the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe had their own advertising and printing department to churn out advertisements, guide books, and other print materials by the thousands. Although smaller railroad companies did not always have those advantages, some collaborated with San Antonio's chamber of commerce which provided useful information to highlight the romantic and exotic attractions potential travelers would find by visiting the city. These smaller rail lines included the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas (better known as MKT, or "The Katy"); and the Iron Mountain (also known as the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern railroad which was affiliated with the Texas & Pacific line). The advertisements resembled those by Southern Pacific in emphasizing the romance and exotic adventures which awaited tourists who ventured to San Antonio. Generally, the ad featured an illustration (often of one of San Antonio's missions) with text highlighting the various attractions visitors would find including golf, hunting, fishing, polo, balls and banquets, all in a hospitable climate. Then would be text describing the railroad, train amenities, and sometimes, schedules. There would also be a name and address for San Antonio's chamber of commerce to whom potential visitors were encouraged to contact for additional information.<sup>661</sup>

Advertisements such as one the MKT (Katy) railroad placed in *Town and Country* magazine emphasized San Antonio's warm climate as opposed to the "chilly

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<sup>661</sup> The ad mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is a prime example; see *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 5, 1911, accessed April 2, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

North.” Sightseers would thrill upon visiting “the old Mission Churches” and Alamo. San Antonio was, “of all America, the oddest blending of modern utility and beauty, with the romance and heroism of the medieval.”<sup>662</sup> By 1911, MKT advertising personnel began collaborating with San Antonio officials such as one ad showing a fashionably-dressed couple looking down from a balcony as the text touted “eating al fresco in January!” While people in Northern parts of the country were “shivering” and “cooped-up” inside trying to keep warm, folks in San Antonio were enjoying summer activities such as golf and driving open through the country “where the historic old missions are waiting to be viewed.” For additional information, interested readers were directed to J. B. Carrington, secretary of the Publicity League for the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. Readers were also reminded “The best way to go is via the Katy.”<sup>663</sup> By December of 1911, the Publicity League had teamed up with additional lines including the Iron Mountain Route to promote the new winter tourist season.<sup>664</sup>

San Antonio city officials and business organizations created their own publications for tourists in addition to working with various railroads. Although ostensibly written for tourists, these read more like booster tracts soliciting business and emigration to the city. Hyperbole and superlatives permeated nearly every page, and in one example filled the title page and continued to the next: “Beautiful San Antonio: The Commercial and Industrial Center of the Southwest. The Great Health Resort of

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<sup>662</sup> *Town and Country*, January 20, 1906, 29. Accessed May 2, 2016, ProQuest American Periodicals Series Online.

<sup>663</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 22, 1911, accessed May 2, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

<sup>664</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 10, 1911, accessed May 2, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.



America. ‘The Largest City, in the Wealthiest County, in the Greatest State, in the Grandest Country, in the World.’” And on the next page quoted the recent 1900 Census as it boasted, “the Largest as it is also the Most Beautiful City in the State and the Healthiest City in the United States offering many splendid opportunities for Investments.”<sup>665</sup> The text predictably described the missions in a similar fashion: “Those who adore the historic, revel in the quaint old missions and go into ecstasies over the superior artistic skill displayed in the carving and statuary that so emphatically placards the proficiency of the workmen who executed them, notwithstanding that for nearly two centuries the destroying hand of time has been assiduous in efforts to ruin the delicate tracings,” name these buildings as favorite attractions.<sup>666</sup>

Other guidebooks published by municipal organizations hyped the romantic history of the city. One booklet detailed attractions to “appeal to your patriotic pride,” and “picturesque quaintness to delight your sense of the beautiful.”<sup>667</sup> Describing San Antonio as “pre-eminently the city of romance,” the authors compared the 1836 Alamo massacre to the 1854 ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’ at Balaclava, and noted the Missions in addition to San Fernando Cathedral breathed “the spirit of the Spaniard and the Moor

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<sup>665</sup> *Beautiful San Antonio: The Commercial and Industrial Center of the Southwest* (San Antonio: Business Men’s Club, 1906), cover and page 2. San Antonio Guidebook Collection, 1890-ca. 1979, DRT6, DRT Library. Hereafter cited as “San Antonio Guidebook Collection.” However for a contravening viewpoint, see Char Miller, “Tourist Trap: Visitors and the Modern San Antonio Economy,” in Hal K. Rothman, ed. *The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 212-217, for the mercenary ways San Antonio made money off people suffering from tuberculosis.

<sup>666</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>667</sup> L. F. Kelly and S. Williamson, *Beautiful San Antonio* (San Antonio: Bureau of Advertising, ca. 1910), 2. San Antonio Guidebook Collection, DRT Library.

in survivals of continental architecture of wonderful beauty.”<sup>668</sup> Taking a page from the “See America First” crowd, Kelly and Williamson assured tourists that from wherever they came, “you will find in the historic traditions of old San Antonio that which will quicken your patriotism and make you a more loyal American.”<sup>669</sup>

The prosperity of the 1920s encouraged railroads as well as San Antonio’s chamber of commerce to increase the level and graphic nature of advertising. The primary themes within the ads, romance and adventure, changed little, although patriotism and nativism were also much in evidence. One striking Southern Pacific advertisement from 1921 revealed the confluence of these themes. The illustration featured a figure in buckskins and a raccoon-skin hat taking cover behind the unmistakable gabled parapet topping the Alamo façade, shooting at unseen enemies below. The large text nearest his head cried “Remember the Alamo! What Davy Crockett won for you today in San Antonio.”<sup>670</sup> Additional text claimed with the loss of the Alamo martyrs, “in the bravest battle against odds that Americans ever fought, the winning of an empire began.” Curiously there was no comparison of the Alamo to Thermopylae as so frequently happened in many other travel narratives. The ad further claimed Sam Houston rallied his troops, “routed Santa Anna and forever removed the Mexican menace from Texas soil.” The ad writer assured readers the Alamo still stood

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<sup>668</sup> Ibid.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid., 22. See also *San Antonio* (San Antonio: Chamber of Commerce of San Antonio, ca. 1920). San Antonio Guidebook Collection, DRT Library.

<sup>670</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, February 1, 1921, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Wall Street Journal.

as “a historic shrine which every liberty-loving American delights to visit.”<sup>671</sup> Finally, there is the issue of how “every liberty-loving American” who “delights to visit” the Alamo is defined. Certainly in the early 1920s, “American” was understood to be white, male, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. Any mixed feelings the Tejano population or other Mexican-Americans might have toward the Alamo as a symbol of Anglo oppression were ignored.<sup>672</sup>

Stories of the Alamo were not new to Anglo-Americans during this time, so the graphics and text of this particular advertisement easily tap into collective memories of Crockett and the Alamo. Decades before Fess Parker and John Wayne, Anglo-Americans knew Davy wore a raccoon-skin cap, and they knew what the Alamo looked like (or at least they knew what the Alamo looked like for them, in their time; not when Crockett and his fellows actually fought and died there). Also, while the term “empire” is generally disparaged by modern academics, in the early 1920s such was not the case. Crockett’s self-sacrifice at the Alamo was essential for Anglo expansion across the continent.

One feature or theme that often appeared in various advertisements was the caricature of the Mexican-American population. The images were not as offensive as they could have been; generally men in large sombreros and *sarapes*, sometimes with

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<sup>671</sup> Ibid.

<sup>672</sup> Anthropologists Holly Beachley Brear and Richard R. Flores have much to say on these topics in their respective books on the Alamo. See Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 24-44, 106-120, and 138-139; and Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 15-34, and 157-161.

guitars serenading their señorita, wrapped in her *rebozo* with an ornate *peineta* and *mantilla*. Images of one of the missions (usually Concepción or San José) appeared as a backdrop to the scene. Romantic, perhaps, but such images nonetheless stereotyped local minorities as exotic Other, especially when contrasted to a fashionably-dressed Anglo family.<sup>673</sup> Forays by tourists into San Antonio's "Mexican Quarter" had appeared in travel narratives for decades prior and the stereotypes of Mexican-Americans formed then carried into the new century. If the northern elites found the Anglo population of San Antonio provincial, the unfortunate denizens of the Mexican Quarter (in reality a notorious slum) were sometimes considered barely civilized, "many of them have not yet arrived at the dignity of a modern cookstove."<sup>674</sup> Advertisements of this time unfortunately reinforced or exploited racial and ethnic stereotypes to sell products and services, and by virtue of being placed in popular mass media, spread the stereotypes to a larger audience.

After the stock market crash of 1929 and onset of the Great Depression, some of the railroads changed their advertising campaigns. Images of San Antonio's missions remained frequent backgrounds, but the text often stressed economy. The Katy railroad advertised San Antonio an "inexpensive, different vacation," or "an unusual inexpensive vacation."<sup>675</sup> Despite lower fares, "the lure of Old Spain" with the "Spanish Missions,

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<sup>673</sup> *New York Times*, January 18, 1924, and December 8, 1924, accessed June 15, 2016, ProQuest Historical New York Times; and *Wall Street Journal*, March 31, 1927, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Wall Street Journal.

<sup>674</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, November 9, 1912, accessed June 15, 2016, ProQuest Historical Christian Science Monitor.

<sup>675</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 4, 1931, and December 18, 1932, accessed May 2, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

centuries old,” replete with an image of a guitar-strumming vaquero remained a stock graphic for the Katy.<sup>676</sup> The Southern Pacific meanwhile refocused its ads mostly on its home state of California. A new train from Chicago to El Paso called the “Golden State Limited” bypassed San Antonio, reduced travel time, and fares.<sup>677</sup>

With these shifts in advertising strategy and particularly to offset potential losses of tourists, the City of San Antonio’s Municipal Information Bureau mounted its own ad campaigns. The style and text highlighted similar attractions as those mentioned in guidebooks and railroad ads: congenial weather, the Spanish Missions, the Alamo, outdoor sports, and economic opportunities. The ads appeared in similar venues as those placed by railroads, including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*. Some of the text from selected ads bears further scrutiny for what it says about how San Antonio presented itself to potential tourists. One early ad beckoned tourists to come “south with the sun to San Antonio.” Another ad assured visitors “an old world charm lingers” on the “Road to Romance” in the city “200 years young!”<sup>678</sup> A curious advertisement appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*; a large outline of the State of Texas showed two rail lines crossing each other at San Antonio. At the same time, a drawing representing a Spanish conquistador with metal cuirass, morion, flag and sword stood above a figure in tights, cape, plumed chapeau, and rapier (representing the French). The accompanying text proclaimed San Antonio to be “At the Crossroads of Nations,”

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<sup>676</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 29, 1935, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

<sup>677</sup> *New York Times*, May 15 1933, and December 5, 1933, accessed June 16, 2016, ProQuest Historical New York Times.

<sup>678</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 5, 1930, and February 19, 1930, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

the city occupied a “spot so lovely that Old World nations warred to possess it two centuries ago!” The French were labeled “intrepid” while the Spanish were “arrogant.” The Franciscans solved the crisis by planting missions, thus claiming the region for New Spain.<sup>679</sup> The idea that Texas was considered then a “crossroads of nations” reveals a high degree of perceptivity, and remains valid today for Borderland Studies specialists. The missions, as outposts of the Spanish Empire, as sacred spaces, as community centers, and as tourist attractions, have acted as borders for different populations for nearly three centuries. The romantic and mythological Spanish past sold vacations to the city. Another city-sponsored advertisement used the *espadaña* of Mission Espada as a backdrop to declare San Antonio as the “Most interesting Southern city.” Declaring there was “romance in the very name” of the city, the ad conjured visions of “Tall palms sigh in the soft breeze . . . venerable missions sit dreaming of past glories,” to attract winter tourists.<sup>680</sup>

In addition to romantic history, San Antonio’s advertising campaign accentuated Anglo patriotism. A drawing of the Alamo façade stood over text that claimed “Every American should see San Antonio.” As above, modern scholars need not look too long before recognizing an Anglo audience was the target demographic. The advertisement proclaimed the “missions—outposts of civilization in America—were old when the Declaration of Independence was signed!” However, as mentioned in an earlier chapter of this dissertation, even by 1776, Mission San José had not yet been completed as the

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<sup>679</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1930, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Los Angeles Times.

