

A vibrant future
begins with
a colorful past.

THE CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF SAN ANTONIO

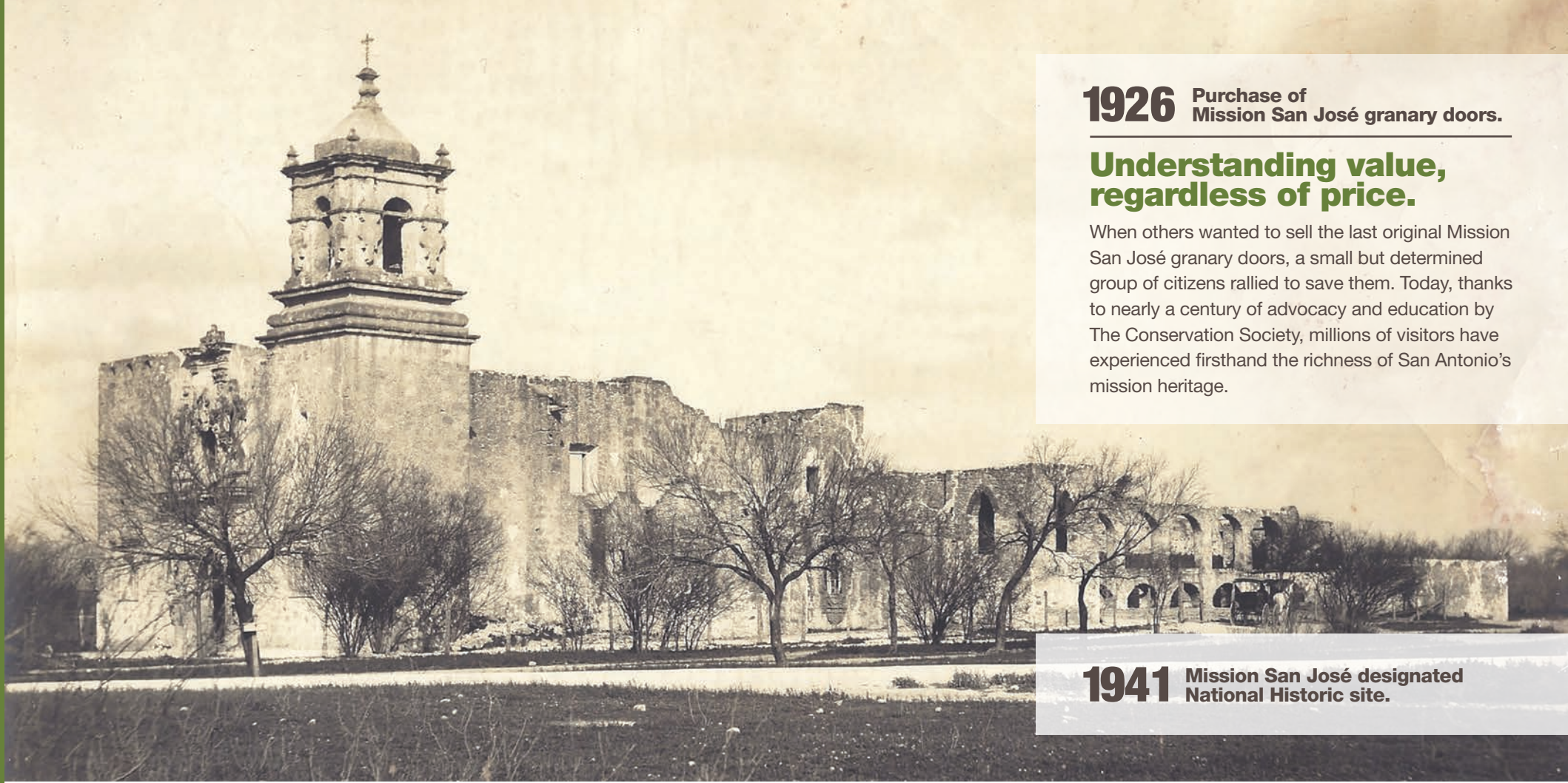
The story of San Antonio cannot be captured in black and white alone. Those who have gone before left a bold canvas created with a palette of stone and adobe, of oak trees and **With an eye toward** **vation** **Society of S** **or the** **preservation** **ral, natural** **and cultural legacy, letting us and generations** **to come experience it with all of our senses,** **in all of its dimensions and color.**



