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Inventing the Fiesta City:

Heritage and Performance in San Antonio's Public Culture

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**Inventing the Fiesta City:
Heritage and Performance in San Antonio's Public Culture**

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Chapter 1

Introduction: San Antonio's Pedestrian Rhetoric

“Fiesta is the psalm of San Antonio—a hymn sung for a century now by the citizenry to glorify the conviction that theirs is a place of halcyonic sophistication on the one hand and an impregnable refuge against the soul-wearying onslaught of day-to-day living on the other.”

-Jack Maguire¹

“Remember the Alamo? I can't even remember my name.”

- t-shirt sold on the San Antonio Riverwalk

My story begins with footsteps, walking the city. During my senior year of high school, I participated in San Antonio's Battle of Flowers Parade, one of the central events of the city's annual Fiesta. Each year, parade organizers sponsored four of the city's public high schools, providing the float, costumes, and all of the decorations. As a “class officer” in one of these selected schools, I could ride in this prominent city spectacle. Some of my friends, who were members of the school band, marched in the parade every year, but this was my sole opportunity. The Battle of Flowers Association chose the theme and the outfits. This year, they chose “musicals,” and so my high school float was designed for “Oklahoma!” We did not choose the costumes either. A few months before the parade, I was fitted for a “pioneer” dress—a long yellow skirt, a puffy shirt and a big white bonnet. At the time, I considered the outfit too frumpy, nor did I appreciate having to walk *alongside* the float, because we could not all fit on the stage itself. As one of the smaller members of the class, I was chosen to be one of the hardy pioneer

children, while my taller friends rode in a mock wagon above heaps of plastic yellow flowers.

Despite these minor disappointments, I was thrilled to be in the event. The day of the Battle of Flowers Parade was an annual, citywide holiday, and so I knew most of my friends and family would be in the stands. We arrived at the “preparation area” several hours before the eleven a.m. start, and I spent this time alternately fascinated and bored watching hundreds of costumed people preparing their cars, horses and bikes. When we finally began to process down the parade route, I started my first “long poem of walking” through downtown San Antonio.² We traveled south on Broadway; I passed by the four dollar seats and the flatbed trucks and lawn chairs pushed into the free spaces in-between. Young kids stood in the front rows, tossing confetti and blowing whistles. We then passed the large bleachers and the main reviewing stand, directly in front of the Alamo. We paused in front of the judges, and then turned west onto Commerce Street. We traveled past more, dense crowds, over the river, past department stores, hotels, and banks, with small crowds watching from their balconies. We turned north onto Santa Rosa Street, and finished before we hit the highway. I smiled and waved for over two hours.

Every year, San Antonians organize a ten-day series of parades, street fairs, band contests and historic pageants to celebrate the city and articulate a distinct community identity.³ Throughout these many events, both San Antonio natives and visitors actively participate in this distinct civic culture. Like the

participants in hundreds of other urban parades, I had a brief chance to perform in the middle of a citywide audience. I enjoyed the opportunity of “going public”—momentarily becoming the center of attention. As a young child, I sat in those same flatbed trucks, eating snow cones and watching bands, mayors, police officers and festival queens pass by. Through the act of “passing by” myself, the myriad glances, waves and “hellos” were my “pedestrian enunciations.”⁴ This parade, as a time and space apart, was a framed event, set aside from the daily pedestrian traffic of downtown San Antonio. Yet parade participants also enacted the every day practices of walking the city. My entry into the center of San Antonio’s public culture was an act of “spatializing the city,” weaving buildings, people, and streets together.⁵ Within the limitations of a particular spatial and social order—the boundaries of the route and an unfamiliar musical costume—I could establish my own relationships with other participants and people lining the parade route. This parade was a special circumstance, a distinct opportunity for public visibility, but those who walked its path also spoke the rhetoric of the “disquieting familiarity of the city.”⁶

The Battle of Flowers Parade is as unique and as mundane as any other urban parade—shaped by national and transnational cultural currents, and yet articulated through distinct local traditions and histories as well. Fiesta is an ideal festival to study because it reflects so many of the cultural forces of its time, and yet also demonstrated the particular social relationships of San Antonio during the twentieth century. As various social actors struggled to enter Fiesta through

parades, pageants and street fairs, they became part of larger structures of power, but their particular footsteps often transgressed these boundaries and continually transformed the city itself.⁷

