

CURRICULUM GUIDE

This curriculum guide has been created to provide information about the history of San Antonio, City Government and records housed at the Office of the City Clerk Archives. The archival program will convert many of the records to digital format making them available to the public on this website:

<http://www.sanantonio.gov/clerk/Archives/FindingAids.aspx>

THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

HISTORY

San Antonio is one of the most historic cities in Texas. Since its beginnings in the 17th century San Antonio has operated under the governments of six different flags. Spain was the first European nation to lay claim to what is now Texas in 1519. France tried to expand from Louisiana in 1685 but their small claim only lasted 5 years. Mexico escaped Spain's rule and became independent in 1821. Texas revolted against Mexico and won independence in 1836. Texas lasted as a republic until they joined the United States. The consummation of the Annexation Agreement of the Republic of Texas with the United States was February 19, 1846. The sixth flag that flew over Texas was the Confederate flag from 1861 to 1865.

The area of San Antonio was first named by Domingo Teran de los Rios' expedition when they celebrated the feast of Saint Anthony along what would later become the San Antonio River on June 13, 1691. The actual founding of the city came in 1718 when a group of colonists under Marin de Alarcon established the Villa de Bexar. In 1731, a group of sixteen families from the Canary Islands arrived and founded the Villa de San Fernando, the first civil government in Texas. In 1837 the Texas Legislature approved the incorporation of the "City of San Antonio," the Town Council was organized and the first City Council meeting was held.

RECORDS UNDER SPAIN AND MEXICO

San Fernando de Bexar Municipal Records, 1770-1832: The collection includes municipal account books 1830-1832, ordinance books 1830-1832, and City

Council minute books from the Spanish and Mexican municipal governments of San Fernando de Bexar 1770-1832.

CITY COUNCIL RECORDS

HISTORY

The Office of the City Clerk is responsible for maintaining, destroying, and preserving the official records created by the City of San Antonio municipal government. In addition to maintaining the official records of the City of San Antonio, the Office of the City Clerk also prepares for and conducts City Council Meetings, public hearings and work sessions, taping each for the permanent record; processes licenses, bonds, and insurance documents; prepares ceremonial items for the Mayor and City Council; sells and distributes copies of the city code, code supplements, and other city publications; processes and maintains records of appointments to boards and commissions; accepts claims filed against the city; accepts and maintains petitions filed by citizens; conducts municipal elections for the City of San Antonio, including City Council Elections and run-offs as well as elections dealing with bond issues, referendums, initiatives, and revisions to the City Charter; administers records of the city, including their microfilming as required by law; read the official bids for the city; and prepares publication of official city notices.

MINUTES

Minutes are the council proceedings for each City Council Meeting.

Office of the City Clerk, Council Journal and Minutes of Commissioners Proceedings, 1837-1997: This collection includes bound volumes of the Council Journal, a logbook recording the activities and meetings of the City Council of San Antonio. Journals include descriptions of petitions presented before the council, ordinances and resolutions passed by the council, and all other matters discussed during meetings. Journals after 1886 include commissioner minutes, a short description of reports presented to the council from each of the city's twelve commissioners (e.g., Fire Commissioner). From 1879 onwards, each volume includes an accompanying name/subject index, describing each topic brought before the council and its location.

ORDINANCES

An Ordinance is a public regulation, rule or law passed by the City Council.

Office of the City Clerk, Ordinance Books, 1850–2001: This collection includes bound volumes of Municipal Ordinances passed by the City Council of San Antonio dating from 1850 through the present. Each volume is accompanied by a subject and name index which can be accessed by either ordinance number or by date. Volume 1864-1867 includes Ordinances published as broadsides in English, Spanish, and German between.

PROCEEDINGS

A proceeding is a transaction of the events and activities of the government
A resolution is a formal expression of opinion or intention made by the vote of the City Council.