The story of San Antonio cannot be captured in black and white alone. Those who have gone before left a bold canvas created with a palette of stone and adobe, of oak trees and agave, of water and work. **With an eye toward the future, The Conservation Society of San Antonio advocates for the preservation of this rich architectural, natural and cultural legacy, letting us and generations to come experience it with all of our senses, in all of its dimensions and color.**

The Conservation Society of San Antonio is one of the first and most effective community preservation groups in the country. Spurred by San Antonio’s rapid urbanization nearly a century ago, Society founders Rena Maverick Green and Emily Edwards, both artists, realized a need for an organization that would be stewards of our city’s unique history. Today, we can point to hundreds of natural and cultural landmarks that are still standing because of The Conservation Society of San Antonio. Our city’s status as the top tourist destination in Texas is both an economic generator and a testament to the unique appeal of a landscape steeped in heritage and natural beauty.

And after a century of success, we are just getting started.



1926 Purchase of Mission San José granary doors.

Understanding value, regardless of price.

When others wanted to sell the last original Mission San José granary doors, a small but determined group of citizens rallied to save them. Today, thanks to nearly a century of advocacy and education by The Conservation Society, millions of visitors have experienced firsthand the richness of San Antonio’s mission heritage.

1941 Mission San José designated National Historic site.

1924

Artists Rena Maverick Green and Emily Edwards organize The Conservation Society to save the historic 1859 Market House and other historic, cultural and natural landmarks.

1926

Undeterred by the razing of the Market House, the newly formed Society pursues visionary preservation projects including protection of the San Antonio Missions and supporting the creation of the Witte Museum.

1929

The Society endorses Robert Hugman’s River Walk beautification plan.

1936

San José compound dedicated.

Purchase of Espada Mission Aqueduct.

1941

The Society, Bexar County, and Catholic Church transfer San José Mission (except church) to the State of Texas.

Dedication of restored River Walk and La Villita.

1942

Purchase of Dashiell House at 511 Villita Street.



1929

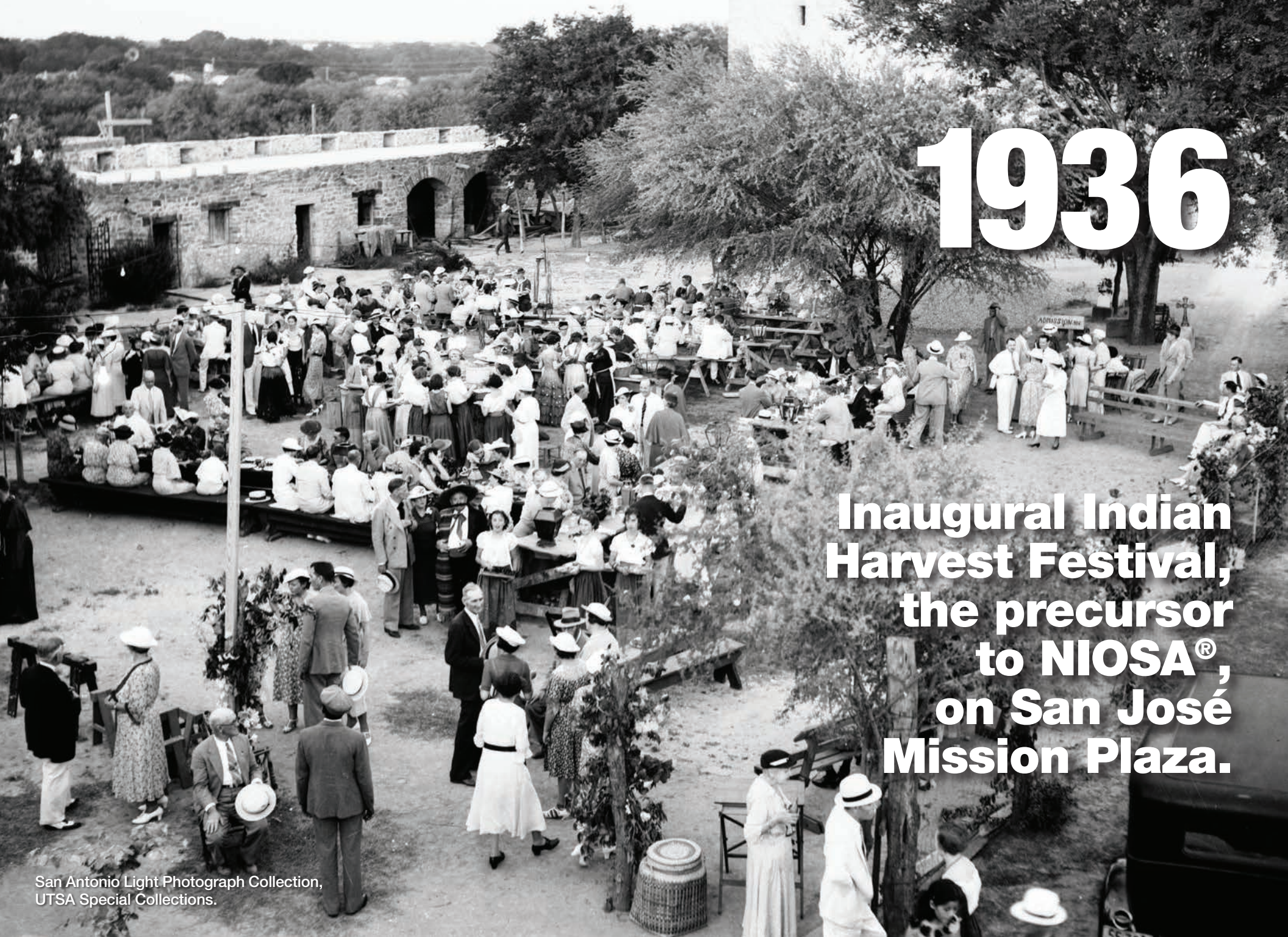
**Conservation Society
purchases San José
Mission Granary
for restoration.**