Going Public

Both anthropologists and historians have recently recognized the pluralistic, multivocal nature of festival. San Antonio's Fiesta, with its multiple events, is a contested terrain of various cultural domains. The notion of "public culture" most closely defines this "zone of cultural debate."⁸ Within this arena, mass culture, vernacular traditions, elite institutions and national culture "are encountering, interrogating and contesting each other in new and unexpected ways."⁹ Fiesta, with over two hundred events and a history that spans the twentieth century, is an arena to articulate this struggle among various cultural producers. As Appadurai and Breckenridge argue, "public," rather than "popular," "mass" or "folk," evades the limitations of dichotomies such as "high" versus "low" culture or "elite" versus "mass" culture.¹⁰ Fiesta, like many modern urban festivals, has elements of all of these cultural domains.

The term "public" is also important for its definition relative to the term "private," especially in women's and ethnic studies. The public/private distinction equates the public with the world outside of the private home. This distinction was part of the ideology of separate, gendered spheres. As women tended to the home, men conducted the public work of the world.¹¹ From its inception, Fiesta has been a space for women to challenge these boundaries and to seek inclusion in

San Antonio's public life. Mexicanos' entry to Fiesta could also be considered a move from the segregated culture of the city's West side into the larger public space of San Antonio's center. As for women, this process of "going public" was a movement from the margins of San Antonio's public life into its center. The culture of segregation, with its careful divisions of public streets and facilities, was a pervasive social reality for both African Americans and Mexicanos in much of San Antonio's twentieth century. Through Fiesta, many Mexicanos struggled to move into the middle of the city's public space. Fiesta demonstrates "the active constitution of places through cultural struggle."¹² As both women and Mexicanos went public, they shifted the boundaries of San Antonio's civic culture. These groups put themselves "in place" in Fiesta by stepping "out of place"—transgressing the boundaries of home and segregated neighborhood.¹³

As a cultural performance Fiesta provided a more flexible space for these social orders to be challenged. David M. Guss identifies four key elements of cultural performance.¹⁴ The first is that it is framed, set apart from daily life. Victor Turner described cultural performances as separated spaces, dramatizations that allow its participants to understand and sometimes change their worlds. They are set apart from normative reality, but are not sealed off from this larger social sphere. The second element of performance is that it is reflexive. Performances are "cultural forms about culture, social forms about society, in which the central meanings and values of a group are embodied, acted out, and laid open to examination and interpretation in symbolic form, both by members of that group

and by the ethnographer.”¹⁵ The third element of performance is that it is “profoundly discursive.” Participants use performance to “argue and debate, to challenge and negotiate.” Guss emphasizes that performances are not texts to be read, but “fields of action” where multiple groups can dramatize competing ideas. Finally, cultural performances have “the ability to produce new meanings and relations.”¹⁶ Festivals not only provide a framed space for multiple voices, they can also become a form for creating new relationships.

While these four elements are vital to cultural performance, Guss understates the slipperiness of this relationship between cultural performance and its surrounding social reality. Fiesta does provide a particularly rich field of action for articulating cultural debates, but these activities are integral to everyday reality as well. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White point out that large city fairs frequently combine work and play, commerce and leisure, and scholars have often unwittingly reproduced a separation of these spheres in their work on festival.¹⁷ They argue that large city fairs are highly adaptable to industrialization, and in fact aid these processes by its intersection of populations, discourses, and products. Stallybrass and White re-conceptualize the fair as an integral part of modernization.¹⁸ Fiesta participants play active roles in constructing the practices of daily life. Fiesta has also played a vital role in re-constructing the more permanent organization of San Antonio’s urban space. San Antonio eventually became the “Fiesta city” throughout the year, as the festival continued to invigorate a growing tourist industry.

Spectacle In Place

Fiesta does change the physical space of downtown San Antonio. Traffic is diverted; fences and gates are put up around the plazas. Residents who rarely come downtown suddenly arrive, en masse. Yet as Fiesta has grown, its organizers have also constructed a more permanent sense of the city as a perpetually “festive” place. Throughout this study, I trace the connections between Fiesta performances and the larger construction of San Antonio’s tourist industry.