<sup>680</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1930, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

ornate church seen today. Just because the first mission, San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) was founded in 1718 (only 58 years prior to the founding of the United States), San José in 1720, and the others in the 1730s, does not mean the church buildings as seen today were completed within a very short time. This is perhaps the most common misconception made regarding the missions and was likely the result of ignorance of medieval and baroque styles. It also comes as no surprise that the ad writers were overplaying their hand. Hyperbole and superlatives are regular tools, and San Antonio offers many interesting and beautiful sights, but some of the ads raise the issue of unreasonable expectations. Other attractions mentioned in the ad included the Alamo “where patriots died for Texas liberty,” and a “cosmopolitan capital” that combined the “best traditions of colonial Spain, the old South, and the robust West.”<sup>681</sup>

In the late 1930s, San Antonio embarked on a new advertising campaign with the slogan, “Picturesque San Antonio: Where Life is Different!” In his introductory remarks to the 1939 report to city mayor C. K. Quinn and other city commissioners, Frank Huntress, chair of the Municipal Advertising Commission, touted his committee’s success introducing “this country’s tourists, investors, developers and homeseekers” to the city’s numerous advantages. The campaign was a comprehensive effort to market San Antonio and its attractions via ads in nationally circulated newspapers and magazines, “several complete series of motion pictures,” as well as “numerous illustrated articles featuring San Antonio . . . published in various newspapers and

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<sup>681</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 12, 1930, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune.

magazines.” Huntress also credited the local advertising firm of Wyatt, Aniol, & Auld for “several striking booklets” full of “highly intelligent and forceful copy and illustrations” to broadcast the city’s charms.<sup>682</sup>

This report revealed that between April, 1938 and May, 1939, the publicity campaign distributed weekly stories on San Antonio “to over 500 newspapers throughout the United States. Special stories and articles were prepared for general and trade publications,” including photographs.<sup>683</sup> The results were impressive. Over 34,000 inquiries asking for information on San Antonio came from the U.S. alone (of the top three, New York and Illinois had over 3,000 each while Pennsylvania had just below 3,000). Over 1,100 inquiries were received from sixty-seven foreign territories with Canadians submitting the overwhelming majority (over 600 while the next highest was England with 58 requests; Mexico sent 38 inquiries).<sup>684</sup>

Those requesting information were sent a free thirty-two page booklet with a colorful cover illustration of a smartly-dressed Anglo couple taking pictures in front of the Alamo with the campaign’s slogan prominently featured. According to the ad commission’s report, the booklet told the “story of the romance and adventure; the unending variety of things to do in sunshine-filled days; the quaintness and old-world atmosphere; [and] the curious blending of the old and new. . .”<sup>685</sup> There was the typical

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<sup>682</sup> “Building Greater San Antonio by Advertising: A Report of the Activities of the Municipal Advertising Commission of San Antonio, Texas for Period January, 1938 thru May, 1939.” No page numbering. San Antonio Guidebook Collection, DRT Library.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid.

<sup>685</sup> Ibid.



glorification of the Alamo martyrs, as well as the description of the city's Mexican-American population as exotic Other, whose women "grind their corn and pat out tortillas by hand."<sup>686</sup> The booklet also informed potential tourists of the four Franciscan missions "when priest and soldier together tamed a wilderness. Restoration has left unchanged their scarred and sacred walls. Age has mellowed their intrinsic beauty and made them monuments of a past never to be reclaimed."<sup>687</sup> San José was described as "Queen of the Missions" and directed tourists' attention to the ornate façade and Rose Window, as bells still called the faithful to worship.<sup>688</sup> While this was the usual tourist information, over 35,000 copies of this booklet were distributed. Even if only a fraction then made their vacation to San Antonio, romantic descriptions of the missions had been consumed by many, many readers.

The commission's report claimed just over 51 per cent of visitors were coming to San Antonio for the first time and they stayed an average of eighteen days (but the report also mentioned some winter visitors stayed up to five months). One significant statistic showed 78 per cent of visitors arrived by automobile, while only 18 per cent arrived by rail.<sup>689</sup> This marked a significant shift away from rail travel and offers a plausible explanation of why fewer advertisements from railroads touting passenger service to San Antonio could be found after 1940. Those in charge of publicizing San Antonio's charms would put the money where they believed it would be more effective.

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<sup>686</sup> *Picturesque San Antonio: Where Life is Different* (San Antonio: Municipal Information Bureau, ca. 1939), no page numbering, est. pages 1 and 10. San Antonio Guidebook Collection, DRT Library.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>689</sup> "Building Greater San Antonio by Advertising."

The Municipal Advertising Commission had a budget of just over \$96,000. Of that, ad space in newspapers and magazines combined took \$51,000. They spent another \$10,000 on printed matter including booklets, posters, and pamphlets.<sup>690</sup> The commission spent \$9,800 for ad space in the popular *Saturday Evening Post*; the highest amount for magazines. Other ads appeared in *National Geographic*, *Time*, *Life*, with *Newsweek* rounding out the top five in terms of dollars spent. Additional titles included *New Yorker*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, and *Field and Stream*. The *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Times* claimed the top two spots for money spent on newspaper ads. These ads represented a wide geographic distribution from Boston down to Miami, and westward to Omaha; however there were no titles west of Denver.<sup>691</sup> The target audience of potential tourists was clearly Eastern and Mid-western rather than west of the Rocky Mountains. Similarly the city obviously learned from Southern Pacific's earlier successes using multiple formats as well as selling a romantic vision of the city's heritage as the ideal spot for a holiday.

Additional romanticized images of one particular mission were communicated to the nation and beyond through the medium of motion pictures and related product advertising. For historians Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, the “nationalization of the Alamo . . . the event that transformed it from a Texas shrine to an American one,” was the 1954 television broadcasts by Walt Disney on the (highly fictionalized) life of

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<sup>690</sup> Ibid.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid.

Davy Crockett.<sup>692</sup> These broadcasts were released on the big screen the next year. It is my contention, and I have tried to demonstrate previously in this chapter as well as previous chapters, that the Alamo had been co-opted as a national symbol decades before actor Fess Parker donned his 'coonskin cap. Nevertheless, Disney's 1955 movie, followed just five years later by John Wayne's, are two of the most substantial forces that created a national phenomenon of the Alamo that is impossible to ignore and complicates efforts to discuss San Antonio's missions as a whole.

The Alamo has been the subject of motion pictures almost since the beginning of the medium. Movies, especially those that claim to reflect historical people and events, often tell us more about the times in which they were made than give us an accurate picture of the time period in which the story is set. Roberts and Olson opine that Disney's Alamo picture is more about the Cold War and the perceived need of strong, American heroes such as Crockett.<sup>693</sup> Conversely, anthropologist Richard Flores gives the Disney movie short shrift and insists John Wayne's portrayal of Crockett said more about patriotism and bravery in the face of seemingly overwhelming (Communist) menace and had greater impact on Americans' psyche.<sup>694</sup>

One of the earliest movies on the Alamo which still exists is Triangle Film's *Martyrs of the Alamo* from 1915. A silent film, textual descriptions were spliced between scenes of live action. Racial and ethnic stereotypes separated the noble,

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<sup>692</sup> Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, *A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 230.

<sup>693</sup> Roberts and Olson, *A Line in the Sand*, 238-243.

<sup>694</sup> Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 95-130.

chivalrous Anglos from the debauched, lecherous Mexicans. According to Flores, William Christy Cabanne co-wrote and directed *Martyrs*; and although Cabanne had worked with D. W. Griffith for several years, there was little evidence that Griffith's cinematic abilities rubbed off on Cabanne.<sup>695</sup> This movie could easily be forgotten had stills not appeared in a guide booklet issued by Southern Pacific. The text of the booklet wallows in maudlin descriptions of patriotism and self-sacrifice as the necessary prelude to civilization in Texas.<sup>696</sup> Readers are invited to visit San Antonio for its history as well as its opportunities for golf, hunting, and fishing.<sup>697</sup> The missions received three pages of their own to describe how "These interesting, ancient ruins speak in their own way of America's early history. They tell a wonderful story of the efforts and faith of the Spanish monks" to bring Christianity and civilization to a benighted people.<sup>698</sup> The skirmish that occurred near Mission Concepción in the War for Texas Independence was elevated nearly to a status of Gettysburg. Meanwhile, the "beautiful carvings" which decorate the architecture of Mission San José were credited to "the Spanish sculptor Huica, who came across the seas for that purpose."<sup>699</sup> The booklet was well illustrated throughout, including several stills from *Martyrs*, and other photographs of the missions. A note on the front cover acknowledges Southern Pacific's appreciation for being able to use the "historic scenes" from the "classic" film.<sup>700</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 98-108.

<sup>696</sup> *San Antonio* (Houston: Southern Pacific Lines, ca. 1916), 2-3.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>698</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, cover page.

Actor John Wayne made no bones about his motivation in making an epic film lasting more than three hours and costing over \$12 million: national pride. In interviews with Hollywood columnist Hedda Hopper, Wayne expressed his longtime desire to make a cinematic version of the siege and battle of the Alamo, “this heroic story is not fiction, it happened only 124 years ago, and it belongs to people everywhere who have an interest in a thing called freedom.”<sup>701</sup> He ripped into both Presidential candidates, Richard Nixon and John Kennedy, for not hyping what he perceived as the United States’ superlative advantages and lifestyle at every turn.<sup>702</sup> Such populist nativism appealed to a considerable portion of the population.

### **The Missions and Big Events: Centennial ’36 and HemisFair ’68**

This section of the chapter briefly shifts away from physical remains of buildings or newspaper graphics, and examines the discourse related to two significant twentieth-century events; major expositions which had a significant impact on cementing the idea of San Antonio’s missions as “sites of memory” in the mind of the American public.<sup>703</sup>

The first was the Texas Centennial in 1936. Festivities and dedications occurred across

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<sup>701</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1960, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Los Angeles Times.

<sup>702</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1960, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical Los Angeles Times.

<sup>703</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, English-language edition ed. and foreword by Lawrence D. Kritzman. 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), v.1, xvii.

the state, and the exposition in Dallas drew millions of visitors. However, much of the discourse reflected the many decades of conceptualizing the missions as exotic ruins, a foreign heritage appropriated by Anglos, and the Tejano population as Orientalized Other. It was the culmination of a century of Anglos' unwillingness to treat the people of Mexican descent living in Texas as equal partners in the narrative of Texas history. While we focus on discourse here, remember the missions did receive some of the repairs and renovations they badly needed during this time, and were highlighted as tourist attractions, as well as being used in marketing materials. The second exposition, HemisFair '68, was more of a celebration of multiculturalism as understood in the 1960s. It was held in San Antonio and the Catholic Archbishop, Robert E. Lucey, was able to provide similar benefits for the missions: money for repairs and publicity.

On November 6, 1923, advertising consultant Theodore Price delivered an address to a meeting of the Advertising Clubs of the Tenth District at Corsicana, just south of Dallas, Texas. He opened his discussion by apologizing for being a New Yorker presuming to tell his audience how best to market Texas in such a way that would attract business and investment capital to the state. Nonetheless, Price admonished his listeners that besides the abundant natural resources of Texas, "you have something else whose value and whose appeal I doubt whether you yourselves appreciate. It is your gloriously romantic history." He strongly urged his audience that a celebration similar to the various world's fairs held in other major cities, in honor of the centennial of the first land titles being awarded to Stephen F. Austin in 1924 was needed to show the world what Texas had to offer, "[in] mere bigness it could and should be

made to exceed anything else of the kind ever attempted.” While 1924 came and went without the proposed celebration, his words had fallen on fertile ground and in 1936, the state commemorated the centennial of its independence from Mexico with a celebration on the scale Price had urged twelve years before.<sup>704</sup> However, Price was mistaken if he truly believed Texas had never harnessed the power of romantic history in marketing the state’s advantages for business, investments, and tourism. As we have seen, a heavily romanticized version of Texas history had been standard fodder in advertisements and travel narratives for many years, particularly as the San Antonio publicity department cooperated with railroad advertising departments.

By 1935 Texas was well on its way to host a centennial celebration in a style Price surely would have approved. However, in preparing the narrative of Texas history for this oversize celebration, professional, critical history lost out to collective memory (notwithstanding the existing historiography), or as historian Kenneth Ragsdale bluntly states, “Texans were about to be subjected to the greatest historical brainwashing in the state’s history.”<sup>705</sup> Literary scholar John Morán González concurs to the degree that the narrative of Texas history as told at Centennial celebrations marginalized those Texans of Mexican descent and justified most any measure of discrimination against them.<sup>706</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> Theo H. Price, “What Texas has to Advertise and How to Advertise It,” *Commerce and Finance*, November 14, 1923, 2107-2109; also Kenneth B. Ragsdale, *Centennial '36: The Year America Discovered Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), 3-5, and 19.

<sup>705</sup> Ragsdale, *Centennial '36*, 39.

<sup>706</sup> John Morán González, *Border Renaissance: The Texas Centennial and the Emergence of Mexican American Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 6-11.