San Antonio Light Photograph Collection,
UTSA Special Collections.



1933

**San José Mission
Granary restoration
completed.**



San Antonio Light Photograph Collection, UTSA Special Collections.

1936

Inaugural Indian Harvest Festival, the precursor to NIOSA®, on San José Mission Plaza.



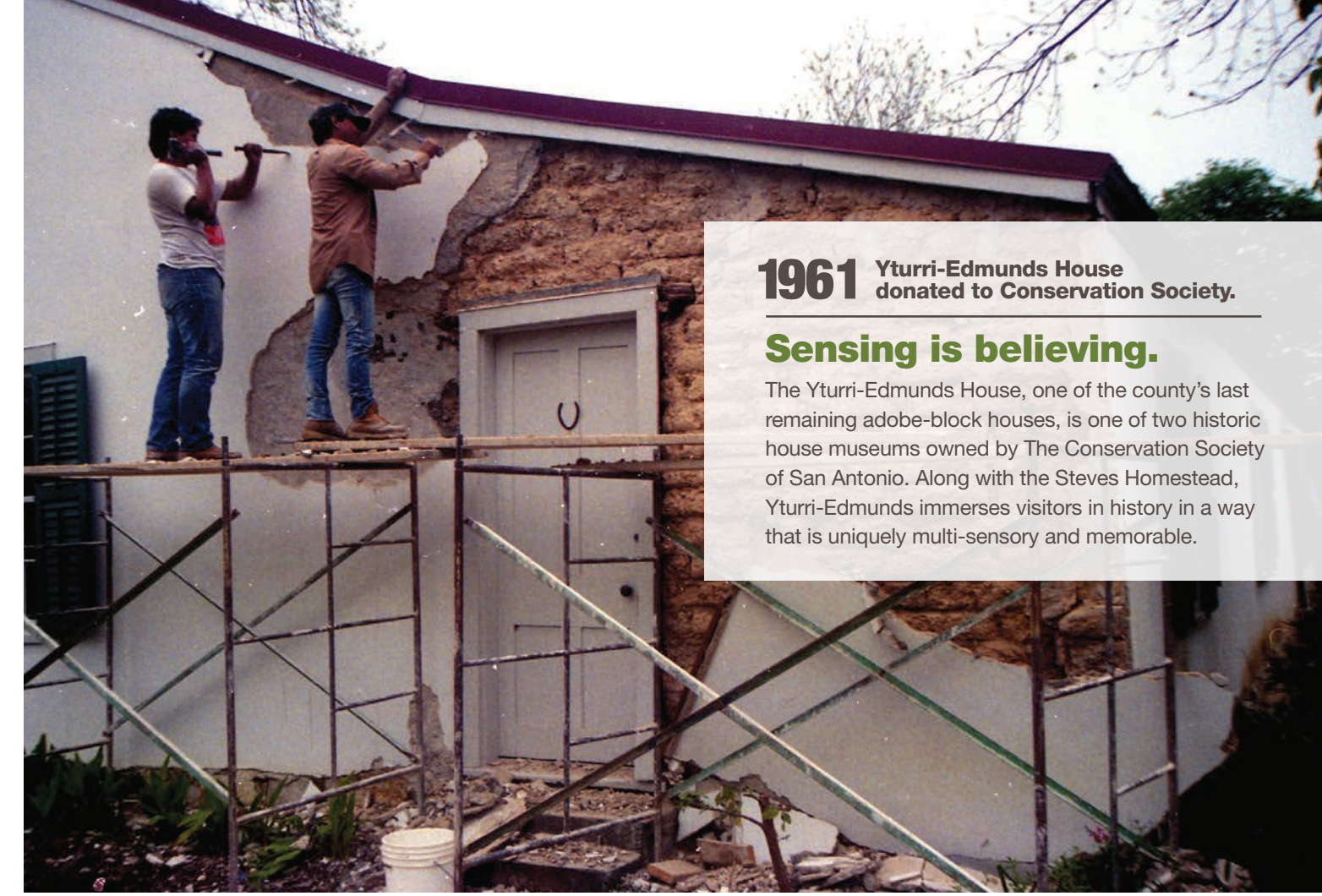
1940
Indian Harvest Festival moved to San Antonio River as promotion for River Walk project.