Fiesta participates in the larger selling of place. Steven Hoelscher synthesizes much of the recent work about the consumption of place. He writes:

Commodification—the process by which objects and activities come to be valued primarily in terms of their value in the marketplace and for their ability to signify an image—can take place as its starting point. Distinct places and the qualities they imbue...can be turned into commodities in their own right.¹⁹

Tourism is about this selling of place, about the commodification of the experience of being in place. Fiesta is a time to sell the city to visitors, and as the festival has grown, so has the phenomenon of promoting the city’s unique qualities, its “distinctness” as a place.

Through Fiesta, city boosters created an image of the city that emphasized spectacle, pleasure and ephemerality. Fiesta crowds were thrilled with the first electric lights on Commerce Street at the turn of the century. As the festival’s royal pageantry developed, Fiesta queens paraded through the streets in elaborate, glittery gowns; Anglo Fiesta-goers gazed at the exotic spectacle of the city’s

“Mexican” folk. Fiesta’s popularity depended upon these spectacles of modern gender, race and modern technology. In the only comprehensive account of the festival, author Jack Maguire says that San Antonio has “the fiesta spirit,” or an “ambiente”. He, like many other city boosters, chronicles Fiesta in order to portray San Antonio as a harmonious place that welcomes its visitors.²⁰ Like New Orleans, Santa Fe, and other cities, festival organizers have long used their events to promote a positive image of the city.²¹

South by Southwest

San Antonio’s distinct civic culture is the product of multiple regional histories. I borrow from Neil Foley’s work, which looks at central Texas to bridge the gap between southern and western history. Looking to Texas’ past, Foley demonstrates that the state fit the cultural boundaries of the South, with its history of slavery and cotton. Texas, however, with its cowboys and ranching culture, was also part of the history of Anglo western expansion. Texas was at the margins of an expanding southern cotton industry, even as many in the state maintained the romanticized image of its western cattle-driving days.²² Most Anglo Texans were transplanted Southerners who also sought to maintain the “color line” and to “extend its barriers to Mexicans.”²³ I take Foley’s insights into the field of public memory. Many Fiesta organizers, whose families hailed from Virginia, Kentucky and the Carolinas, carried their memories on their backs, and sought to shape the city’s political economy and public events with the markings of white southern culture. Fiesta events also bear the imprint of the U.S. westward expansion. Fiesta

organizers created idealized scenes of the state's nineteenth century pioneers, and celebrated the white racial dominance of manifest destiny.

As Fiesta invokes public memory in both the Anglo south and its movement west, it also intersected with Greater Mexico. Texas, and especially San Antonio, was a “border province between the South, West and Mexico.”²⁴ José Limón recently investigated many of the historic and symbolic connections between Greater Mexico and the U.S. South.²⁵ Anglo Southerners' westward travel was also, of course, a movement into Mexico. Texan independence, and the later U.S. war with Mexico, was largely a “Southern exercise in imperialism”—conducted by a Southern American President and carried out by another Southern general, in the interests of expanding a Southern based slavery and cotton-based economy.²⁶ As Limón demonstrates, though, Greater Mexico also influenced the modern South. Throughout his work, he charts a “comparable set of responses to the expanding hegemony of a ‘Northern’ and capitalist modernity,” and makes these connections in the domains of political economy, labor, the arts and folkloric culture.²⁷ My hope is to use Limón's analysis to situate Fiesta as it performed between Greater Mexico and the U.S. South.

In order to trace these performances of Southern, Western and Mexicanness, I have focused on Fiesta as an enactment of socioeconomic change over the twentieth century. This approach is admittedly more diachronic than synchronic, more focused on the transformation of the festival over time than on the simultaneous debates and cultural expressions performed annually across the

city. Yet I adopt this historical perspective to explore Fiesta's entanglement with modernity. Here I am influenced by Abner Cohen's analysis of London's Notting Hill Carnival. He divides his historical approach into five "phases" of dominating ideas.²⁸ Like Cohen, I separate Fiesta's development into distinct phases in order to explain its relationship to larger social transformations.

History and Invented Tradition

One of the challenges to a historical approach to Fiesta, though, is that the dominant discourses of the festival claim to have no history. In his Fiesta account, Jack Maguire observes: "Fiesta has changed, but not much. So has the city, but not much."²⁹ Maguire's story, like the multiple Fiesta accounts in the local press, describes the festival's sameness over time, denying both conflict and social change. Cultural performances such as Fiesta enact multiple histories, yet their written accounts usually minimize these contradictory claims.

