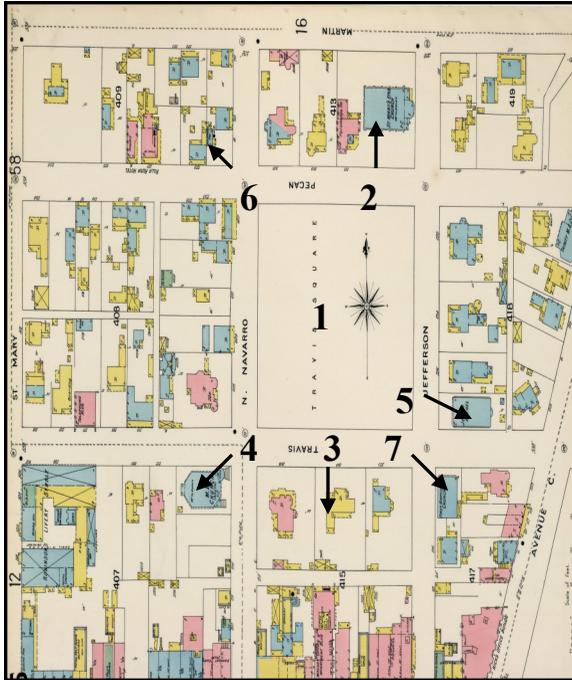


## 7. First Baptist Church

The former First Baptist Church was constructed at the southeast corner of Travis and Jefferson Streets between 1872 and 1877. Services continued at this location until 1905 when the congregation relocated to 4th and Taylor Streets. A Texas Historical Marker denotes the original church location.

### Travis Park Map of Historic Sites



1. Confederate Monument in Travis Park
2. St. Mark's Episcopal Church
3. St. Anthony Hotel
4. Travis Park United Methodist Church
5. Former site of Temple Beth-El
6. Former site of Travis Club Building
7. Former site of First Baptist Church

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UTSA Libraries Special Collections

Historic postcards of Travis Park with bandstand and Travis Club Building originally published by The Dahrooge Co., Inc.

Historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Map available at:  
[www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/s.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/s.html)

# WALKING TOUR OF HISTORIC TRAVIS PARK

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



## Travis Park

Welcome to historic Travis Park, one of the oldest municipal parks in the country. The land originally belonged to Samuel Maverick, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence, who used the property for his orchard. The land was deeded to the city in 1870 after Maverick's death. The park was known variously on different maps as Travis Plaza and Travis Square.

By 1876 the City had made upgrades to the park, including planting grass, installing painted wooden benches, and enclosing the area with a fence. A bandstand was also constructed on the southwest corner of the park. The fencing was removed in 1891 and the bandstand torn down in 1937. The park originally had dense landscaping, much of which was removed by the 1950s.



Two cannons, reportedly used during the Civil War battle of Valverde, New Mexico, were given to the city by Major Trevanion T. Teel in 1892 and installed in the park. Teel, who had fought at Valverde, supposedly buried the cannons to prevent capture by Union forces and subsequently retrieved them after the war. Although currently in storage, the cannons will be returned to the park.

The development of Travis Park into a formal urban square was a result of the City Beautiful Movement which sought to integrate beauty and order into the urban landscape during the 1890s and early 1900s. This coincided with an increase in the establishment of Civil War memorials following the death of Robert E. Lee in 1870 and the end of Reconstruction in 1877. Cities throughout the South began memorializing their Confederate dead.

The focal point of Travis Park is the Confederate Civil War Monument in the center. The monument was erected in 1899 and was funded by the Barnard E. Bee Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy. The park had served as a camp for Confederate soldiers, and reportedly, a hospital for wounded soldiers was located on the site.

The Confederate monument faced some resistance during construction. An April 1, 1898, *Daily Light* article indicated opposition on the grounds that the "monuments erected today will be the scoff of a later generation." Despite controversy, the monument was completed in 1899 at a cost of approximately \$3,000. The ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone on June 4, 1899, was attended by veterans of both the Union and Confederate armies.



### 1. Confederate Monument in Travis Park

New development threatened the monument and park during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century when an attempt was made to build an underground parking garage directly beneath the park in 1953. The heirs of the Maverick family stopped this venture. Today, a concept plan for Travis Park is being developed to revitalize this historic urban space.

Enjoy a stroll in Travis Park. This brochure includes information on the historic buildings surrounding the park. A map of these sites is located on the back of the brochure.



## 2. St. Mark's Episcopal Church

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, at the northern edge of Travis Park, has served San Antonio since its congregation was established in 1858. The cornerstone of the church building was laid in 1859, but the outbreak of the Civil War and the following years of Reconstruction delayed completion of the church until 1875. St. Mark's Church was designed by Richard Upjohn, one of the nation's leading church architects working in the Gothic Revival style of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gothic Revival style elements include the buttresses and window tracery.