1946
City requests Indian Harvest Festival move to La Villita for Fiesta. Later renamed Night in Old San Antonio®.

1955
NIOSA® attendance exceeds 10,000.

1956
NIOSA® adds a third night.

1958
NIOSA® adds a fourth night.



1961 Yturri-Edmunds House donated to Conservation Society.

Sensing is believing.

The Yturri-Edmunds House, one of the county's last remaining adobe-block houses, is one of two historic house museums owned by The Conservation Society of San Antonio. Along with the Steves Homestead, Yturri-Edmunds immerses visitors in history in a way that is uniquely multi-sensory and memorable.

1949

Purchase of Bombach House at Villita and South Alamo streets.

1952

Edna Steves Vaughan donates Steves Homestead at 509 King William Street.

1953

Campaign begun to save José Antonio Navarro House complex.

The Society backs Maverick family heirs to avoid construction of 1,100 car garage under Travis Park.

1954

Restored Steves Homestead house museum opens to public.

1957

Texas Supreme Court bars construction of Travis Park garage, ending threat of garages under city parks.

Purchase of 25 acres near Espada dam for Acequia Park.

1959

Defeat of multi-story tourist information center in Alamo Plaza.

Purchase of O. Henry House, later moved to Lone Star Brewery Grounds.

1964 Restored Navarro House complex opens to public.

Saving more than local treasures.

When urban renewal claimed many of the city's historic buildings in the 1960s, The Society saved the home of Texas patriot, José Antonio Navarro, and kept it in its original location. The significance of the history represented by the once endangered Navarro house has been recognized statewide and is a National Historic Landmark.



MOTTO

“Shall I say ‘Yes, I remember it.’ or ‘Here it is, I helped to save it?’”

– Miss Anna Ellis

1968 La Villita enlarged as part of HemisFair urban renewal.

It takes a village to save one.

San Antonio's original “Little Village” is one example of The Conservation Society's collaborative approach to preservation. The Society began conservation efforts with then Mayor Maury Maverick in the 1930s with federal funding. Over the years, the buildings of La Villita have been saved through public and private partnerships and are now home to art galleries, restaurants, and NIOSA®.



Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission (www.thc.texas.gov)



1962
NIOSA® profits for historic preservation exceed \$100,000.

1976
Attendance reaches 100,000 making NIOSA® the nation's largest historic preservation fundraising event.

1985
NIOSA® profits first exceed \$500,000.

1964

Court battle won to restore water flow in San Juan Acequia.

1965

Purchase of Old Ursuline Academy complex.

Resolution passed for preservation of 22 historic buildings in HemisFair.

U.S. Department of Commerce selects The Society to oversee preservation of these structures.

1967

City of San Antonio adopts its first historic zoning ordinance.

1974

The Society's Historic Buildings Chair, Pat Osborne, becomes City's first Historic Preservation Officer.

1975

Ursuline Academy sold to Southwest Craft Center for restoration.

Acequia Park transferred to city.

Navarro House deeded to Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission.

1976

Espada Aqueduct property transferred to city.

1977

National Trust for Historic Preservation Crowninshield Award received for national impact on historic preservation activities.

1978

Reuter Building façade is first façade easement donated to The Society.

Congress passes San Antonio Missions National Historical Park bill after intense Society lobbying.

1979

Purchase and preservation of Staacke and Stevens buildings on Commerce St.

1981

Successful PR campaign to restore fire-damaged Municipal Auditorium.

Purchase and resale of Rand Building for preservation.

1982

Hertzberg Clock at Building, the oldest on Houston Street, donated to The Society.

Stuemke Barn relocated to Wulff House grounds.

1983

Albert Maverick Building, the oldest on Houston Street, saved.

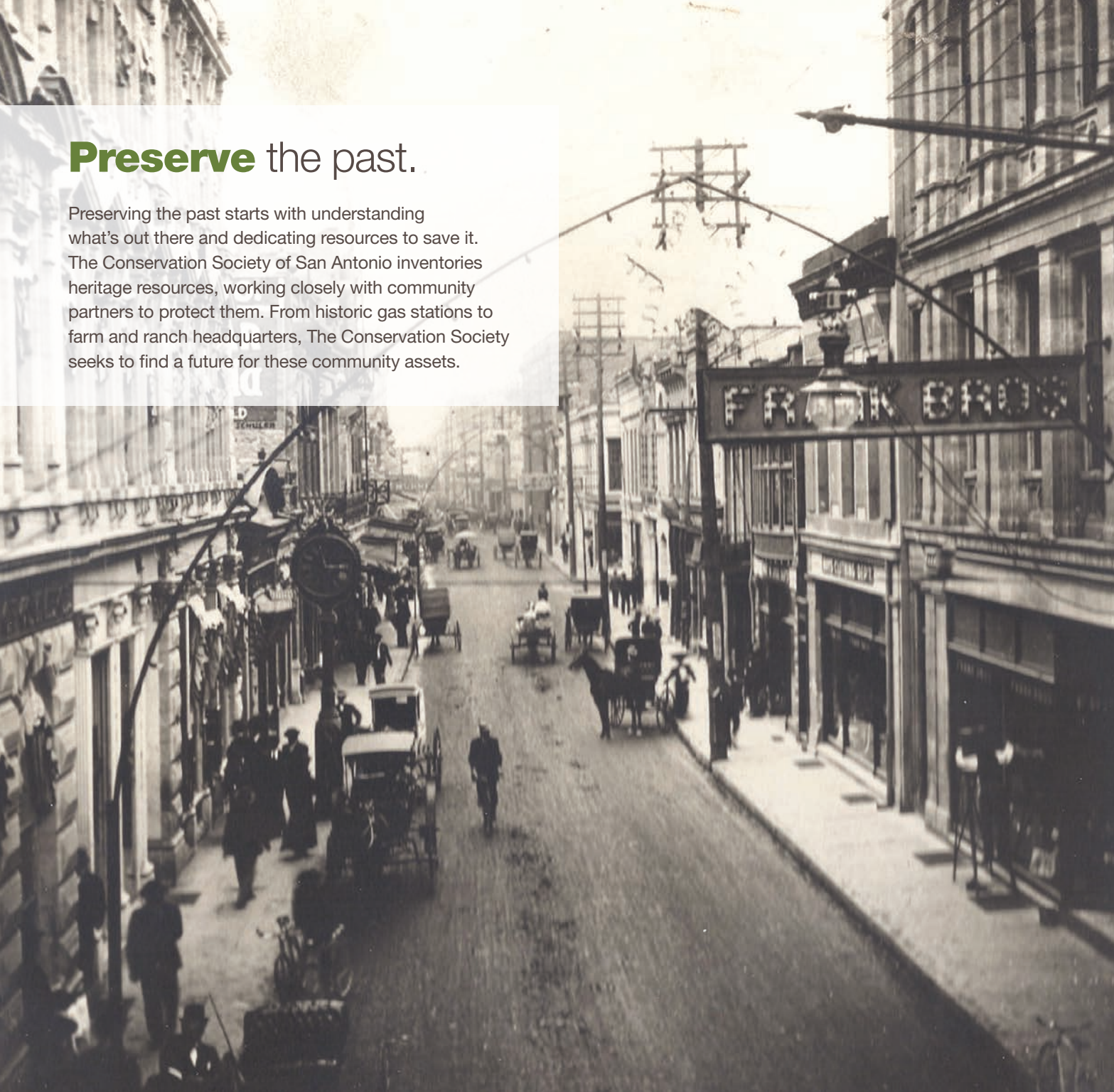
Preserve the past.

