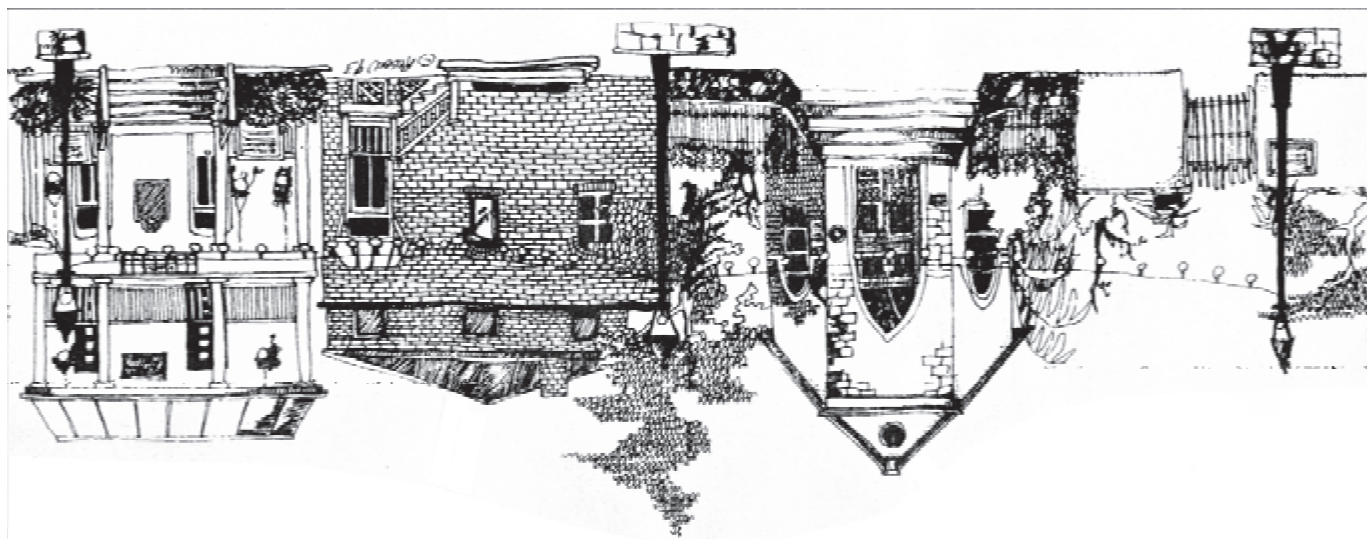




A Walking Tour of La Villita



The purpose for which The Conservation Society of San Antonio is formed is to preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, places and customs relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty and all that is admirably distinctive to our State; and by such physical and cultural preservation to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow with knowledge of our inherited regional values.



complete history of La Villita. La Villita, neither the markers, nor the brochure are intended to convey a has attempted to represent diversity of the people and the cultures of La documents from various sources. While the interpretive information brochure has been thoroughly researched and is based on records and Historic District. The information presented on the markers and in this Development and Operations Department and is a National Register City La Villita is a facility of the City of San Antonio Center City Tenants Association and The Conservation Society of San Antonio. The interpretive markers that guide you through the walking tour of La Villita were funded through a cooperative project of the La Villita continue the arts and crafts tradition begun over 75 years ago. events, large and small, public and private. The shops and boutiques In addition, La Villita is the setting each year for about 300 other Antonio sponsored by The Conservation Society of San Antonio. Independence from Mexico, includes "A Night in Old San events, Fiesta, an annual event which celebrates Texas" are evident here. The past is celebrated through the year in many Mexican, German, French, American, and Texan peoples which As you meander, you will see the influences of the Spanish, alive with shops very much in the present day.

The charm of this "Little Village" of San Antonio should be savored. Once called a hidden treasure, La Villita is rich with history in a setting history. Today it stands as a monument to San Antonio's past. Mary Maverick, acted to preserve this colorful part of San Antonio's century saw La Villita decline into a slum. In 1939, city fathers, led by hauled up from the river at 25 cents a barrel. The first part of the 20th their own wells for drinking water, but for washing purposes water was now comprise La Villita. Before the turn of the century most homes had best illustrated by the variety of architectural styles of the buildings that educators and craftsmen. The cultural mix that occurred at this time is These pioneers became San Antonio's business leader, bankers, European migrants from Germany and France moved into the area. showed La Villita to be of considerable size. Late in the 19th century, earlier structures. In 1836 a map drawn before the fall of the Alamo families. After a flood in 1819, brick, stone and adobe houses replaced Villita became a village of primitive huts for Spanish soldiers and their known as the Alamo, was abandoned and became a military outpost. La Christianize these natives. By 1792 San Antonio de Valero, which is now When the Spaniards founded Mission San Antonio de Valero in 1718,

La Villita Yesterday

1. BOWEN/KIRCHNER HOUSE

This house appears on an 1873 map and was built either by San Antonio postmaster John Bowen, who bought the property in 1851 or by Auguste Kirchner, who bought it from Bowen in 1871. The original house is built of caliche block.



2. LOSANA HOUSE

Mariano Romano Losana was the original owner of this house. A succession of owners and businesses, including a chemical manufacturing company and restaurant were among the tenants prior to the acquisition of the house by the City of San Antonio in 1939.



3. HESSLER HOUSE (CANADA HOUSE)

Typical of the 1870's construction, this house was built by Ernest Hessler. The construction is caliche block with gabled roof of standing seam metal.