Originally, wooden louvered openings were located below the stained-glass windows on both sides of the nave, allowing for cross ventilation. A cannon found on the grounds of the Maverick homestead was donated to create the original church bell. Elaborate wooden trusses, octagonal wooden columns, and stained glass windows adorn the church's interior.

The Parish Hall and Education Building additions on the west side of the church were completed in 1926-27. In 1949, the church was enlarged by San Antonio architect Henry J. Steinbomer. The original side entrance was enclosed with a stained glass window, and a Gothic Revival style tower entrance was constructed.

Early congregation members included Robert E. Lee and Lt. John B. Hood. Samuel and Mary A. Maverick were also founding members and donated the first stained glass church window. Future President Lyndon B. Johnson and Lady Bird Taylor were married at St. Mark's in 1934.

Completion of a recent extensive restoration returned the church's interior more closely to Upjohn's original design. Today, St. Mark's Episcopal Church continues to thrive as an active urban parish in the heart of historic San Antonio.



## 3. St. Anthony Hotel

The elegant St. Anthony Hotel at the southern edge of Travis Park was constructed in 1909 for Texas cattlemen B.L. Naylor, A.H. Jones, and F.M. Swearingen. An adjacent addition to the hotel, connected through the first floor lobby, was constructed shortly thereafter in 1910 and featured a rooftop terrace. Both hotel "towers" were originally eight stories in height and designed by architect J. Flood Walker with Mission Revival style parapets gracing the rooflines.

An extensive renovation undertaken in 1935 transformed the St. Anthony into a luxury hotel. Two additional stories were added giving the roofline its current appearance, the Travis Street façade was unified, an elaborate lobby known as Peacock Alley was designed, and the interior spaces were lavishly upgraded. A writer dubbed the renovated hotel as "the Waldorf on the Prairie." A 1941 addition at the eastern edge of the building expanded the hotel across the entire city block and included a parking garage with drive-up reception desk, additional guest rooms, and a new ballroom.

The St. Anthony Hotel was reportedly the first fully air-conditioned hotel in the world and one of the first hotels to offer a drive-up garage registration desk. Many significant guests have visited the St. Anthony Hotel including Eleanor Roosevelt, Douglas MacArthur, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Will Rogers.

The historic St. Anthony Hotel was restored in 1983 and continues to provide luxurious accommodations for overnight guests, weddings, and events.



## 4. Travis Park Methodist Church

The congregation of today's Travis Park United Methodist Church was first established by missionary Rev. John Wesley DeVilbiss in 1846. Methodist missionaries were sent to Texas reportedly in response to an 1835 letter from Col. William B. Travis to a Methodist publication asking for the presence of the Methodist faith in San Antonio. Travis was killed at the Battle of the Alamo in 1836, but Methodist missionaries, including the Rev. DeVilbiss, came to Texas shortly thereafter. He established the first Methodist church in San Antonio on Soledad Street in 1852.

The cornerstone of Travis Park United Methodist Church was laid in February 1883, with completion of the church in 1886. A large addition to the south side of the church was constructed in 1901-02 and included a small spire atop the existing tower. A larger spire added later remains in place today. The church reflects elements of the Romanesque Revival style with large rounded-arch windows, heavy limestone walls, and round tower.

An adjacent office building south of the church, known as Harmony Hall, was purchased in 1910. An extensive 1948 renovation of Harmony Hall, by architect Henry Steinbomer, produced the mid-century modern façade and monumental stained glass cross of the church's Youth Building. The 4,700-piece stained glass installation was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Porter Loring of Porter Loring Mortuaries. It was designed by the Jacoby Stained Glass Studio of St. Louis, Missouri, with stained glass pieces from many different countries.

In 1955, a fire destroyed the church floor, organ, and many of the pews, but the interior was reconstructed and remodeled in 1958. Travis Park United Methodist Church remains an active congregation in downtown San Antonio.

## Lost Buildings of Travis Park



## 5. Temple Beth-El

The former Jewish Temple Beth-El was located at the northeast corner of Travis and Jefferson Streets diagonally across the street from the St. Anthony Hotel. Temple Beth-El's congregation was founded in 1874, and a two-story stone temple building was first constructed on the site in 1875. The cornerstone for a new temple at this location was laid in 1902. The elaborate new Temple Beth-El (pictured above) was designed by architect Harvey L. Page and featured a central dome and lantern, square corner towers, and a grand arched entranceway on Jefferson Street flanked by Classical columns. Temple Beth-El remained at this location until the completion of a magnificent new temple on Belknap Place in the Tobin Hill neighborhood in 1927. The former temple at Travis Park was later demolished, but Temple Beth-El remains an active congregation in Tobin Hill today.

## 6. Travis Club Building

The former Travis Club Building was constructed at the northwest corner of Pecan and Navarro Streets in 1912 and served as an athletic and social club. The 7-story structure was designed by architect Harvey L. Page in the Renaissance Revival style with a large arched entrance. Amenities included a two-story gymnasium that could be converted into a ballroom and 34 sleeping rooms. The structure was demolished in 1978 for a parking lot.