Celebrate the present.



Fight for the generations.

Shape the future.



Preserve the past.

Preserving the past starts with understanding what's out there and dedicating resources to save it. The Conservation Society of San Antonio inventories heritage resources, working closely with community partners to protect them. From historic gas stations to farm and ranch headquarters, The Conservation Society seeks to find a future for these community assets.



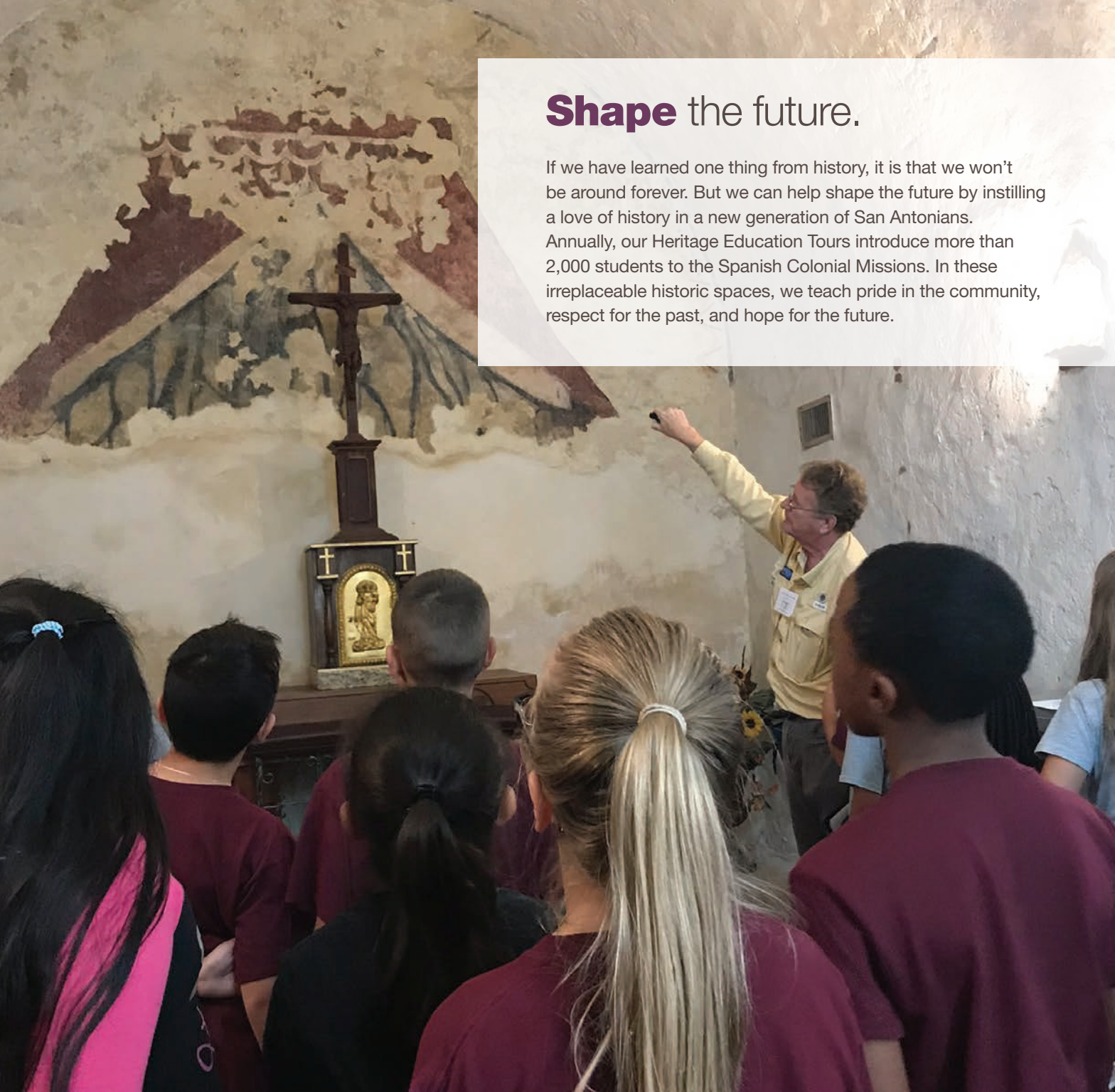
Celebrate the present.