Office of the City Clerk, City Council Proceedings, 1849–2005: This collection includes correspondence, department reports, petitions, ordinances, resolutions, contracts, construction blueprints, maps, sketches, and photographs that document the activities of the City Council of San Antonio. Proceedings largely consist of materials that were either passed by the City Council, as ordinances and resolutions, or filed in the Office of the City Clerk and later presented to the City Council, such as departmental reports presented by commissioners, or petitions brought by private citizens or corporations before the City Council. The collection documents the history of the City of San Antonio from the 1840s through the present, with materials relating to a variety of different topics, including the operation and results of city elections; the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, sidewalks, sewers, electric signs, parks and plazas, rail and telegraph lines, and modifications to the San Antonio River; reports by City Commissioners on building projects, public health, city litigation, crime, and fire statistics; petitions and correspondence pertaining to topics as various as animal control, liquor and gambling within the city, zoning, schools, libraries, working conditions for laborers, and the distribution of municipal services.

DEEDS

A document once executed with the required authority transfers property from one to another.

Office of the City Clerk, Deeds, 1844-2000: This collection includes executed and unexecuted deeds of the City of San Antonio, predominately from the 1850s through the 1970s. Most of the deeds are lands either sold by or to the City of San Antonio for various municipal projects, including easements and properties for

the construction of city parks, cemeteries, streets and highways, sewers, airports, and flood prevention programs. The collection includes documentation for a number of significant municipal projects, including the creation and expansions of Brackenridge Park, San Pedro Park, and Stinson Field.

BONDS AND CONTRACTS

A written obligation under which a government, corporation or person guarantees to pay a stated sum of money before a specific date.

Office of the City Clerk, Bonds and Contracts, 1849-1965: Records consist of contracts, bonds, construction specifications, blueprints, and photographs documenting municipal projects and improvements of the City of San Antonio. A majority of the collection is contracts associated with street, bridge, and sewer construction projects throughout the city, including several early city contracts and bonds providing for the construction of bridges, quarries, and salaries for schoolteachers from the 1840s and 1850s. There are also bonds, contracts, specifications, and correspondence related to significant municipal projects, including renovation of the municipal building, the leasing of Stinson Field, and the creation of municipal auditorium. The collection also includes oath of office bonds for city employees from the 1910s through the 1940s, and surety bonds for the city's plumbers, taxicab drivers, electricians, auctioneers, and construction companies from the 1920s through the 1960s.

PROCLAMATIONS

An official declaration by the city giving public notice.

Mayor Proclamations, 1939-1951: Collection consists of proclamations issued by the mayors of San Antonio, beginning with Maury Maverick in 1939 continuing through the administration of Jack White in 1951. Materials include official proclamations issued by the city, and filed in the Office of the City Clerk, and also correspondence with citizens, public officials, and persons petitioning the city of San Antonio to establish an official day honoring particular events, persons, or causes.

DEPARTMENT RECORDS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

The City of San Antonio has a mayor-council government. The Mayor and City Council are separate offices. The Mayor, an elected executive, along with the

elected City Council functions with legislative powers. The Mayor may select a chief administrative officer, a City Manager, to oversee the different department which enables them to serve full time overseeing a wide range of services.

Office of the Mayor's Records: The Mayor's records include speeches, correspondence, policy files, projects files, reports, financial statements, and press releases.

Gus B. Mauermann Records, 1943-1947

Alfred Callaghan Records, 1947-1949

A. C. White Records, 1953-1954

Walter W. McAllister Records, 1961-1971

Henry Cisneros Records, 1981-1989

Lila Cockrell Records, 1989-1991

Nelson Wolff Records, 1991-1995

William E. Thornton Records, 1995-1997

Howard W. Peak Records, 1997-2001

Edward D. Garza Records, 2001-2005

CITY MANAGERS OFFICE

The City Manager is appointed by the Mayor and City Council to administratively manage the City. Duties include supervising the day-to-day operations of city departments and preparing the city budget.

City Manager Records: The City Manager's records include budgets, correspondence, studies, projects, reports, programs and agreements.