Part of this contradiction is embedded within the construction of traditions themselves. Eric Hobsbawm was one of the first historians to conceptualize public ceremonies as events created by citizens of modern nation states to encourage a sense of national identity. In doing so, he redefines tradition as a process of invention, "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."³⁰ Raymond Williams came to a similar conclusion a few years earlier. He defines a selective tradition as that which is "an intentionally selective version of

a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of cultural definition and identification... What it offers in practice is a sense of predisposed continuity.”³¹ Fiesta is continually constructed by selective references to the past, in the interests of particular class and ethnic groups. Fiesta is a source of cultural capital, a ritual constructed to justify social dominance.

However, the practice of inventing and selecting traditions are not that of the dominant groups alone. Alessandra Lorini, who examines the community life of blacks in the nineteenth-century New York, argues that “acts of invention and reinvention of selected traditions, far from being the exclusive products of hegemonic groups, are part of the broader process of cultural circularity between ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultures.”³² As Fiesta grew into the citywide spectacle that it is today, its history is not merely that of the dominant class seeking to impose certain values upon the greater San Antonio public. Instead, it is a complex series of negotiations among competing interests.

In this dissertation, then, I emphasize not only the changes in the performance of Fiesta, but also the struggles to rewrite the public history of Fiesta. As new events and pageants become a part of Fiesta, promotional brochures and officially sanctioned definitions of the festival change as well. As Fiesta is enacted, it is also narrated by its organizers and participants. I borrow from Michel Rolph Trouillot’s work to describe this distinction. Trouillot defines three separate categories of human capacities. First, persons are “agents,” occupants of structural categories such as class and status. The second category is

“actor,” a role that includes the whole collection of practices in specific historical moments. This second category allows a space for the consideration of particularities that are not entirely reducible to social structure. Fiesta organizers and participants often act in accordance to class, ethnic and gendered interests, yet their actions are not entirely reducible to these categories. Finally, the third capacity is as subjects. People are interpreters of their own experiences. This distinction is not to seal off discourse from other forms of human practice, but to allow a method of considering the terms with which actors define their actions. At the same time, this capacity does call attention to narrative.³³ Trouillot’s three distinctions provide a way to look at the struggle among collectivities, of classes, ethnic and gendered groups, and to consider the specific actors involved in this historical context. At the same time, these actors’ capacity as subjects also allows a space to consider the stories of Fiesta participants tell about themselves.

The Heritage Elite

Like many San Antonio stories, the history of Fiesta began at the Alamo, a fortress that has become a colossal figure in the local and national imagination. For those of us who grew up next this “shrine of Texas liberty,” the Alamo seemed particularly pervasive. For most of the twentieth century, San Antonio has been nationally known as the Alamo city. The site, and the 1836 battle, cast an enduring shadow on most accounts of the city’s past and its present. It is an oppressive shade. Yet the Alamo city’s biggest public festival, Fiesta, began in

1891 as a commemoration of the martyr's cause, Texan Independence, and so the festival's history must deal with the Alamo's shade.

In her analysis of Alamo myth and ritual, Holly Beachley Brear argues that Fiesta is the “secular Easter six weeks after the Good Friday of the Alamo's fall.”³⁴ Fiesta celebrated manifest destiny, justified by the Anglo sacrifice during the Alamo battle. At its beginning, Fiesta also celebrated a new social order in San Antonio, a German and Anglo elite who controlled the newly modernizing city. Through the language of Texan independence, this new elite celebrated their social prominence and white racial superiority. By the late nineteenth century, the Alamo narratives had already been constructed to represent Anglo hegemony in Texas. The phrase “remember the Alamo” was used to justify several instances of violence against Texas' Mexican American population after annexation.³⁵

Richard Flores has carefully articulated the Alamo as a master symbol of Texas modernity. Through his analysis of various spatial terrains, historical and cinematic texts, he describes how the “remembering the Alamo” inscribes a radical difference between “Angloness” and “Mexicanness” as part of the transformation of social relations developed during the “Texas Modern,” the period from 1880 to 1920 when Texas transformed from a mainly Mexican, cattle-based society into an Anglo dominated industrial and agricultural social complex.³⁶ Fiesta San Antonio, also introduced during the Texas Modern, articulated many of the same emerging social relations as the Alamo.