González's charges that Centennial narratives marginalized Tejanos are borne out by looking no further than the official guidebook from the fairgrounds in Dallas, site of the official exposition and celebration. Hyperbole and superlatives saturated this official story of Texas. From this booklet, readers learned that while "the saga of Texas began with the conquistadores," in actuality, "the debt of the free citizens of Texas today is a debt to tall men with long rifles, American frontiersmen."<sup>707</sup> In describing the fair as "An Empire on Parade," the guidebook bragged, "no chapter of American history is richer in romance, dramatic highlights, and stirring events." Readers were also promised, "against a background of history made brilliant by the story of the mission priest and Spanish Don, pioneer and frontiersman, the sharp imprint of Texas will be revealed."<sup>708</sup> The exhibits and shows continually reinforced the collective memory of Texas as a wilderness saved only by the interventions of Anglos. At the Cavalcade of Texas, the triumphalist interpretation continued as an exhibit "written and produced as a living saga of the inexorable advance of civilization, by blood and iron and the enduring will of the white man, in what was once only the wild land of the naked savage." Interestingly, this particular exhibit considered all European explorers (even Spanish) as "white."<sup>709</sup> Finally, at The Old West exhibit, a replica of the Alamo (not quite to full scale) contained numerous documents and relics, and reproduced for visitors "the story of the epic battle of the Alamo, one of the most tragic and yet most glorious in all history." This display contained (with no apparent sense of irony) "placards and tablets

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<sup>707</sup> *The Official Guide Book, Texas Centennial Exposition, June 6-Nov. 29, 1936* (Dallas: Texas Centennial Central Exposition, ca. 1936), 9.

<sup>708</sup> *Official Guide Book*, 15.

<sup>709</sup> *Official Guide Book*, 63.



marking the corresponding spots where various Texas heroes fell in their desperate, hopeless, resistance against fifteen times their number of Mexican troops.”<sup>710</sup>

Other advertisements, mementos, pamphlets, posters, and ephemera told similar hagiographic stories. Advertisements suggested interesting vacation spots statewide such as beaches, dude ranches, “foreign color,” mountains, and missions.<sup>711</sup> A brochure entitled, *All America is Invited to Visit Texas’ Centennial Celebration*, oozed similar hyperbole. Texas was divided by cardinal directions with South Texas (including San Antonio) being the “Cradle of Texas History, Rich in Romance.” Only the limited space prevented a more lurid account of the 1836 Alamo battle. Visitors were also directed to the other four missions south of town.<sup>712</sup> Predictably, promotional material was created for Texas schools including a sourcebook to provide elementary teachers with programs and lesson plans for the Centennial year. However, it was the typical romanticized, ethnocentric history as usual. Half of the section on “Spanish Texas” was taken up with

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<sup>710</sup> *Official Guide Book*, 97.

<sup>711</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 5, 1936, accessed May 2, 2016, ProQuest Historical Chicago Tribune; and *New York Times*, April 5, and April 19, 1936, and May 31, 1936, accessed April 29, 2016, ProQuest Historical New York Times.

<sup>712</sup> *All America is Invited to Visit Texas’ Centennial Celebration* (Dallas: State Headquarters, Texas Centennial Celebrations, 1935), no page numbering. DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX. Hereafter cited, DeGolyer, SMU.

<sup>713</sup> Wylie A. Parker, *Here is Texas: A Sourcebook of Centennial Program Material* (San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1936), 55.

one of the legends of Rosa's Window at Mission San José, according to which the King of Spain's favorite artist, Pedro Huizar, was sent to decorate the mission. His sweetheart, Rosa, followed a few years later but died before she arrived.<sup>713</sup> The façade of San José was also featured on one of the posters created to promote the Centennial celebrations. The poster image shows a procession of people in what appears to be traditional Mexican garb approaching the main doors for a religious service. (See Figure 6.2.) Although it is hardly an insulting stereotype, there is an implication of the Spanish colonial era being 'frozen-in-time' and safe to be appropriated into Anglos' concept of a mythological Spanish past.

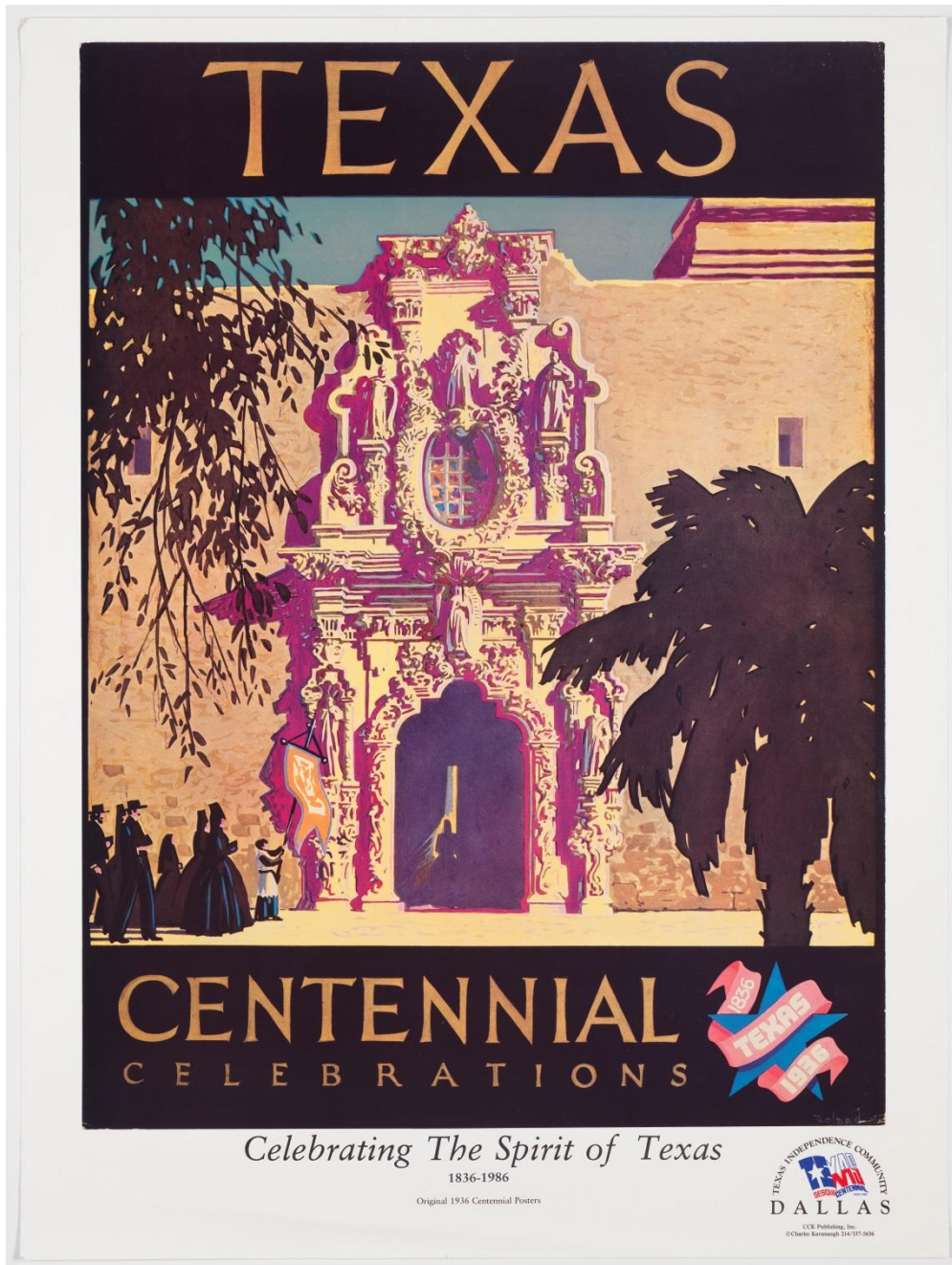


Figure 6.2 Texas Centennial Celebration poster, Mission San José. Scanned image courtesy of the DeGolyer Library, SMU, Dallas, TX. Although this is a 1986 reprint for the Texas Sesquicentennial, other than the text in the lower white border, there are no substantive differences from the original 1936 version.

Some of the anti-Mexican racism of the 1930s was a ‘sin-of-omission,’ in that Spanish and Mexican accomplishments were ignored or appropriated into the Anglo progressive historical narrative. Other times, the racism was more open and blatant. The Centennial narratives were the natural sum of one hundred years of Anglos constructing collective memories of a land brimming with natural resources and limitless opportunity, but occupied by a benighted, exotic Other. According to the narrative, Providence smiled on the Anglos as they audaciously seized the land, thus redeeming it and exploiting it to its fullest potential. While some of the Centennial narratives recognized Texas did have a deep multicultural history, the images and descriptions contained the ultimately exploitive and paternalistic tone of a conqueror, not an equal. As far as the actual mission buildings in San Antonio were concerned, they received significant attention in terms of money (both state and federal) and resources for the constant maintenance and repairs old buildings require, including \$75,000 for restoration work at the Alamo, and \$20,000 for Mission San José.<sup>714</sup>

Thirty-two years after Centennial, another exposition took place providing another opportunity to showcase San Antonio’s missions. This exposition was important for two main reasons: first, the exposition took place in San Antonio rather than Dallas; and second, Catholic Archbishop Robert E. Lucey had taken a special interest in the missions years before and dedicated the resources to insure they made a positive impression on visitors. The focus of HemisFair’68 was entirely different than that of

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<sup>714</sup> Ragsdale, *Centennial '36*, 113.

Centennial'36. While the earlier exposition had been a celebration of all things (Anglo-) Texan, with the intention of selling Texas to the nation and beyond, the latter gathering at San Antonio was a celebration of the many nations, cultures, and peoples of the Western Hemisphere.

Archbishop Robert E. Lucey was the driving force in the second third of the twentieth-century in restoring San Antonio's missions and promoting them as tourist attractions. A native of California, his great love for the West coast missions easily transferred to his new appointment in San Antonio.<sup>715</sup> During his term as archbishop, from 1941 to 1969, he dedicated nearly \$300,000 on the missions, by acquiring surrounding property, repairs, conservation, and renovation. Religious scholar Thomas Bremer asserts Lucey's dedication "to preserve the missions for the glorification of the Church's heritage in San Antonio also had a touristic dimension to it. Indeed, the archbishop sought to praise the Church's past by appealing to the needs, tastes, and desires of tourists." Part of insuring the missions appealed to tourists was to give Ethel Wilson Harris at Mission San José nearly free rein to impose her own ideas of what she believed the tourists wanted to see, even if it appeared to subordinate the church's role as sacred space.<sup>716</sup>

Archbishop Lucey is worthy of additional attention. He was born into a working-class, Irish Catholic, home in Los Angeles. The tragic death of his father when Robert was a young boy, along with one of his early assignments out of seminary

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<sup>715</sup> Thomas S. Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists: The Borderlands of Religion and Tourism in San Antonio* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 84.

<sup>716</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 86.

inculcated a strong sense of social justice and activism.<sup>717</sup> Lucey believed his activism on behalf of the working class prevented his advancement in Los Angeles, so he was shipped off to be the Bishop of Amarillo, Texas in 1934, where he discovered the ugliness of anti-Hispanic racism. Being adamantly pro-union and pro-civil rights did not endear him to many in his flock (even some of his own clergy). In 1941, he moved up the hierarchy and away to San Antonio as Archbishop.<sup>718</sup> Upon his arrival in San Antonio, he made restoring the old missions a top priority. He believed the mission enterprise “gave historical legitimation to Catholic claims to having played a fundamental role in making the American nation, especially by blazing the trail of civilization in what Lucey regarded as the wilderness of the savage western lands.”<sup>719</sup> Lucey’s outspoken nature regarding civil rights would later be recognized by President Harry Truman who “asked him to serve on a blue ribbon panel investigating conditions” for both migratory workers and *bracero* foreign laborers in the United States.<sup>720</sup>

In addition to directing significant funds for repairs to mission buildings, Lucey’s public rhetoric underscored his admiration for the missions and missionaries, as well as his conviction in the dignity of the Mexican-Americans who worshipped in the old structures. In a speech delivered in Austin, on April 24, 1952, to the Catholic

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<sup>717</sup> Saul E. Bronder, *Social Justice and Church Authority: The Public Life of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 6-9, and 21-30. Bronder specifically credits the anti-capitalist encyclicals from Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI emphasizing the inherent dignity of laboring classes for inspiring Lucey’s interest in social justice issues.

<sup>718</sup> Stephen A. Privett, *The U. S. Catholic Church and its Hispanic Members: The Pastoral Vision of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1988), 3-13.

<sup>719</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 93.

<sup>720</sup> Bronder, *Social Justice and Church Authority*, 76-80; also, Carlos Kevin Blanton, *George I. Sánchez: The Long Fight for Mexican American Immigration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 145-149.

