Selection of General Readings on San Antonio, Texas
Historic Preservation Graduate Programs
Department of Architecture
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The San Antonio Missions, and the World fair in 68’ were just the beginning of the amazing history that shaped present San Antonio. San Antonio has attracted many multi-national companies and has become a place for the medical and biotechnology industry. This book provides insider text from local writers and delves into San Antonio’s charming past.i

Drawing on exhaustive research in San Antonio and Bexar County archives, Félix Almaráz has reconstructed the land tenure system that began with the Spaniards' jurisprudential right of discovery and progressed through colonial development, culminating with ownership of the mission properties under successive civic jurisdictions (independent Mexico, Republic of Texas, State of Texas, Bexar County, and City of San Antonio). Several broad questions served as focus points for the research.ii

San Antonio Architecture is the comprehensive catalog of the architecture inventory of the city. Complete with illustrations, keyed maps, and informative essays, it is a must-have book for every armchair and on foot architectural, art, and community historian.iii

Four thousand years ago bands of hunter-gatherers lived in and traveled through the challenging terrain of what is now southwest Texas and northern Mexico. Today travelers to that land can view large art panels they left behind on the rock walls of Rattlesnake Canyon, White Shaman Cave, Panther Cave, Mystic Shelter, and Cedar Springs. Messages from a distant past, they are now interpreted for modern readers by artist-archaeologist author.iv

This is the first book on the remarkable 50-mile Spanish-era acequia system that supplied water to early San Antonio. It is believed to have been the most extensive such network within the present-day United States. One of the acequias, serving lands near Mission Espada, remains in use. Its 1730s stone aqueduct is a significant tourist attraction.v

This book explores eighteenth-century San Antonio de Béxar, a community on the periphery of Spain's North American frontier. From this struggling settlement eventually developed modern San Antonio, Texas. In spite of isolation and neglect, many of the settlers, veterans of frontier colonies farther south, founded San Antonio on centuries-old institutions. Although the colonists often feuded with one another in the early years, frontier political and economic forces molded them into a single community by the end of the eighteenth century.vi
Estaville, L. E., & Earl, R. A. (2008). Texas Water Atlas. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press. This book, written by geographers Lawrence E. Estaville and Richard A. Earl, is a thorough examination of water resources in Texas since European settlements. The authors include a variety of water related topics and describe their effects in Texas’ financial and political future. The book includes a great number of color maps and is an outstanding source for students, professors, conservation professionals, and policy makers.vii


Gwynne, S. C. (2010). Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History. New York, NY: Scribner. S. C. Gwynne’s Empire of the Summer Moon spans two astonishing stories. The first traces the rise and fall of the Comanches, the most powerful Indian tribe in American history. The second entails one of the most remarkable narratives ever to come out of the Old West: the epic saga of the pioneer woman Cynthia Ann Parker and her mixed-blood son Quanah, who became the last and greatest chief of the Comanches.x

Irwin, T. (2016). San Antonio’s Historic Architecture. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing. Spanish colonial missionary settlements established San Antonio as a junction between Mexico and the developing United States in the early 1700s. Because of its remote location amid both countries and its great distance from other cities, San Antonio became a crossroads for commerce, industry, and strategic military position on the wild frontier. Texas independence and the admission of Texas into the United States in the 19th century established a diverse cultural population and distinctive architecture that remains historically significant across the nation as it continues to gain attention on the world stage.xi

Miller, C. (2005). On the Border: an Environmental History of San Antonio. San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press. This collection of essays, revised by Miller, is a narrative of San Antonio’s environmental history since the arrival of the Spanish settlers in the early 18th century. It examines the increasing connection between the citizens and the South Texas landscape. The book also explores the history of city parks, water and sewer systems, and identifies present issues and threats that affect San Antonio.xiii

Porter, C. R. (2009). Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press. In 1718, the Spanish settled San Antonio, partly because of its prolific and breathtaking springs—at that time, one of the largest natural spring systems in the known world. The abundance of fresh water, coupled with the Spanish colonial legal concept that water was to be equitably shared by all settlers, led to the building of the system of acequias (canals or ditches) within the settlement. The system is one of the earliest and perhaps most extensive municipal water systems in North America.xiii

This nomination was written by the National Historical Park for the inscription of the San Antonio Missions as a World Heritage site. The properties consist of 5 Spanish colonial missions located along the San Antonio River plus an agricultural ranch outside of San Antonio: over 300 hectares total. The missions carry an interchange of human values and living cultural traditions that made them become a World Heritage site. A buffer zone of 2,068 hectares has been identified for the protection of their outstanding universal value, as well as existing Federal, State, and Local laws.


Rodolfo Rosales discovers San Antonio’s politics behind the scenes. Rosales analyzes the extensive unsuccessful efforts of Chicanos and Chicanas to become part of the city’s political life, ever since the election of Henry Cisneros. By reviewing the history of the Chicano’s Community he explains why the idea of incorporating to the political system has become a mere delusion and highlights the role of Chicana middle-class women in politics.ⅳ


No natural resource issue has greater significance for the future of Texas than water. The state’s demand for water for municipal, industrial, agricultural, and recreational uses continues to grow exponentially, while the supply from rivers, lakes, aquifers, and reservoirs is limited. To help Texans manage their water resources today and plan for future needs, one of Texas's top water experts has compiled this authoritative overview of water issues in Texas.ⅴ


Places Left Unfinished at the Time of Creation tells of growing up in San Antonio, Texas, in an in-between place and time — shifting back and forth across the Mexican border, between present realities and ancient cultures. Interweaving family remembrance, pre-Columbian mythology, and the histories of Texas and Mexico, it blends the story of one Mexican family with the soul of an entire people. Part treasury of the elders, part elegy, part personal odyssey, part Book of the Dead, its tales are of a fragile family lineage that spans borders and rivers and decades.ⅵ


ⅳ Retrieved from: http://www.amazon.com/Lower-Pecos-Texas-University-Anthropology/dp/160344985X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1457041670&sr=1-1&keywords=lower+pecos+anthropology


ⅵ Retrieved from: https://books.google.com/books/about/San_Antonio_de_B%C3%A9jar.html?id=PxtSAAAAAMAAJ