4. TEJEDA HOUSE (THE CAXIAS HOUSE)

This house is one of the earliest houses in historical La Villita. Built by Jose and Refugia Duran Tejeda, it is also named for the Duke of Caxias, Brazil's most famous soldier in its fight for independence.



5. HERRERA HOUSE (THE SAN MARTIN HOUSE)

The house was owned by Rafael Herrera who bought the property in 1854. It is named for Don Jose de San Martin who fought for independence in South America. (Note insert cut into the wall to show rubble - stone and lime mortar method of construction.)



6. KITCHEN

The kitchen building was constructed during the National Youth Administration restoration in 1939. The small building stands on King Phillip V walk where the legendary Mrs. Womble's Boarding House once stood.



7. GUADALUPE HOUSE

The house and the walkway leading to it take their present names from the shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe which was constructed during the NYA era on the north side of the house. The floor tile was probably fired in the kiln behind the building during the early 1940's.



8. KILN AND WEAVING BUILDING

This building was used to house the arts and crafts programs which were integral to the La Villita restoration project. Clay pavers, plaques and other materials used were fired in the kiln. Classes were also taught here for many years.



9. & 9.B. BOLIVAR HALL

A twentieth century building in the style of frontier military posts of the late 1800's. It now houses the administrative offices of La Villita and a post office. (Note the plaque at the east end of the lower porch and another as you walk west.)



10-12. ST. PHILIP'S COLLEGE

The college was begun in an adobe house just north of this building in 1898 but the present brick buildings date to the 1900's. The City of San Antonio acquired the group of buildings in 1945.

13. THE LITTLE CHURCH

The cornerstone was laid for the church on March 2, 1879. Several denominations have held services here. However, it is now on active non-denominational church and a favorite site for weddings.

14. FLORIAN HOUSE

Constructed in 1854 at a cost of \$660, the house is named for Erasmus Florian, a Polish immigrant. The original structure and rear addition reflect the dramatic change in building styles from the pre-Civil War to the later Victorian period.

15. FAVILLE HOUSE

Franklin D. Faville constructed the house about 1855. Typical of many mid-Nineteenth century homes in San Antonio, the house has a gable running parallel to the front of the house.



22. SHAFER HOUSE

This house was built by A.H. Shafer after he purchased the property in 1888. It was advertised in the early 1900's as a "nicely furnished apartment with hot and cold running water, electric lights and gas".

23. ESQUIDA/DOWNS/DIETRICH HOUSE

Named for three of its owners, this house underwent numerous additions. Amazingly, this adobe structure was found in excellent condition inside the cinder block walls at the Joy Kist Candy Company's warehouse during renovations after HemisFair '68.

24. 101 KING PHILLIP V ST

This house was built sometime before 1855 on Womble Alley. The interior of the house reveals caliche block walls and pine floors, as well as a beaded board ceiling and an early wood mantle.

25. CIRILUS GUISSI HOUSE

Formerly located in the HemisFair area, the 1890's house was dismantled and reconstructed here in 1969 and form the southwestern corner of Maverick Plaza.

26. THE OTTO BOMBACH HOUSE AND STORE

Built in 1856, the property has housed many businesses, most recently a restaurant named for "Little Rhein", the predominantly German neighborhood adjacent to S. Alamo St in the early 1900s.

Markers

Architect: Lewis A. Fisher, AIA
Historical Research: Maria Watson Pfeiffer
Editing: Luis Torres
Pen & Ink Drawings ... Jean Rosow

16. McALLISTER HOUSE AND STORE

The land bought by Samuel W. McAllister in 1854 was incorporated into La Villita in 1949. The store is of limestone and the second story of Caliche block.

17. BARBER SHOP

Built in the 1950's, the shop was one of the later structures added to La Villita.

18. THE COS HOUSE

This structure is believed to be one of the oldest in La Villita predating 1835. General Perfecto de Cos reportedly signed the Articles of Capitulation for the Mexican army here on December 9, 1835, after being defeated by the Texan Army.

19. ARNESON RIVER THEATER

A visit to La Villita is not complete without seeing the Arneson River Theater. Built as a WPA project in 1939, the facility is the site of a variety of events from political rallies to operas.

20. DOSCH-RISCHE HOUSE

Ernest Dosch and Ulrich Rische, proprietors of the Deer Horn Saloon, built this house sometime in the early 1880's. Earlier building methods are reflected in the narrow interior doorway and thick walls.

21. NEW YORK STAR CLEANING AND DYE WORKS

This structure replaced two small adobe houses. The New York Star Cleaning and Dye Works operated here until 1933 when the property was leased by the Joy Kist Candy Company.

27. GRAY-GUILBEAU HOUSE

The house is named for James Gray and French consultant Francois Guilbeau who bought the house from Gray in 1853. The house saw many owners and changes before becoming a restaurant in 1970.

28. THE DASHIELL HOUSE (CASA VILLITA)

Colonel Jeremiah Y. Dashiell had this house built in 1856 on land on the San Antonio River bought in 1849. The Conservation Society of San Antonio maintained offices at Casa Villita from 1942-1974.

29. PLAZA JUAREZ

Plaza Juarez was built during the National Youth Administration restoration of La Villita and was named for Mexican patriot Benito Juarez. The area had in earlier times been developed with small homes and businesses.



The Conservation Society of San Antonio sets aside funds earned through A Night in Old San Antonio® each year to support the restoration and rehabilitation of La Villita including but not limited to the historic buildings.