Conference on the Spanish-Speaking People of Texas, he proclaimed, “Texas is Proud of its Spanish-Mexican Heritage.” Lucey observed that Texas was “the meeting place of two cultures, two ways of living. . . . The two have blended in a new culture enriched by both Anglo and Mexican elements to create the Texan.”<sup>721</sup> He also pointed out, “We advertise Texas as a tourist playground to vie with California and Florida,” and listed San Antonio’s missions, San Fernando Cathedral, and La Villita among the most popular attractions. Lucey then reminded his listeners that without Mexico, the Alamo, “marked as number one tourist spot,” would not exist. Similarly, Lucey astutely noted, “the Spanish style of architecture that is so evident in Texas and that has captured the fancy of many who live in the north and east. Texas might argue with California as to which state should have the honors in claiming it for its own and Texas may resent the labeling of it as ‘California style’ architecture. But the honors go to Mexico and to Spain and it is the heritage of our Mexican-American fellow citizens.”<sup>722</sup> These observations emphasized to his audience both the debt Anglo Texans owe to Tejanos, as well as the importance of San Antonio’s missions for tourists, and their appeal beyond state borders.

San Antonio’s Spanish missions meet French historian Pierre Nora’s definition of “sites of memory,” as being “significant entities” which became “symbolic elements of the memorial heritage” of the community.<sup>723</sup> Lucey doubtlessly would have agreed. Bremer argues “Lucey’s desire to make the missions into aesthetically pleasing and

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<sup>721</sup> Robert E. Lucey. “Speech, Catholic Conference on the Spanish-Speaking People of Texas, Austin, Texas, April 24, 1952,” in *Addresses, 1952*, Robert E. Lucey Papers, Catholic Archives of San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas. Underline in the original. (Hereafter cited as Lucey Papers, CASA.)

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>723</sup> Nora, *Realms of Memory*, xvii.

plausibly authentic space coincided with his understanding of them as symbolic monuments to the ‘precious heritage’ of Texas and the nation. He sought to make the missions not only sacred sites of the Catholic Church but also important tourist attractions where visitors could come to appreciate their heritage.”<sup>724</sup> Nora discusses the complexity of sites of memory that are at once “material, symbolic, and functional.”<sup>725</sup> Lucey’s efforts to restore the missions reflected each of Nora’s three facets as he tried to restore the material remains while calling attention to their functions as sacred space and symbolic heritage of the city. In a speech he evidently recycled for multiple occasions, Lucey argued that while the missions belonged “to the Church,” they were “invested with a public interest; they are a precious heritage—spiritual, religious, and historic, they are deathless monuments of the early days of this dear and sunny land.”<sup>726</sup> Finally, Bremer asserts Lucey’s efforts on behalf of the San Antonio missions were done “to build a tourist attraction that would rival the missions of his beloved California.”<sup>727</sup>

Despite the fact that the year of HemisFair marked the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the city of San Antonio, the exhibits and physical campus where it was set up, accentuated the city’s future. Although the city reaped advantages from the positive publicity that came with the exposition and gained a large convention center built

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<sup>724</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 92.

<sup>725</sup> Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 14.

<sup>726</sup> “Sermon in Honor of the Restoration of La Bahia Presidio, Goliad, Texas, Sunday, October 8, 1967.” Addresses, 1967. Lucey Papers, CASA. Bremer quotes this phrase nearly verbatim and cites a different speech from 1973. See Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 92 and 176, note 122.

<sup>727</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 92.



expressly for the fair, the benefits were not shared by all of San Antonio's citizens.<sup>728</sup>

The land where HemisFair was built was a slum, and while city fathers called its removal urban renewal, the occupants nevertheless lost their homes. David Montejano asserts Anglo-owned businesses were the largest beneficiaries; and San Antonio Congressional Representative Henry B. Gonzales, a driving force behind HemisFair, bristled when attention was drawn to the endemic problems of race and poverty.<sup>729</sup>

On the other hand, Lucey earmarked money and resources to repair and make the missions more presentable to tourists. A year later, perhaps based on feedback from fair-goers, the Archdiocese approved the installation of billboards advertising the "Old Spanish Missions," on major highways leading into San Antonio.<sup>730</sup> These signs may be thought of as the origins of what eventually became known as "The Mission Trail," which would encourage visitors to look at the missions as an inter-related unit. It is relatively easy for historians to see each mission, from the Alamo to Espada, as part of the larger Spanish missionary enterprise. It is another thing altogether for tourists to see the missions, separated by several miles of winding river, as links in a chain.<sup>731</sup>

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<sup>728</sup> Robert S. Benjamin, "HemisFair '68: And a Glimpse of the City Where it is to be Held," *Mexican-American Review*, March 1967, 10-14; and "This World's Fair Has a Long Future," *Business Week*, March 30, 1968, 66-71.

<sup>729</sup> David Montejano, *Quixote's Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 84-86.

<sup>730</sup> Rev. Charles Grahmann to Msgr. Balthasar J. Janacek, February 12, 1969, Old Spanish Mission Office Collection, CASA.

<sup>731</sup> Marion A. Habig, *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions* (1968; repr., Livingston, TX: Pioneer Enterprises, 1997).

Dallas businessman Stanley Marcus once reminisced that the 1936 Texas Centennial celebration was when “the rest of America discovered Texas.”<sup>732</sup> But he was wrong; America had already discovered Texas. And one of the reasons America already knew about Texas was because of San Antonio and its missions. Not just the Alamo, although it certainly received the lion’s share of attention; but images and descriptions of the other missions also made frequent appearances in advertisements and literature promoting travel for decades. From travel advertising to guide books to motion pictures, America had been informed of the romantic and exotic Spanish missions. Well before Centennial in 1936, Southern Pacific and other railroads had been promoting Texas tourism in various media, even borrowing from the ‘newfangled’ motion picture industry. Architects had been copying or inserting decorative features derived from mission architecture into their commissions for decades. Perhaps Marcus was too young to recognize the effects, or because his store was based in Dallas, he likely did not see the tourists flocking to San Antonio. And the tourists were indeed coming. Drawn by agreeable weather, pleasurable activities, and interesting sights, many tourists visited San Antonio. The Alamo and other four missions were high on the list of interesting sights, and were regular features in advertising campaigns. They were all sites of memory, and the events of the twentieth century just confirmed that fact.

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<sup>732</sup> Quoted in Ragsdale, *Centennial '36*, 302.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION: SAN ANTONIO'S MISSIONS AS 'SITES OF MEMORY'; FROM NATIONAL PARKS TO WORLD HERITAGE STATUS, 1968- 2015

The past is never dead. It's not even past. –William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*

One of the first actions Robert E. Lucey took in 1941 as the newly installed Archbishop of San Antonio was to sign an agreement with Wendell Mayes, chairman of the Texas State Parks Board, and Alvin J. Wirtz, of the United States Department of the Interior, designating Mission San José as the first national historic site west of the Mississippi River.<sup>733</sup> A journalist for the *Dallas Morning News* accurately considered the momentous agreement “a precedent-setting measure second to none in the establishment of national historic shrines. Not only is it the first such site created in co-operation with a state park agency but it also is the first national historic site established in co-operation with the Catholic Church; it is also the first to be administered jointly by

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<sup>733</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, May 7, 1941, accessed July 26, 2016, Readex America's Historical Newspapers; and Thomas S. Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists: The Borderlands of Religion and Tourism in San Antonio* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 84.

the church and the national and state park services.”<sup>734</sup> Religious historian Thomas Bremer suggests Lucey had developed a deep interest in the Spanish colonial-era missionary endeavors while growing up in California. Furthermore, Bremer asserts Lucey’s devotion to the missions included a “touristic dimension;” that the prelate felt it was vital to appeal to the “needs, tastes, and desires, of tourists.”<sup>735</sup> The historic precedent set by this ‘church-state’ agreement prior to the Second World War would be expanded forty years later when three additional San Antonio missions: Concepción, San Juan, Espada, as well as the Espada *acequia* (a form of aqueduct for irrigating mission croplands) were combined into the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park.

Central to this final chapter’s exploration of San Antonio’s missions from approximately 1970 to 2015 is the concept of collective memory in the modern era. The memories play out differently among the missions and add meaning to these buildings of stone and mortar. During these years the missions became formalized members of the United States National Park Service (NPS) and granted World Heritage status by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), all the while retaining their role as sacred space. At the Alamo, the most popular tourist attraction in the State, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) have faced criticism from different racial and ethnic groups over how the 1836 battle has been interpreted. Similarly, an ugly war of words broke out over the final moments of Davy Crockett’s life and its meaning for the nation. Also, resurgent groups of Native

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<sup>734</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, May 7, 1941, accessed July 26, 2016, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>735</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 86.

Americans have challenged how the NPS and Catholic Church scripted the roles of their ancestors in the colonial period and claimed rights regarding ritual and sacred space at the missions. These events reveal the conflicts and accords among the sundry groups for whom the missions are important. The importance of the missions to these groups explains why, after nearly three hundred years of use, abuse, neglect, and reconstruction, the missions persist in the memories of so many.

This concluding chapter examines San Antonio's missions in their role as "sites of memory," having achieved that status over the course of many, many years.<sup>736</sup> During the course of nearly three centuries, San Antonio itself transformed from a ragged village on the Spanish frontier to one of the ten most populous cities in the United States. One mission, San Antonio de Valero, the Alamo, became a "site of memory" based on the battle on March 6, 1836 and its visibility in the national narrative increased greatly since then. It was more complicated with the other missions. For those who still lived nearby and used the mission chapels for worship, these buildings always had been sites of memory. But on a larger, national scale, they had to wait for Northern elites to discover them and incorporate them into the narrative. This progress accelerated after 1877 and the arrival of the railroad to San Antonio, which linked the sleepy border town to a nation of tourists searching for an identity.<sup>737</sup> The identity these tourists found in San Antonio, based largely on local Anglos' construction, resembled

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<sup>736</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, English-language edition ed. and foreword by Lawrence D. Kritzman. 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), v.1, xvii.

<sup>737</sup> Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 2001), 4-5.

more of a 'mythological Spanish past' than an accurate or authentic reflection of historical reality.<sup>738</sup> However, San Antonio's Spanish and Mexican roots are ever present, ever exposed; whether one is interacting with the large Tejano population, shopping at El Mercado, enjoying a Tex-Mex dinner, or kneeling before an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe at four of the missions. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs reminds us there is frequently a significant distinction, or distance, between memory and history.<sup>739</sup> Nevertheless, the two are dependent upon each other and intricately interwoven with each other. This complexity becomes obvious at San Antonio's missions when contemplating the drastic changes, but also the continuity of the role of sacred space. Memory and History have been interacting and informing each other for nearly three centuries, and the missions have been the border between them.

### **The Missions, the NPS, and New Adventures in Community Relations**

Although there had been calls for the San Antonio missions to be developed into a National Park as far back as 1958, such a park was not authorized until twenty years later and did not open as an official National Historic Park until 1983.<sup>740</sup> For San

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<sup>738</sup> Journalist Carey McWilliams coined the phrase "fantasy Spanish heritage." See Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, rev. ed. with added material by Matt S. Meier (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1990), 43-53.

<sup>739</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter, (1950; repr., New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980), 79-80.

<sup>740</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, June 24, 1958, accessed July 26, 2016, Readex America's Historical Newspapers; and Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 111.

Antonio architect Sam Zisman, a national park would allow better “preservation and maintenance of the ancient irrigation system,” which was “something the California missions do not have, and is still in use today.”<sup>741</sup> Old buildings require a great deal of preservation and maintenance, and securing the necessary resources (funds as well as expertise) has been the driving forces for federal involvement at the missions. As Bremer argues, the missions’ “status as a national park continues to lend the missions a level of national priority that borders on the sacrosanct” as ranking “among the nation’s most sacred places,” and as such, the missions have received “budgetary appropriations that have in fact rescued them from certain extinction brought about by deterioration, encroachment, and abuse.”<sup>742</sup> But achieving that status was by no means easy or guaranteed.

In his book on historic preservation in San Antonio, local journalist Lewis Fisher claims that by 1961 Mission San José was struggling. Despite being a National Historic Site and Texas State Park, Fisher states that year there was no money forthcoming from the Texas State Parks Board for much needed repairs. Almost as bad were the “irrelevant” and “badly labeled and displayed” exhibits.<sup>743</sup> Fisher does not cast blame, but many of these exhibits considered so inadequate would have belonged to Ethel

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<sup>741</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, June 24, 1958, accessed July 26, 2016, Readex America’s Historical Newspapers.

<sup>742</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 113-114.