Commemorating Texan independence, like remembering the Alamo, shaped a distinct racial hierarchy between an Anglo “self” and Mexican “other.”

The social elite who organized the first Fiesta parades, what I will call the “heritage elite,” used this commemoration to legitimize their own social dominance in the city. Connecting themselves to the Alamo defenders through their heritage, whether ancestral or symbolic, this elite made themselves modern heirs to reign over San Antonio. Trouillot again is relevant, as he writes that commemorations “contribute to the continuous myth-making process that gives history its more definite shapes: they help create, modify, or sanction the public meanings attached to historical events deemed worthy of mass celebration.”³⁷ Commemorations “adorn the past with certainty: the proof of the happening is in the cyclical inevitability of its celebration.”³⁸ San Antonio’s heritage elite marked the anniversary of Texan Independence in order to naturalize their own positions of power; they connected the certainty of historic commemoration with the continuation of their own roles as cultural guardians.

However, they were never entirely successful in their efforts. Throughout this study, I examine the extent to which this heritage elite could control this festival’s performances and meanings. From its beginnings Fiesta celebrations suggested a more unstable, ambivalent articulation of modernity. Unlike the Alamo, whose custodians sought to dispel ambiguities, Fiesta has continually contained multiple, contradictory discourses, a contested terrain.

Forgetting the Alamo

Central to my analysis of “inventing the fiesta city,” is how this is distinct from inventing the Alamo city. While the Alamo codified racial separateness, Fiesta discourses moved between repulsion and desire for the “Mexican” other. Robert Young, in his analysis of such contradictions within English theory and literature, writes that “Englishness” is divided within itself, continually “sick with desire for the other.” He attributes this to the transformation into modernity. During the nineteenth century, the cultural movement produced by capitalist development was one of processes of both unification and differentiation. “The globalization of...a single integrated economic and colonial system...was achieved at the price of the dislocation of its peoples and cultures.”³⁹ While not every aspect of this colonial model can be applied to the Texas modern, the impact of the dramatic transformation to an industrialized and racially stratified society is both creative and destructive, a “unity of disunity.”⁴⁰ The story of the Alamo emphasized the binary lessons of this new social order, but Fiesta was more openly riddled with anxiety over these multiple social transformations. As a set of performances that included hundreds of social actors and subjects, Fiesta was a more contradictory space—a fuller articulation of the complexities of modernity. The cultural memory of racial stratification at the Alamo was fixed at the site of its stone-fortified church.⁴¹ Fiesta, an ephemeral, multivocal spectacle, was always more ambivalent.

Fiesta's name itself hints at this central ambiguity. While Fiesta commemorated the end of Mexico's control over the region, it simultaneously expressed a link to San Antonio's Spanish/Mexican past. As Trouillot writes, names set up a field of power.⁴² The decision to borrow from "the language of the defeated" was an assertion of Anglo's attempts to appropriate Mexicano cultural capital. Yet I would like to propose a third possibility for the persistence of "Fiesta." As hegemonic cultures seek to swallow all resistant forms, they are rarely successful at eliminating all potential sources for opposition. In fact, they often incorporate the possibility of their own undoing. To some extent, this process is true of Fiesta. Even groups who were excluded from representation in festivals create alternative meanings. Furthermore, the official version of public history is itself subject to constant struggle over definition and interpretation.

David Glassberg demonstrates that

The desire to display the illusion of consensus through mass participation sometimes leads civic officials to include dissenting voices in their public historical representations. These voices, in turn, can subvert the overall impression the officials are trying to communicate.⁴³

Fiesta is a hybrid term for a hybrid festival. And while the Alamo communicated fixed identities, Fiesta expressed a fragmented, heterogenous sensibility. For my purposes, Bakhtin's notion of linguistic hybridity is the most useful. For him, hybridity is "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance...between two linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor."⁴⁴

Hybridity “frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems...the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents.”⁴⁵ Fiesta is such a word. These contradictory meanings have the ability to unmask each other, even if they do not always do so. While Fiesta is continually a hybrid construction of different voices, these contradictions do not always produce new forms and worldviews. Fiesta, as a double-voiced entity, has the potential for unmasking the contradictory voices of its construction, but only at certain historical moments does this happen. Thus, my analysis focuses on the moments that the contradictions slip into larger social transformations.