Conservation is not just saving old buildings. It is about bringing new life to landmarks and landscapes, making them vital and relevant to our present day. San Antonio's original party with a purpose, A Night In Old San Antonio®, is one way in which we invite everyone in the community to celebrate our city's cultural heritage traditions while raising funds for preservation.



Fight for the generations.

When history is threatened, The Conservation Society of San Antonio takes a stand. Not only for today, but for future generations who will lose the full story of San Antonio if our cultural and natural resources are lost. As advocates for conservation, we meet with neighborhood, city, state, and national leaders, to listen and learn, and ultimately fight for an authentic picture of San Antonio.



Shape the future.

If we have learned one thing from history, it is that we won't be around forever. But we can help shape the future by instilling a love of history in a new generation of San Antonians. Annually, our Heritage Education Tours introduce more than 2,000 students to the Spanish Colonial Missions. In these irreplaceable historic spaces, we teach pride in the community, respect for the past, and hope for the future.

1985

Fairmount Hotel relocated,
setting world record for
heaviest building moved.

When an immovable object met an unstoppable force.

When city developers wanted to demolish the Fairmount Hotel to make way for Rivercenter Mall, The Conservation Society stepped in. Society members orchestrated the move of the 1,600 ton, three-story building six blocks. This may be the largest, but certainly not the only, example of The Society's tenacity and commitment to historic preservation. In this instance, the unstoppable force won.

Photo courtesy of the San Antonio Express-News.

Photo courtesy of the San Antonio Express-News.



1998 Development of Ellis Alley on the East Side.

Restoring the heart of a community.

After the Civil War, Ellis Alley was part of the first “freedom colony” of African-American residents and remained the hub of the East Side community for nearly a century. The Conservation Society was instrumental in the restoration and reuse of three original homes.

2001 Restoration of Hays Street Bridge.

Building bridges, connecting communities.

When residents wanted to save the Hays Street Bridge, a vital link connecting San Antonio’s eastside and downtown, the Conservation Society rose to the challenge with a \$50,000 grant. The Society helped preserve this bridge including a rare Whipple-Phoenix truss from 1881. The Hays Street Bridge project highlights the Society’s role in supporting grass roots efforts to save beloved neighborhood landmarks.



1988

Restoration of Franklin House on the San Antonio Academy campus funded in part by The Society.

1989

Las Casas Foundation restores and reopens Majestic Theatre with help from Society grants.

1992

Fort Sam Houston quadrangle restored as first step in restoration of the post’s 934 historic buildings.

1993

Aztec Theatre sold with preservation covenants.

1994

\$300,000 pledged toward the restoration of the San Pedro Playhouse.

1995

Renovation of Robert E. Lee Hotel for downtown housing.

Sullivan Carriage House moved and reassembled at the San Antonio Botanical Garden with funding assistance from The Society.

Society establishes Mary Ann Blocker Castleberry as Chair for Historic Preservation in the UTSA graduate architecture program.