<sup>743</sup> Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Precarious Preservation of a Heritage* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1996), 493-494.

Wilson Harris, the manager of San José for the Texas State Parks.<sup>744</sup> Fisher records that the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS) believed if San José were operated by the NPS, more money for repairs would be available; thus SACS spearheaded the effort to bring San José, as well as Concepción, San Juan, Espada and its aqueduct under the auspices of the NPS.<sup>745</sup>

The political wrangling required to shepherd the bill creating the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park from bill to signed law is best told elsewhere.<sup>746</sup> Issues over Church-State relations nearly scuttled the project in 1979 when President Jimmy Carter signed the bill establishing the park, but then withheld the necessary funds for actually running the park.<sup>747</sup> Not until February 20, 1983 did the NPS take formal control of the mission and *acequia* properties while the Church retained control of the spaces used for worship.<sup>748</sup> Nonetheless, there were parts of this process directly related to my understanding of the missions and collective memory. One such part was a Congressional Subcommittee hearing, held in San Antonio on November 9, 1976, to ascertain community support for the creation of a national park around the missions. Of the people who testified, support for the park project was overwhelming; not surprising since most of the witnesses had some sort of official capacity with municipal or local volunteer organizations that believed the missions belonged in the national park system.

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<sup>744</sup>Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 78-80, and 93; and Luis Torres, *Voices from the San Antonio Missions* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1997), 207-208. See Chapter V of this dissertation for additional discussion of Harris and her eccentric notions of ‘authenticity’ at San José.

<sup>745</sup> Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 494.

<sup>746</sup> Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 493-502; and Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 111-116.

<sup>747</sup> *Washington Post*, February 18, 1979, accessed August 5 2016, ProQuest Historic Washington Post.

<sup>748</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 112-113.



Statements to the Subcommittee came from Abraham Kazen, Jr., the Congressional Representative for the district in which the missions were located (who read into the record a telegraphed endorsement from former First Lady, Lady Bird Johnson); Lila Cockrell, Mayor of San Antonio; Bexar County Commissioner Albert Bustamante; Fr. Balthasar Janacek, representative of the San Antonio Missions Advisory Committee; Henry Guerra of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; and many others. Most importantly were two themes that many of the witnesses emphasized as they spoke to the subcommittee. The first emphasized that the missions continued to be active churches and community centers. The buildings may have been crumbling, but the faithful still gathered for Mass, catechism classes, and other parish events. Second, many witnesses also remarked that the missions stood as symbols of the Hispanic heritage in Texas, the Southwest, and the United States.<sup>749</sup>

George Garza of the San Antonio Mexican Chamber of Commerce heartily endorsed the proposed park. He described the missions as “the finest and well-preserved symbols of this [Hispanic] culture and heritage.”<sup>750</sup> Henry Guerra similarly emphasized the “economic, political, cultural, architectural, and engineering heritage symbolized by these missions has proven to have great impact on the Southwest and demonstrates its continuing influence on our Nation.”<sup>751</sup> It was, after all, the Bicentennial Year in the United States, and the people coming before the Subcommittee tended to accentuate the

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<sup>749</sup> *Hearing before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs*, HR14064, To Authorize the Establishment of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park in the State of Texas, and for Other Purposes, 94<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess., November 9, 1976, 11-88.

<sup>750</sup> HR 14064, *Hearing*, 44-45.

<sup>751</sup> HR 14064, *Hearing*, 31-32.

region’s Spanish influence upon American history. Mayor Cockrell summed up the missions’ importance as “active centers of religious, social, and cultural activities. They are a tie to the past, a catalyst for the present, and a hope for the future.”<sup>752</sup> The arguments advanced in this hearing reinforced the missions’ status as “sites of memory;” as “symbolic element[s] of the memorial heritage [for this] community.”<sup>753</sup>

Although support for a national park incorporating the missions was quite positive at this particular subcommittee hearing, the potential for conflict could be seen. In one exchange between Fr. Janacek (more commonly known as “Father Balty”) and the Subcommittee members, the priest recommended the proposed oversight advisory committee be enlarged from seven to nine members to include one representative named by the Archdiocese and one by the parishes. When asked if that was not redundant, he replied that the Archdiocese might hold one point of view while parishioners might hold a differing opinion regarding “the missions because they are their homes.”<sup>754</sup> Although Fr. Janacek recognized the potential for conflicts, he did not see the possible differences as insubordination to Church hierarchy.

Nonetheless, the idea of the missions as spiritual home and community center led some parishioners to oppose the project. Janie Garza, a resident of the San Juan and Espada communities, was one of the more outspoken opponents of NPS involvement. She believed the Park Service would impose more bureaucracy and regulations that would outweigh any perceived benefits. She also asserted that because the NPS would

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<sup>752</sup> HR 14064, *Hearing*, 15.

<sup>753</sup> Nora, *Realms of Memory*, xvii.

<sup>754</sup> HR 14064, *Hearing*, 29.

need to purchase a number of properties surrounding the missions, there would be a number of parishioners who risked being displaced. Garza expressed disgust at the demise of the mission community around San Juan as the Park Service bought properties and then tore down existing houses. She was equally appalled by the lack of interest and communication she perceived between the NPS and the local parishes, “Why does the national park have to ‘interpret?’ Why can’t we interpret? I’m sorry to say this, but why do *gringos* have to interpret our culture?”<sup>755</sup> As chair of the Parish Council at Mission Espada, Garza also expressed serious concerns over certain parish-owned “artifacts and antiques, now that the Missions have become a National Park.” Apparently some pieces of value donated to the parish had disappeared and the Council was demanding to be consulted on the disposal of other parish properties.<sup>756</sup> No reply regarding the donated objects was found.

I pursued the gist of Garza’s complaint regarding interpretations of the missions to tourists with a volunteer docent at the missions. I queried whether the NPS had any sort of approved script or outline docents were expected to follow when leading tourists around the compounds. I was informed by my contact that no such script or outline existed, much to this person’s dismay.<sup>757</sup> A subsequent follow-up email indicated some on-going “disarray” in the volunteer interpreter program at the park, but also expressed

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<sup>755</sup> Torres, *Voices from the San Antonio Missions*, 77-82. Quote from page 79, italics in the original. The interview was conducted in 1995, over a decade after the NPS moved in.

<sup>756</sup> Resolution by the Parish Council, San Francisco de la Espada, July 11, 1983. Old Spanish Missions Collection, Catholic Archives of the Archdiocese of San Antonio (hereafter cited as CASA).

<sup>757</sup> Volunteer docent, e-mail to author, July 20, 2016. Name withheld by request. As I did not have the specific instances or situations Garza was upset about, mine was a more generalized inquiry on procedure.

confidence that two new administrators would be able to solve the issues.<sup>758</sup> In the meantime, the absence of an approved or “official” script or outline for the volunteer docents opens the door for a considerable amount of inconsistency. For example, would one legend of the Rose Window at San José be privileged over another? Would Pedro Huizar continue to be considered a famed Spanish artist, when most historical sources suggest he was *mestizo*?<sup>759</sup> From my own personal experiences as a frequent visitor to the missions, I would assert the answer is “yes,” there are inconsistencies in accounts shared by the docents.

By the same token, private tour companies which run shuttle buses of tourists from the Alamo to Espada are not held to any standard, and the author has overheard some of these operators giving his tourists highly romanticized tales which had little basis in historical fact. Bremer also points out the disconnects and discomforts from parishioners, volunteer docents, and park rangers in how to best to inform tourists of the historical, religious, cultural, and social significance of these buildings. Indeed, he notes that some park rangers will not enter the chapel sanctuaries while in uniform, but sends the tourists through and then meets them again upon their exit. On the other hand, Bremer suggests the rangers have more guidelines regarding what they tell to tour groups than the docents.<sup>760</sup> The lack of oversight or consistency encourages myth to be accepted in the place of historical fact, and exacerbates the gap between academic history and memory.

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<sup>758</sup> Volunteer docent, e-mail to author, July 20, 2016. Follow-up email query.

<sup>759</sup> See Chapter II of this dissertation for more on Pedro Huizar, his alleged ethnicity, and the Rose Window.

<sup>760</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 121-131.

## **Davy Crockett is Dead: Now Let Him Rest In Peace**

It is an accepted historical fact that Davy Crockett died on March 6, 1836 at the Battle of the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas. The specifics surrounding his death, however, have been the source of an amazing amount of debate and acrimony, particularly over the past forty years. Although former Texas State Historical Association President Dan Kilgore noted a few alleged ‘sightings’ of a living Crockett after 1836, neither Kilgore, nor modern scholars look upon Davy as some early-modern Elvis Presley.<sup>761</sup> It is curious to me that the “how did Davy die?” debate from the 1970s to the present has been so rancorous; why all this fuss over the exact nature of someone’s death 180 years after the fact? Instead of contributing more ink arguing whether Crockett died fighting near the Alamo chapel doors, or was later captured and executed on Santa Anna’s order, I am suggesting a different question: what did his death mean in terms of collective memory? Although historian James Crisp bluntly asks a similar question, “Why do we care so much?” his conclusion is different from my interest in meaning and collective memory.<sup>762</sup>

At the core of this bitter dispute is whether Davy Crockett died while fighting the overwhelming numbers of Mexican soldiers, or whether he was taken prisoner (along

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<sup>761</sup> Dan Kilgore and James E. Crisp, *How Did Davy Die? And Why Do We Care So Much?* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010),42-44.

<sup>762</sup> Kilgore and Crisp, *How Did Davy Die? And Why Do We Care So Much?* Cover.

with four to six other survivors, depending on the source), only to be summarily executed upon Santa Anna's direct order. For the next 140 years, there were differences of opinion regarding Crockett's final moments, depending on who was telling the tale.<sup>763</sup> Although one nineteenth century Texas historian, R. M. Potter claimed that Crockett died surrounded by the bodies of numerous enemies he had killed, there were dissenting voices; one by no less of a personage than Theodore Roosevelt, who claimed Crockett was the last defender to die, but offered two possibilities on how that may have happened.<sup>764</sup> In neither case was it intimated that Crockett surrendered. Nor was a craven surrender by Crockett suggested by one of Santa Anna's own men, Lt. José Enrique de la Peña, who plainly stated that Crockett and half a dozen other Texan survivors had been brought before the Mexican commander, only to be executed on his command.<sup>765</sup> De la Peña's diary and disputes over its legitimacy remain at the crux of the modern debates.<sup>766</sup>

Earlier in this dissertation I challenged mission scholarship to move beyond the binary of "the missions brought the blessings of Western Civilization to the Indians" versus "the missions were deathtraps for the Native Americans." So do I now argue that

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<sup>763</sup> Kilgore and Crisp, *How Did Davy Die?*, 9-48.

<sup>764</sup> R. M. Potter, "The Fall of the Alamo," *Magazine of American History*, January, 1878, 13; and Theodore Roosevelt, "Remember the Alamo: Hero-Tales from American History," *St. Nicholas: An Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks*, September, 1895, 927. The illustration accompanying Roosevelt's article shows a defeated man in buckskins with his back against a wall and pistol dangling from one hand being shot by a rank of enemy soldiers drawn up as a firing squad.

<sup>765</sup> José Enrique de la Peña, *With Santa Anna in Texas: A Personal Narrative of the Revolution*, trans. Carmen Perry (College Station: Texas A&M University Press), 53.

<sup>766</sup> James E. Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), 61-138; also, Bill Groneman, *Death of a Legend: The Myth and Mystery Surrounding the Death of Davy Crockett* (Plano: Republic of Texas Press, 1999), 113-158.

“how did Davy die?” is an unproductive exercise and ultimately asks the wrong question. A better question is “what does it mean?” Crisp, along with historians David Montejano and Arnolde de León, and anthropologists Richard Flores and Holly Beachley Brear, argue it is all about race: Davy (Anglo) and his heroic death at the hands of a race seen as inferior (Mexican Others) led to the inspired victory at San Jacinto, which allowed Anglos to take over Texas from those benighted Others.<sup>767</sup> This is the “erudite” and “elitist” scholarly history Halbwachs asserts is divorced from the popular and collective memory.<sup>768</sup> To this end, amateur historian and retired New York City firefighter, William Groneman, speaks for the collective memory that believes Davy Crockett fought until the moment of his death.<sup>769</sup> Groneman and his sympathizers contest the scholars mostly by casting aspersions on the veracity and provenance of the sources (namely de la Peña’s diary) used by academics, and deriding as “revisionists” those whose arguments are somehow interpreted as besmirching America’s pantheon of heroes.<sup>770</sup> ‘America needs heroes and Davy was a worthy and honorable one’ appears to be Groneman’s essential conclusion about the meaning of Crockett’s death.<sup>771</sup>

Flores forcefully argues that the legendary and heroic Davy (who died in battle) replaced the more historically accurate Davy (who *might* have been taken captive at the

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<sup>767</sup> Kilgore and Crisp, *How Did Davy Die?*, 93-95; Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 130-152; David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 223-225; Arnolde de León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 66; and Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

<sup>768</sup> Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, 78-80.