Thomas Huebner, 1977 – 1982

Louis Fox, 1982 – 1990

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

The City Attorney and the staff of attorneys handle all legal matters for the City of San Antonio from acting as general counsel to giving legal advice.

Office of the City Attorney Records, 1893-1985: Records of the Office of the City Attorney include civil case dockets, city and school tax dockets, legal opinions subject files and court transcripts of selected cases involving the City of San Antonio. Each bound case docket includes entries for lawsuits filed by or against the City of San Antonio, and includes the lawsuit's case number, court filed,

petition date, names of the defendant, plaintiff, and attorneys, claim of the plaintiff, disposition of the suit, and a description of the judgment.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The Finance Director's Office, representing the Department, has the fiduciary responsibility for providing policy and program direction to safeguard the City's financial assets and manage its financial. The Department supports all other departments and agencies of the City by providing comprehensive financial services. The Finance Department is organized into four divisions: Office of the Director, Accounting, Public Utilities, and Financial Services.

Finance Department Records 1911-2004: Records consist of annual reports and ledgers maintained by the Finance Department (Finance Committee) from 1911 until 2004, though the bulk of the materials date between the 1930s and 1990s. Among the records are annual financial reports, audit reports, budget reports, bond ledgers, and grant reports.

MUNICIPAL COURT

The San Antonio Municipal Court was created by city charter and given authority by the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and the Texas Government Code. The court has jurisdiction over Class C misdemeanor criminal cases, with punishment upon conviction of fines up to \$500. Municipal court judges are appointed by the City Council of San Antonio to serve two-year terms.

Municipal Court Dockets 1899-1986: Records include 520 bound dockets documenting cases that appeared before the San Antonio Municipal Court from 1899 through 1986. The volumes are arranged primarily by year. Within each bound volume, cases are arranged by case number and each case's title, offense charged, date filed, date tried, a short description of the judgment rendered, and any appeals filed in the case.

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

San Antonio parks can trace their history to the early 1730's when the Spanish government granted public lands to the municipality. San Pedro Park, a portion of Brackenridge Park, Military, Main and Alamo Plazas, Market Square, Milam, Columbus, Pittman-Sullivan Parks and the City's Eastside Cemeteries are comprised of Spanish land grant property that has never left public ownership.

Funding for the parks was for the most part non-existent until the 1870s. At that time the City Council voted to add trees, install fencing gravel walks, irrigation and add other improvements.

Local amateur horticulturalist Anton Wulff played a leading role in the early beautification of San Antonio's parks and plazas. He was the first to hold the position of Park Commissioner.

In 1928 the City funded a new recreation department to provide supervised programming at its growing number of parks and the Parks and Recreation Department was organized in 1952.

Parks & Recreation Department Records 1920-2006: This collection consists of boxes of photographs, negatives and slides. Subjects include City government and officials, parks and park programs, events, city landmarks and citizens.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The department was created following the reorganization of city departments in 1951. The department assumed responsibility for the planning, opening, construction, maintenance, and repair of all streets, alleys, sidewalks, bridges, rivers, watercourses, creeks, ditches, and public ways; of the sanitary and storm sewers, sewer systems, and sewage disposal plants; of the construction, maintenance, repair, and operation of all public buildings and properties belonging to or used by the City

Public Work Department Records 1916 – 1985: Records include correspondence, contracts, reports, memoranda, blueprints, architectural drawings, photographs, and slides that document the activities of the City of San Antonio's Public Works Department, chiefly the files of the Director of Public Works from the late 1940s through the 1980s.

VITAL RECORDS - HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Vital records are records of life events kept under governmental authority, including birth certificates, marriage licenses, and death. Texas Vital Statistics can provide records for births or deaths that were filed in Texas from 1903 to the present. Marriage and divorce records are not held by the city but by the county.

Birth Records, 1897 – Present and Deaths Records, 1876 – Present: The Vital Records of the City of San Antonio provide birth and death records that were

filed with the office from the late 1800's to the present. Death information often includes cause of death, burial site, birth date, length of residence in San Antonio, parents' birthplaces.