1996

The Society official history, *Saving San Antonio: The Precarious Preservation of a Heritage* by Lewis F. Fisher, published.

1998

Work begins on Project ReNew to revitalize the neighborhood south of Five Points.

1999

Development, in conjunction with Federal Realty Investment Trust, of revitalization design guidelines for Houston Street.

Grant to city for iron fences around cemeteries on East Commerce.

Donation toward the restoration of San Juan Acequia to maintain rights to water irrigating Mission San Juan Capistrano and adjacent farmlands.

2000

American Institute of Architects “Institute Honors for Collaborative Achievement Award” received in recognition of The Society’s 75 years of beneficial influence on the architectural profession.

2001

Dedication of restored San José Granary gristmill attended by President George W. and First Lady Laura Bush.



Rita Rozelle Schimpff Collection

2008 Local landmark designation for ten historic farms and ranches.

Preserving a way of life.

The farms and ranches around Bexar County tell the story of our frontier heritage. The Conservation Society's inventory of houses, barns, jacales, and other structures documents our regional agricultural and ranching industries.



2004

Froggy Bottom, named for the Louisiana region where Black settlers migrated from in the 1800s, added to NIOSA®. The area pays tribute to African-American culture through music and food.

2011

French Quarter expanded into South Alamo Street between Villita and Nueva. The food and music represents the early French settlers who came through San Antonio.



2010 Support for funding to save Lerma's Nite Club.

Because cultural history matters.

Lerma's Nite Club, one of the oldest, continuously operated conjunto music venues, was threatened with demolition. The Society secured funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to ensure that this building's ephemeral cultural history wasn't lost.

2002

Grant to Hidalgo Foundation for restoration of the Bexar County Courthouse.

2003

Collaboration with City to maintain visibility of Stinson Airport terminal's original Art Deco façade.

2005

"Trails to Treasure" benefit for Hays Street Bridge restoration.

Coordination of project to stabilize the adobe Bergara-Le Compte House on Guadalupe Street.

2006

Society starts the process to nominate the San Antonio Missions as a World Heritage Site.

2007

Collaboration with the City and a local non-profit to save and relocate Carol Burnett's childhood home for reuse as an after-school learning center.

2008

Establishment of the Brackenridge Park Conservancy in conjunction with the City Parks and Recreation Department and community stakeholders.

2009

Participation in the creation of the international award-winning River North Master Plan.

Successful advocacy effort to establish a preservation easement on the 1848 James Trueheart House and surrounding land.

2011

Successful advocacy for amended ordinance governing street name changes affecting historic streets.

2012

Successful application for state and local landmark designation for Alamo Stadium.

Society promotes preservation of HemisFair '68 Confluence Theater (Wood Courthouse) and Institute of Texan Cultures buildings.

2013

Advocacy for the Texas Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

2014

Funding support pledged for the Mission San Juan Spanish Colonial Farm, the only one of its kind in the United States.

2018

Society announces \$300,000 Tricentennial commitment to restore 1877 Pump House #1 in Brackenridge Park.



2015

**World Heritage status awarded to the
San Antonio Missions.**

2019

Woolworth Building on list of Texas' Most Endangered Historic Places.

Because history is not always made on the battlefield.

The Conservation Society of San Antonio fights to save ordinary places made extraordinary by the efforts of committed citizens. In the heart of downtown, the Woolworth Building was the site of the nation's first peaceful, voluntary lunch counter integration on March 15, 1960 during the Civil Rights sit-in movement. Nearly 60 years later, this important site is a state antiquities landmark because of The Conservation Society's effort.

Will we pass along
memories or
memorable places?

Because history never stops being made,
the Conservation Society of San Antonio
will never stop fighting to save them.
Will you tell
the story of San Antonio
in all of its richness and color?

A photograph of the Woolworth Building in San Antonio, a multi-story brick and stone building with many windows. The building is shown from a low angle, looking up. The sky is clear blue. In the foreground, there are some streetlights and a sign that says "RIGHT LANE".

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Because history never stops being made,
The Conservation Society of San Antonio
will never stop fighting for preservation.

**Will you join our effort to tell
the unique story of San Antonio
in all of its richness and color?**



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For more information about our current initiatives and how you can become a member, call 210.224.6163 or visit SAconservation.org