<sup>769</sup> William Groneman, III, *David Crockett: Hero of the Common Man* (New York: Forge, 2005), 162-175. Groneman has also published under the name “Bill Groneman.” See footnote #34, above.

<sup>770</sup> Groneman, *David Crockett*, 179-183; and Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo*, 65-102.

<sup>771</sup> Groneman, *David Crockett*, 189-190.

end of the battle and executed afterward) because by the end of the nineteenth century, “valor” had become a “central tenet of patriotism,” which was required if Davy was to be installed as an “American hero.”<sup>772</sup> Flores claims America was in need of such heroes as it struggled to maintain its identity and superiority against the Plains Indians and immigrant hordes.<sup>773</sup> In the late twentieth century, Flores asserts the heroic Crockett is still necessary to inspire Anglos in their xenophobic battles against a rising Mexican-American population bent on claiming civil rights previously denied to them.<sup>774</sup>

Ultimately, for many people, even at the close of the twentieth century, a heroic death for Crockett makes the story of the Alamo all the more romantic and appealing. In February, 1994, a journalist from the *San Antonio Express-News* spoke with visitors from outside the State of Texas about their visit to the Alamo shrine. A lady from Michigan broke down in tears after touring the site. She expressed surprise at her “visceral” reaction, but reported feeling “in awe. They [the defenders of 1836] never had a chance, but they never gave up. . . I felt this was hallowed ground. I felt enveloped by the ambiance, the atmosphere, I’m just caught up in it somehow.”<sup>775</sup> Another lady, a Filipino immigrant by way of New York, claimed to have wanted to see the Alamo firsthand and afterward stated, “this is a symbol of bravery, . . . They never surrendered.”<sup>776</sup> Texas historian T. R. Fehrenbach agreed, stating “the Alamo is a symbol of the human spirit and of courage, which is why it transcends nationality.” The

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<sup>772</sup> Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 146.

<sup>773</sup> Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 145-147.

<sup>774</sup> Flores, *Remembering the Alamo*, 149-152.

<sup>775</sup> Robert Rivard, “Remember the Alamo: The Growing Debate over the Shrine of Texas Liberty,” *San Antonio Express-News*, February 27, 1994, accessed August 8, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*



visitors “come from all over the world. But I don’t think they are coming because it was a parochial story of Texans and Mexicans beating up on each other.”<sup>777</sup> A story of great courage, even in the face of certain death, can be more universally appealing, more tragically romantic, than earlier interpretations of an independence movement within a distant Borderland region.

Conversely, what if Crockett did lay down his arms, sickened by the violence and bloodshed around him; only to be murdered in cold blood by a hard-hearted Santa Anna and his ruthless minions? Such a Crockett seems much more human and more real, and no less courageous. This scenario casts Santa Anna as an even more blood-thirsty monster. For good or ill, we will never know the truth of that day; which is why it behooves our society to move beyond the specific instance of his death, and look for a broader interpretation. Different audiences seem determined to attach their own meaning to his death and proclaim their democratic right to do so. Or as historian Michael Kammen observes, “Myth tends to triumph over historical facts; and in this instance [Crockett’s death at the Alamo], mass culture and learned culture went their separate ways.”<sup>778</sup>

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<sup>777</sup> Ibid. Fehrenbach’s historiographical interpretations have been critiqued as traditionalist to a fault by fellow Texas historian Walter Buenger. See Walter L. Buenger, “Three Truths in Texas,” in *Beyond Texas Through Time: Breaking Away from Past Interpretations*, ed. by Walter L. Buenger and Arnaldo De León (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011), 7.

<sup>778</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 647.

## The Return of the Natives; Or, Had They Ever Left?

At the main visitor's center at Mission San José, the NPS shows a free video every half hour called, "*Gente de Razón*," ("People of Reason"). Narrated by local Tejana singer, Tish Hinojosa, the film contextualizes the missions and the mission communities as being practically continuous for many hundreds of years. Toward the end of the film, Hinojosa asks her daughter what happened to the Native Americans who came to the missions. Her daughter responds that the Indians "all died." To which Hinojosa admonishes her daughter to "go look in the mirror."<sup>779</sup> Bremer suggests the "theme of continuity" is important mainly for tourists' appeal, to emphasize the "legacy" and "living parishes" of the mission communities.<sup>780</sup> There is one important feature that he fails to mention, and that is the role of collective memory for both the tourists' sake, as well as that of the mission communities.

Bremer posits "the theme of continuity archaicizes the contemporary worship communities, which in turn lends authoritative relevance to the old buildings while dodging the sticky issue of Church and state separation."<sup>781</sup> He is correct, but I would add the importance of collective memory. Halbwachs' comments on religious communities and memory are particularly incisive by describing that when believers

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<sup>779</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 121; and *Gente de Razón: People of the Missions*, directed by John Grabowska (Tucson, AZ: Western National Parks Association, 1998) DVD.

<sup>780</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 121.

<sup>781</sup> Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*, 121-122.

gather in consecrated space, they “re-establish, in addition to their visible community, a common thought and remembrance formed and maintained there through the ages.”

Furthermore, he observes “the group memory endures much like the buildings presumed to house it and that a single current of religious thoughts has uninterruptedly flowed beneath the roofs of such holy places.” Even though:

“the church is empty at times, doors locked and walls sealing in only lifeless objects. The group is dispersed at such moments, but it endures and remains what it had been; when the group comes together again, there would be no reason to assume it had changed or had even ceased to exist so long as the faithful could pass by the church, view it from afar, or hear the bells, so long as they could hold in mind or readily evoke the image of their congregating together and the ceremonies they have participated in behind these walls.”<sup>782</sup>

Besides the Catholic parishioners who use the missions as sacred space, the past twenty-five years has witnessed a renaissance by groups of Native Americans, some of whom grew up in the mission communities, reclaiming their collective memories as descendants of those for whom the missions were initially established.

In Fr. Janacek’s collected papers in the Catholic Archives of San Antonio, there is material dealing with multiple groups of Native Americans in the 1990s, each asserting some form of claim on the missions.<sup>783</sup> The most serious claims involved the repatriation and reburial of the remains of Native Americans at Mission San Juan under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990. The groups included: the American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions; the

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<sup>782</sup> Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, 151-152.

<sup>783</sup> Monsignor Balthasar J. Janacek Archival Papers, CASA. Hereafter cited as, “Janacek Papers, CASA.”

Native American Church; the Inter-Tribal Council of American Indians, Inc.; and the Tap Pilam group of Coahuiltecans. These groups did not always speak as a unified voice regarding their various claims. Fr. Janacek, in his role as the Archdiocese liaison to the missions and the NPS, was involved with working with the various Native American groups.

In February, 1994 and in November, 1999, two sets of physical remains purported to be indigenous people were reburied with much more dignity and ritual than when the remains were initially discovered. It was believed they had joined the San Antonio missions during the colonial period and after their deaths were buried on mission property. Their remains were disinterred in the twentieth century as a consequence of repairs and renovations at the missions and had been held for study.<sup>784</sup> In each of these cases the Inter-Tribal Council of American Indians (in 1994) and the American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions (in 1999) made claims under NAGPRA for the return of Native American remains held at various museums and universities. The 1994 reburial took place in San Antonio's San Fernando Cemetery, No. 2, and a dual ceremony of Native American rituals and a Catholic Mass was held. This addressed the remains of an estimated thirty-seven individuals had been taken from a mass grave under the post office near Alamo Plaza in the 1930s. Gary Gabehart, president of the Inter-Tribal Council of American Indians, hoped the ceremonies and interment would bring peace to the ancestors whose afterlife was disturbed, but also a

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<sup>784</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, February 20, 1994, and November 26, 1999, both accessed on August 8, 2016, Newsbank, Access World News.

measure of respect for local descendants of the Native Americans.<sup>785</sup> The 1999 reburial involved a larger group of remains, perhaps as many as ninety people, discovered at Mission San Juan in the 1960s. Once again a dual ceremony involving Native American customs and a Catholic Mass were held and the remains were reburied at San Juan.<sup>786</sup>

With the reburials, these local descendants of indigenous people were reasserting their heritage and reestablishing their memories in context of the missions, which had been a part of their communities, and their ancestors' lives. In a sense they were reclaiming a degree of continuity regarding the missions' role within the communities which had been supplanted by the Spanish heritage myths. However, a significant ethnographic study conducted at the turn of the twenty-first century suggests that in the Mission San Juan community, there are lineal descendants of individuals from the Colonial period still living in the local area.<sup>787</sup>

One example of the types of claims not related to human remains was a letter draft, sent to Patrick Flores, Archbishop of San Antonio asking for his signature and return of the document. Flores sent copies to several close advisors, including Fr. Janacek, asking for recommendations. If he signed the document as requested, it would be a blanket acquiescence to Native American demands (in this case a group called "Danzante Coahuilteco") which authorized "the use of the missions of San Antonio for

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<sup>785</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, February 20, 1994, accessed on August 8, 2016, Newsbank, Access World News.

<sup>786</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, November 26, and November 27, 1999, accessed on August 8, 2016, Newsbank, Access World News.

<sup>787</sup> Alston V. Thoms, ed. *Reassessing Cultural Extinction: Change and Survival at Mission San Juan Capistrano, Texas* (College Station and San Antonio: Center for Ecological Archaeology, Texas A&M University, and San Antonio Missions National Historic Park, 2001), iii.

the religious use of the Native American community” including “prayer in the original fashion and traditional methods” along with traditional dances, songs, languages, sweat-lodges, bonfires, and incense. The basis for the request was that the missions “were originally intended for use by the Native Americans and their descendants” in addition to having been built by the indigenous peoples.<sup>788</sup>

In addition to asking his fellow clergy for suggestions, Flores also contacted Dr. Félix D. Almaráz, Jr., a historian at the University of Texas at San Antonio for an opinion as well. Almaráz was not so impressed with these Native Americans’ historical understanding, perhaps as a result of his own biography of Catholic historian Carlos Castañeda who largely disparaged the Indians of Colonial-era Texas. He informed Flores the group was making claims with little or no historical basis. Essentially, because “Coahuiltecan” was a broad linguistic term covering a number of groups, it was not lineally traced based on families. Also, Almaráz opined that since the original Coahuiltecan were nomadic hunter-gatherers, they had little historical basis for a sweat-lodge or similar claimed rituals.<sup>789</sup>

And while Almaráz did not mention it directly, one of the more glaring historical incongruences regarding the Indians’ claims would be that the Coahuiltecan who originally joined the missions would have been taught to pray as Catholics, not necessarily with chants and drums. However, as argued earlier in this dissertation, the

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<sup>788</sup> Memo, dated March 22, 1995, from Archbishop Patrick F. Flores to Bishops Bernard Popp and John Yanta, and Monsignors Patrick J. Murry, Larry Stuebben, and Balty Janacek, Re: Native American Letter, with attachments. Janacek Papers, CASA.

<sup>789</sup> Memo, dated May 6, 1995, Dr. Félix D. Almaráz, Jr. to Archbishop Patrick Flores. Janacek Papers, CASA.

exact nature or level of commitment the original mission Indians had for their new faith is an open question. As one modern Coahuiltecan, Ray Hernandez, informed a reporter for the *San Antonio Express-News* in 2001, “We always knew we were different. We always knew we were Indian.”<sup>790</sup> Hernandez, a council member of the Tap Pilam group of Coahuiltecan, continued, “We were Catholics, but we had our own religion that was very, very closed. The minute we spoke of Indianness [*sic*] and our beliefs, we got knocked down to the lowest level of humanness. But now things are better, and we can talk about this.”<sup>791</sup> However, when it came time to rebury the remains turned over to the Tap Pilam group, they “realized that a traditional ceremony did not exist for reburial.”<sup>792</sup> Their dilemma was incisively summarized by Patricia Newada of the Native America Center who told the journalist, “You don’t jump up to 200 years later and expect to form an American Indian tribe.”<sup>793</sup> Thoms concurs, suggesting that through the years, the Coahuiltecan “tended to conceal or camouflage their presence.” However, now in a society that tends to be more culturally tolerant, “people with mission Indian heritage once again became readily visible as resurgent Coahuiltecan.”<sup>794</sup> As these modern groups of Coahuiltecan walk a fine line between invented traditions and recovered memories, their experience suggests that not all historical silences are forever.<sup>795</sup>

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<sup>790</sup> John Davidson, “Coahuiltecan,” *San Antonio Express-News*, April 1, 2001, accessed August 8, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>792</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>794</sup> Thoms, *Reassessing Cultural Extinction*, 44.