COMMITTEE, ASSOCIATION AND BOARD RECORDS

BEAUTIFY SAN ANTONIO ASSOCIATION

Organized in 1951 as an arm of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, the mission of the Beautify San Antonio Association was to "clean, repair, plant, and freshen" the city of San Antonio by implementing public anti-litter awareness programs, coordinating annual Clean-Up, Paint-Up, and Fix-Up days, hosting various clean-up projects around San Antonio, and awarding monthly Beautification Awards to area businesses and individuals. The organization was largely the brainchild of its founding member, O.P. Schnabel (1896-1987), an insurance salesman with the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company.

Guide to Beautify San Antonio Association Records 1951-2004: Scrapbooks, administrative files, photographs, and an audio tape that document the activities of the Beautify San Antonio Association from its inception in 1951 through 2004. A large part of the collection is comprised of scrapbooks created by the organization as part of the National Cleanest Town in America Competition from 1951 through 1969. Each scrapbook contains correspondence, newsletters, newspaper clippings, promotional materials, broadsides, and photographs that document various clean-up projects around the city of San Antonio, and public anti-litter campaigns spearheaded by the organization. There are also meeting minutes, bylaws, charter and newsletters that illuminate the administration of the Beautify San Antonio Association from the 1950s through the 1990s.

CITY COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The City County Government Committee was created in 1994 through a coalition of county and city official to help reduce overlap in services and to improve the overall efficiency of city and county government. The primary goal of the committee was to study the existing structure of local government within Bexar County and to develop recommendations to improve its structure.

City County Government Committee Records 1991-1997: Records include correspondence, reports, consolidation case studies, financial records, legislative

materials, numbered reference documents and audio and videotapes that document the activities of the committee.

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

The City Council passed an ordinance that created the Board of Review for historic districts in 1967. It set the rules and guidelines for creating historic districts, regulations for exterior changes to historic structures and sites and the process concerning applications for permits. The board consisted of nine members and was to act in an advisory capacity only. The 1967 ordinance was amended in February 1987 to also provide for the designation of historic landmarks and establish the formal City Historic Preservation Officer. The HPO was to administer the preservation ordinance and advise the Board for Historic Districts and Landmarks on applications that came before them.

Historic Design Review Committee Records 1970-2005:

This collection covers Historic Design Review Committee minutes from 1978 – 2005, agendas from 1988 – 1992 and case files from 1977 – 2004.

Historic Preservation Officers Records, 1967 – 1994:

This collection covers the Historic Preservation Officers records from the 1960's into the 1990's. The types of records contained in this collection include ordinances, surveys, meeting notes, legislation, zoning and various projects.

SAN ANTONIO WATER BOARD

The City entered into its first water supply contact in 1877 with J.B. LaCoste and Associates. The company constructed a pump house near the headwaters of the San Antonio River in what is now Brackenridge Park. In 1883 a new company led by George Brackenridge acquired the water system and by 1900 all the system's water was obtained by artesian wells linked directly to the distribution system. In 1905 Brackenridge sold his interest in the water company to George Kobusch of St. Louis and the name was changed to San Antonio Water Supply Company. Soon it changed hands again and was acquired by a Belgian syndicate. The syndicate sold the waterworks to a group of local investors in 1920.

Contract and rate disagreements prompted the City to issue seven million dollars in revenue bonds and purchase the system in 1925. The utility became known as the City Water Board and it was managed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the City Council.

In 1992 The San Antonio Water System (SAWS) was created by consolidating three predecessor agencies: The City Water Board, the City Wastewater Department and the Alamo Water Conservation and Reuse District.

Guide to the City of San Antonio Water Board Records 1918-1995: This collection consists of various types of financial reports from the 1960's into the 1990's, studies from the 1970's into the 1990's, subject files covering rate increases and water revenue bonds, and city council files pertaining to the San Antonio City Water Board.