<sup>795</sup> For invented traditions see, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and on historical silences see, Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

## **The End of an Era: The DRT vs. the GLO and the Future of the Past**

In his book on Americans' collective memory of select battlefields, historian Edward T. Linenthal observes, "The Alamo, like other battlesites, has been the object of veneration and defilement, and its enduring message of patriotic orthodoxy has been subject to redefinition."<sup>796</sup> Since the dawning of the twentieth century, the DRT had been the state-appointed custodians of the Alamo chapel and surrounding property. Internal schism, severe economic depression, and two world wars could not shake their hold over the Alamo and (more importantly) the narrative passed along to visitors. However, new challenges arose in the 1950s and 1960s with the Civil Rights and Chicano movements. The DRT's traditionalist narrative of heroic Anglo self-sacrifice for the greater cause of Texas freedom from Mexican tyranny was challenged as hackneyed and irrelevant to a modern, multi-cultural society. For several recent decades, the DRT had been under fire regarding their control and ethno-centric interpretation of the site's history and meaning from multiple groups representing various racial and ethnic interests.<sup>797</sup> Even Fr. Janacek excoriated the DRT's interpretation and religious devotion to the shrine in a sermon delivered at a Mass at the Alamo. He accused the DRT of worshipping dead heroes instead of a living God and for creating a myth which has been used, "in the history of this state, to demean and insult other people, to obscure their history, their

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<sup>796</sup> Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 55.

<sup>797</sup> Holly Beachley Brear, "We Run the Alamo and You Don't: Alamo Battles of Ethnicity and Gender," in *Where these Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 302; and Brear, *Inherit the Alamo*, 95-131.



role, even in this battlefield and to obscure the hundred plus years of Spaniard and Native American presence upon this hallowed ground.”<sup>798</sup> Fr. Janacek’s condemnation of the DRT’s collective memory related to the Alamo martyrs gives modern historians another facet with which to examine and consider contested memories.

Challenges to the DRT point out the difficulty in negotiating between memory and history. Now, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the State of Texas has officially removed the DRT from its principal role as custodian of the Alamo, and reestablished the Texas General Land Office (GLO) as caretaker. As this is currently an evolving story, my dissertation will only be able to follow it with limited sources, and without a complete resolution. On the other hand, because the DRT controlled the Alamo and its story for so long, and for some people, the DRT and Alamo are inextricably linked in memory. This drama merely reinforces historian Michel Rolph Trouillot’s prescient observation, “History is messy for those who must live it.”<sup>799</sup>

As early as 2009, a group calling itself “the Alamo Society” began complaining about the touristy and kitschy attractions directly across Alamo Plaza from the shrine. Bill Chemerka of Barnegat, New Jersey, who founded the group, argued the City of San Antonio should raze the buildings facing the Alamo and restore the site closer to the 1836 appearance. Chemerka called the current scene a “disgrace. I wouldn’t want a McDonald’s at Pearl Harbor or a Starbucks on the beaches of Normandy.”<sup>800</sup> However,

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<sup>798</sup> “Talk given at ‘Music at the Missions’ Mass, June 19, 1988, at Mission San Antonio de Valero-The Alamo,” Janacek Papers, CASA.

<sup>799</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 110.

<sup>800</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, March 6, 2009, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS) argued that the building storefronts had historical value, even if the businesses within did not, and warned careful research was needed before anyone began razing buildings.<sup>801</sup> Although these discussions did not immediately involve the DRT, there would need to be negotiations between the city, the DRT, and the US government regarding a federal building on the corner of East Houston and Alamo Plaza over any plans to expand the site's footprint. Also, Chemerka's attitude regarding commerce being conducted on sacred space is reflective of DRT rhetoric of the Alamo as a sacred shrine, as well as earlier conflicts over commercial activities on sacred ground.<sup>802</sup>

Trouble for the DRT began brewing in late 2010 when one chapter from western Texas accused the DRT President General, Patti Atkins, as well as the group's governing board of signing a contract with a California entertainment firm for \$900,000. The firm was putting together a grand extravaganza for the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2011. However, critics within the DRT claimed the contract exposed the organization to too much financial risk and had not been properly signed in accordance with the organization's bylaws.<sup>803</sup> The proposed extravaganza included readings of historical documents by local and international celebrities, a flyover by the USAF Thunderbirds, performances by the San Antonio symphony, Phil Collins, ZZ Top, Clint Black, and others, and would close with twenty minutes of fireworks.<sup>804</sup> Critics from within the

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<sup>801</sup> Ibid.

<sup>802</sup> See Chapters IV, V, and VI of this dissertation.

<sup>803</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, December 5, 2010, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>804</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, January 7, 2011, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

DRT claimed such a “circus” detracted from the Alamo’s status as shrine and the DRT’s role “to maintain the Alamo as a ‘sacred memorial to the heroes who immolated themselves upon that hallowed ground.’”<sup>805</sup> There were also complaints that while this show might bring some much-needed cash into DRT coffers, necessary repairs and maintenance to the chapel’s roof were being ignored. A month later, DRT marketing director Tony Caridi stated the event was canceled for lack of sponsors and blamed those opposed to the concert for creating such bad publicity by harping on the leaking roof as well as a Texas Attorney General’s investigation of the DRT’s finances which had begun the previous year, but appeared to be expanding.<sup>806</sup>

Even though the anniversary celebration was scaled back and quite modest compared to earlier ambitions, the DRT’s troubles did not improve. By April, 2011, the Texas Senate was conducting hearings related to DRT governance and management of the Alamo.<sup>807</sup> Enough unsavory details on DRT finances and failure to allocate sufficient funds for preservation work on the Alamo (one of the DRT’s avowed primary functions) were exposed that State Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, whose district included the Alamo, pushed a bill through the Texas Legislature that required the DRT and the GLO to work together to increase transparency regarding DRT financial priorities and preservation.<sup>808</sup> For the editor of the *San Antonio Express-News*, this represented a good start, but still did not provide a sufficient level of oversight of the DRT. The editor

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<sup>805</sup> Ibid.

<sup>806</sup> Ibid.

<sup>807</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, April 12, 2011, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>808</sup> “Our Turn: Improvement in Alamo Oversight,” *San Antonio Express-News*, June 5, 2011, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

argued the GLO should exercise its option of creating a nine-member advisory board (which would include three DRT members, plus the Alamo curator who was hired by the DRT).<sup>809</sup> Only then might the Alamo receive the level of funding needed to carry out the necessary repairs.

By December, 2011, the DRT and the GLO had hammered out a compromise agreement that after eighteen months could be renewed for five years, but with a limit of four possible renewals; no more than twenty years. According to the agreement, the GLO was defined as the “custodian” and the DRT relegated to the status of an “independent contractor.”<sup>810</sup> According to the agreement, admission to the Alamo would remain free of charge, the DRT “shall explore” various ways to enhance visitors’ experiences, the DRT would use GLO processes for visitor complaints, and “keep the Alamo in ‘good order and repair,’” and the DRT would “address the diverse, rich heritage of the Alamo; maintain the ‘dignity and decorum’ of the site; and provide educational outreach that emphasizes historical accuracy.” In return, the GLO would pay the DRT \$10,000 per month for “compliance costs,” review the hiring and retention of department heads through the Alamo’s administrator, inspect DRT records, and employ “an on-site representative to monitor operations.”<sup>811</sup> While these conditions did not satisfy all critics, ultimately the DRT’s days as sole guardians of the Alamo were indeed numbered. It would have been interesting to see what the DRT might have done

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<sup>809</sup> Ibid.

<sup>810</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, December 16, 2011, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>811</sup> Ibid.

to alter their interpretation of the history to provide the “historical accuracy” called for in the agreement.

The agreement between the GLO and the DRT seemed to be working for a while, despite a scathing report in November, 2012 issued by the GLO describing serious financial mismanagement of the Alamo complex by the DRT. Some of the DRT’s worst offenses included: allowing proceeds from the gift shop ostensibly for repair and maintenance to be mixed with state money, failure to act on engineering reports concerning leaks in the Alamo roof and failure to “prioritize preservation in the shrine’s operating budget,” DRT claims of ownership of certain historic relics without adequate provenance, and using state funds to run its private library on the Alamo grounds.<sup>812</sup> However, since the Legislature had already replaced the DRT with the GLO, the Texas Attorney General decided not to take legal action against them.<sup>813</sup> The *Express-News* editor criticized the Attorney General’s office for not pursuing more punitive action against the DRT.<sup>814</sup>

Additional scandals in the local newspaper did not help the DRT’s cause. The reported thefts of valuable items (although the definition of “valuable” was disputed), DRT resistance to GLO requirement that after-hours functions could serve alcohol, and continuing disputes over the DRT Library exacerbated the friction between the GLO and

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<sup>812</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, November 22, 2012, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>813</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>814</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, November 29, 2012, accessed July 29, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

the DRT.<sup>815</sup> Additionally, this friction occurred as the city was again exploring the feasibility of improving Alamo Plaza. As an *Express-News* reporter observed, “Alamo Plaza is the most complex downtown issue.”<sup>816</sup> The journalist complained the “plaza lacks the visual cues that delineate the Alamo’s original footprint,” and although the kitschy gift shops brought in a considerable amount of money to city coffers, “they seem blasphemous because, while they might be across the street from the Alamo’s current boundaries, they are still on hallowed ground, where men died.”<sup>817</sup> This journalist’s complaint of commercial activity on “hallowed ground” substantiated historian John F. Sears’ astute observation, “Twentieth-century tourist attractions also continue to combine the sacred and the profane, the religious and the secular, the mythic and the trivial, the spiritual and the commercial.”<sup>818</sup> Sears’ comments are still valid for tourist attractions in the early twenty-first century as well.

People looking for an opportunity to justify the expense of significant improvements to Alamo Plaza got a major boost in 2014. Phil Collins, founding member and lead singer for the popular musical group “Genesis,” as well as being a serious collector of Alamo memorabilia, offered to donate his existing collection to the Alamo. Collins’ collection consisted of over 200 pieces and was valued at over \$15million. According to the agreement, the GLO would take possession of the

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<sup>815</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, January 6, 2013, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>816</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, August 11, 2013, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>817</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>818</sup> John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 211.

collection, and a suitable center to house and display the collection would be built.<sup>819</sup> At this point, the impetus to revamp Alamo Plaza and the changes the GLO was making in running the Alamo shrine began to take on a greater sense of urgency. However the pace still appeared glacial.

Then in March, 2015, the final blow fell for the DRT. Recently elected Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush informed the DRT their contractual agreement to run the Alamo for the GLO was terminated “for cause” effective July 10 of that same year. According to the GLO, there were ten breaches of contract which led to the termination, including the failure “to prepare and operate under an annual management plan; run the complex ‘in a good and prudent manner’; and produce a policy” on resolving visitor complaints. The DRT’s Library on the premises, the absence of a succession plan for staff, more transparency related to personnel issues, and firing of a senior staff member were also mentioned as issues leading to the termination.<sup>820</sup> Two days later, the *Express-News* reported that “the land office and the city each soon will launch a separate master planning process for the Alamo area.” Bush also reportedly claimed his goal was to make the Alamo “cash-flow positive.”<sup>821</sup> Implied was that the DRT was not keeping up with changes, both in the way the city and State wanted to explore using the physical site to reflect changes in tourists and the whole tourism experience, which was not necessarily about playing the role of pilgrims coming to worship at the shrine of martyrs. The DRT remained committed to worshipping dead

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<sup>819</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, June 25 and June 27, 2014, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>820</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, March 13, 2015, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>821</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, March 15, 2015, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

heroes in a similar fashion as their early twentieth-century ancestors had, in quiet reverence.

There are any number of clichés that could be used here to mark the end of a 110-year, intimate history between the Alamo and the DRT. These powerful women were highly influential in shaping a specific memory that became interwoven into the national narrative. However, as both Texan and American society changed in the late twentieth century to reflect a more diverse population, the DRT’s message became less and less relevant. In fact, the DRT narrative ossified when the larger state and national narratives were becoming more flexible to recognize racial, ethnic, and gender groups silenced by earlier versions. It will be curious to see how the DRT transitions its identity and role without having a significant presence at the Alamo. On May 27, 2016, the DRT Library announced it would be closing on June 1, to move the collection. While negotiations are being held with Texas A&M University—San Antonio, no permanent repository has yet been announced.<sup>822</sup> For the GLO, it remains to be seen how they will shape the narrative to appeal to new generations of tourists.

### **Mission Accomplished: San Antonio’s Missions Achieve World Heritage Status**

“A building built in the 1700s is never finished,” Fr. David Garcia astutely observed in

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<sup>822</sup> *Inside the Gates*, DRT Library blog, May 27, 2016, accessed August 21, 2016, <https://drtlibrary.wordpress.com/>.



March, 2010 as the missions were undergoing a \$15million fundraising campaign and preservation projects.<sup>823</sup> Fr. Garcia was directing the fundraising campaign, named Las Misiones. Part of the impetus to engage in such an ambitious project was economic revitalization of San Antonio’s south side of town. But the primary drive for stabilizing and restoring the missions was their bid for World Heritage Site status.<sup>824</sup> Old buildings require constant upkeep which is often very expensive, but as Garcia observed, since the missions were central to the community, “the money is used for the betterment of these missions and the betterment of the larger community.”<sup>825</sup> The quest for World Heritage Status actually began in 2006 with Virginia Nicholas, a former president of the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS) and Bexar County Historical Commission president. The application process took nine years, a great deal of research, and a considerable amount of nervous waiting, but on July 5, 2015, UNESCO granted World Heritage Site status on San Antonio’s five missions.<sup>826</sup>

SACS did not undertake such an ambitious project alone. They sought to bring other players with a stake in the missions on board quickly. In early 2007, SACS contacted the Catholic Church to assuage concerns that attaining World Heritage Status would not place the missions under another layer of bureaucracy. Paula Piper, a SACS representative wrote “The Archdiocese will not be encumbered with any new regulations

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<sup>823</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, March 18, 2010, accessed August 17, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>826</sup> “Society in Action: Society Made World Heritage Nomination its ‘Mission,’” June 25, 2015, SACS website, accessed August 18, 2016,

<https://www.saconservation.org/Advocacy/SocietyinAction/tabid/119/ArticleID/563/ArtMID/508/Society-Made-World-Heritage-Nomination-its-Mission.aspx>.

pertaining to the preservation of the mission churches, if they are designated a World Heritage Site. The laws that would apply are being followed by the Archdiocese at this time.”<sup>827</sup> In essence, SACS reassured the Church that it was already meeting its legal obligations for preserving the missions and should face no new guidelines if the bid were successful.

But what is so special about a World Heritage Site designation? What might the missions and San Antonio gain from such status? A flippant response would be, ‘bragging rights;’ except this would be bragging on a global scale. Because the criteria for World Heritage status are so strict, the designation carries no small amount of prestige. Those existing sites are considered to be an elite company. The website of UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention states candidates “must be of outstanding universal value” in addition to meeting one of the established ten criteria.<sup>828</sup> The criteria recognize both natural and cultural significance. A proposed site could be a natural wonder of the world such as the Grand Canyon within the US. Conversely, a site might represent a unique culture, or artistic (including architectural) achievement such as the Cathedral of Chartres, France, or historic urban regions such as that surrounding the Grand Mosque of Cordoba, Spain.

In addition to prestige, those pushing for the recognition anticipated significant benefit to the local economy. However, gathering community-wide support for the

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<sup>827</sup> Paula D. Piper to Fr. Martin Leopold, Moderator of the Curia, Archdiocese of San Antonio, dated January 24, 2007, copy to Father Balty. Janacek Papers, CASA.

<sup>828</sup> “The Criteria for Selection,” UNESCO World Heritage Convention website, accessed August 18, 2016, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria>.

endeavor was also expensive. The missions needed a considerable amount of attention from preservationists in order to look their best for teams of experts UNESCO sent to visit each site as part of the process. Hence the Las Misiones capital campaign with the ambitious goal of \$15million. Additionally, in September, 2011, Bexar County approved a \$10,000 payment to assist with securing “international expert opinions” as part of the application process.<sup>829</sup> The money was justified as “an investment in the city’s global marketing appeal.”<sup>830</sup> But the economic impact was expected to be substantial as Bexar County officials predicted achieving World Heritage status would mean over 1,000 new jobs, \$2million additional hotel tax revenue, and “more than \$100million in additional economic impact.”<sup>831</sup>

The journey to World Heritage status was not without the occasional political hitch. In 2011, UNESCO admitted a Palestinian delegate; a seemingly harmless action. However, it kicked into play a law passed by the US Congress from the 1990s which forbade paying dues to any United Nations agency that allowed a member from Palestine. Without dues money from the US, UNESCO suddenly lost a significant portion of its funding.<sup>832</sup> And in 2013, when the US was then considered in arrears on its dues payments, it no longer had a vote in UNESCO.<sup>833</sup> The hue and cry to urge Congress to repay the dues so as not jeopardize the opportunity of World Heritage status

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<sup>829</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, September 28, 2011, accessed August 11, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>830</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>831</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, July 7, 2013, accessed August 11, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>832</sup> “Another View: Pay UNESCO Dues, Get Missions’ Status,” *San Antonio Express-News*, June 6, 2013, accessed August 11, 2016, Newsbank Access World News; *San Antonio Express-News*, July 7, 2013, accessed August 11, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>833</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, December 1 and December 13, 2013, accessed August 11, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

for the missions did not convince everyone. As one letter to the editor of the *Express-News* sarcastically opined, if achieving World Heritage status was such a great thing and bring such economic benefit to the city, “then the people of San Antonio should pay the dues. For your information, the U.S. government is broke.”<sup>834</sup> As it turned out, the lack of dues did not prevent UNESCO from granting World Heritage status, but the crisis did have a number of supporters worried.

Similarly, another potential political setback occurred in early 2015 when Texas State Senator Donna Campbell of New Braunfels filed Senate Bill 191 which sought to bar any foreign entity from “owning, controlling, or managing” the Alamo. She claimed her legislation was prompted by the nomination of the San Antonio missions (including the Alamo) to UNESCO for World Heritage designation. Campbell asserted “The Alamo is the story of Texas. It should always be maintained and cared for by Texans.”<sup>835</sup> At a hearing on her proposed bill, Campbell claimed being a World Heritage site was “not necessarily an honor,” and “anything that starts with U.N. gives me cause for concern.”<sup>836</sup> Although even as early as October, 2013, Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson dismissed as “horse hockey” rumors to the effect that World Heritage status somehow gave UNESCO control over the Alamo.<sup>837</sup> Campbell may have believed she had reason for concern since during the previous legislative

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<sup>834</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, January 10, 2014, accessed August 11, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>835</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, February 9, 2015, accessed July 6, 2015, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>836</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, February 25, 2015, accessed July 6, 2015, Newsbank Access World News.

<sup>837</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, October 31, 2013, accessed July 26, 2016, Newsbank Access World News.

session the Texas Legislature had changed the DRT's historic role as caretakers of the Alamo.

John Oliver, one of Campbell's policy advisors, offered as an explanation, "her overriding concern regarding the UNESCO designation – that Texans could lose control of the narrative regarding the sacred history of our state."<sup>838</sup> Oliver's turn of phrase, "that Texans could lose control of the narrative regarding the sacred history of our state," may be more revealing about the senator's motives (or his own) than intended. Campbell's fears may have less to do with 'black helicopters in the night' conspiracy theories and more to do with a collective memory of the long-standing, 'heroic Anglo' narrative of Texas history in general, and the Alamo in particular. Perhaps the senator or her constituents believed that UNESCO would somehow force the tradition-bound narrative to change to recognize the benighted Mexican Others. Campbell and her supporters may have the 'heroic Davy' myth too deeply embedded in their collective memory.

In January, 2014, US Secretary of the Interior officially nominated the San Antonio Missions for consideration by UNESCO to be added to the World Heritage Site roster. Of the ten possible UNESCO World Heritage criteria, the stated justifications for inclusion in the materials put forward were:

- "Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in

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<sup>838</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, April 22, 2015, accessed July 6, 2015, Newsbank Access World News.

architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.”

- “Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.”
- “Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.”<sup>839</sup>

In 2015, UNESCO granted World Heritage Site status based on Criterion (ii). In the application materials, Criterion (ii) heavily emphasized the still-functioning irrigation ditches (*acequias*), which allowed for significant cultural interchange between the colonizing Spanish and the colonized indigenous people, as together they carved agricultural fields that would provide food for the missions. The application notes, “The creation and ongoing maintenance of these systems brought together in common cause the indigenous mission inhabitants and the missionaries, leading to an exceptional interchange of cultures. The most dramatic was the change in lifestyle adopted by the formerly nomadic Coahuiltecos to become settled agriculturalists.”<sup>840</sup> The application painted an overall extremely positive picture of the missionary enterprise. However, given the millions of dollars the city hoped to recoup with increased tourism, smoothing

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<sup>839</sup> *San Antonio Missions, Texas, United States of America: Nomination to the World Heritage List by the United States of America*, January, 2014, 159-162, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.missionsofsanantonio.org/publications.html>. See also, “Criteria for Selection,” UNESCO website.

<sup>840</sup> *San Antonio Missions*, 159.

over History's rough edges should not be surprising. Debates may continue on whether this intense change in lifestyle was good or bad for the Coahuiltecan, or how much choice they may have had at the time, or how much agency they retained after joining the missions.<sup>841</sup> Many of those who joined the missions and survived the epidemics assimilated into the local Spanish population. In doing so, they survived to pass along their culture *and memories* to the next generation, and the generation after that, and so forth as part of the cultural interchange of which the Criterion described. Due to the significant level of Spanish (and later Mexican) cultural influence, it is little wonder that cultural geographer Daniel Arreola considers San Antonio the cultural capital of the national Mexican American community.<sup>842</sup>

In his masterful synthesis on the Spanish Borderlands, eminent historian David Weber gives scant attention to the Texas missions. And yet without the missions the colonial frontier of Tejas, as well as our modern maps would look very different. It all started nearly three hundred years ago with Mission San Antonio de Valero. The missions came first, the presidio of San Fernando followed closely behind, and despite the friction between the missionaries and soldiers, they were dependent on each other and together with the Native American neophytes, eked out a precarious existence at the edge of the Spanish Empire. Spanish colonists followed a couple of decades later and again, despite some difficulties with the previous settlers, eventually found their niche and the little frontier villa began evolving slowly into one of the ten largest cities in the

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<sup>841</sup> See Chapter I of this dissertation for more discussion of the "Black Legend" versus "White Legend" of Spanish colonization, including modern scholars who continue this rather pointless exercise.

<sup>842</sup> Daniel D. Arreola, *Tejano South Texas: a Mexican American Cultural Province* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 131-149, and 189-205.

United States.

Weber poignantly observes “When Spain’s hegemony over the southern rim of North America ended in 1821, its long tenure left an enduring legacy that extended beyond the tangible transformation of people and places.” Additionally, “Spain’s legacy also lingered in American historical memory, where it took on a life of its own.”<sup>843</sup> Although Weber was speaking in the abstract, his ideas can be applied to San Antonio’s missions. The missions are a legacy of the past, which over the course of three hundred years became ‘sites of memory,’ both locally, and nationally. We can never reconstruct the past with perfect accuracy, and as Weber suggests, “The quest for a usable past has produced multiple interpretations of the Spanish experience on North American frontiers—constructions that have contended with one another over time to transform our understanding and to become in themselves powerful legacies of Spain’s centuries in North America.”<sup>844</sup> Romances of moonlit visits to mission ruins, fantasies of saintly friars patiently instructing passive Indians in the saving graces of Christianity and Western agrarian lifestyles, and the stoic martyrdom of the Alamo heroes have contended with archaeological and historical research, and despite being found wanting, have endured in collective memories. One reason the memories trump history is the sheer amount of printed materials, booster propaganda, tourist guide books, travel narratives, and advertisements, as well as film media that have been published over many decades as opposed to the few high quality books by professional historians.

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<sup>843</sup> David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 335.

<sup>844</sup> *Ibid.*



Leigh Clemmons, a professor of theatre, as well as women's and gender studies opines, "The architectural spaces of Texan cultural memory operate to legitimate a pedagogical national narrative grounded in heroic discourses of sacrifice, bravery, and freedom, as well as the larger-than-life grandeur and spectacle that is often associated with the Lone Star State."<sup>845</sup> While this thought is most easily applied to the Alamo, it also describes much of the romanticism overlaid onto the other missions (particularly the missionaries) as well. Advertisements and travel narratives describing the missions as ancient ruins promised romantic and exotic adventure to tourists. And because tourism is such a staple of San Antonio's economy, the dominance of the romantic and exotic tales can be frustrating for historians. However, historians will always be needed to offer correctives because . . . as long as memories persist, the past is never dead.

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<sup>845</sup> Leigh Clemmons, *Branding Texas: Performing Culture in the Lone Star State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 35.

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