Through the twentieth century, Fiesta has changed dramatically. What began as a commemorative parade honoring Texan Independence has now become a ten-day calendar of over two hundred events, sponsored by various civic and commercial organizations in the city. Now Fiesta has three parades, which attract over 200,000 spectators each. Large street fairs monopolize the entire downtown area every night of the week. Local and visiting bands perform at dozens of venues. Fiesta has become San Antonio’s most important civic event, and it is saturated with Mexican imagery. Holly Beachley Brear describes these festival changes as a growing “popularity contest” between different remembered pasts—“victory at San Jacinto verses pre-Anglo San Antonio.” Yet I would suggest that Fiesta’s relationship to the Alamo, and to “the Mexican” is much more complicated. While Brear certainly acknowledges competing voices, the

discourses of Alamo memory and Mexican heritage are more entangled than she suggests. From its inception, Fiesta has remembered both the Alamo and its pre-Texan past in an ambivalent cultural performance of nostalgia, modernity, elite pageantry and middle class politics.

As Fiesta participants articulate their tangled relationships to modernity, two dominant views emerged. One, endorsed by the heritage elite, describes the festival as a realm of halcyonic sophistication. Jack Maguire, a Texas writer endorsed by Fiesta organizers, wrote his Fiesta history following this view. His work is a hymn of praise, both of Fiesta and San Antonio as a whole. For Maguire, Fiesta's history is one of consensus. Unlike the chaotic series of public displays that make up Fiesta, Maguire presents a rather orderly procession of events. As parade officials seek to control these disruptions, so Maguire has attempted to appropriate the many public controversies into a respectable story.

For another group, those who would rather “forget the Alamo,” Fiesta sounds more like a bawdy bar tune than a hymn, a cacophony of voices negotiating their place in San Antonio's public culture. Although Fiesta has faithfully occurred around the week of April 21, the anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto that won Texas independence, most of contemporary events have very little to do with remembering the Alamo's heroes. In fact, most of them have little to do with remembering anything. Fiesta has transformed into a carnivalesque forgetfulness—ten days of “puro party.” Such a public display of forgetfulness has affected private memories as well. Like July 4th celebrations, the patriotic

purposes of the event are often taken for granted setting for modern leisure. The process of “forgetting the Alamo” has its own history. My analysis is an attempt to trace the processes of both social memory and forgetting.

By selective memory, various San Antonians created a space for themselves in the present. They struggled to legitimize their positions in the social structure, to become individual actors in the city’s public life, and to write their own histories. My analysis could not hope to capture all of Fiesta’s dizzying multivocality, but I have brought out the key events and participants who shaped Fiesta’s place in its modern city. Although I only focus on the emergence of these central Fiesta events and themes, it is important to note that each of these distinct performances continue into contemporary Fiestas. High school kids like myself still march in the Battle of Flowers Parade, and the Fiesta queens ride above their heads. The street fairs like the Night in Old San Antonio monopolize San Antonio’s tourist pedestrian spaces, and the Carnival continues at downtown’s margins. Each of these events have their own cultural domains within Fiesta. Each adds another layer to understanding this central spectacle of San Antonio’s civic identity.

To focus on the foundations of Fiesta, I begin with its early parades, from 1891 to 1899. The Battle of Flowers parades, organized by women’s voluntary organizations, were hybrid performances where upper class white women pelted flowers at each other in mock battles in front of the Alamo. Through these parades, women created a space between the binary spheres of public and private-

a domesticated public sphere. Acting as matronly custodians of culture, these women were able to secure a role for themselves in the city's public culture. I also examine these parades as they were performed at the boundary of one economy and the emergence of another. San Antonio was becoming an industrial city, as social forces were displacing ranch society; yet the parade presented the city as a site of "antiquated foreignness." A growing tourist industry would promote the city as a site of difference within the nation's borders.

As Fiesta expanded, its elite pageantry developed in the first two decades of the twentieth century. While the founders of the Battle of Flowers Association strained the boundaries of womanhood through the parade, their daughters were initiated into a more secluded privatized sphere, focused on the "southern beauty." These changes represent not only an expansion of the festival, but an increasing emphasis upon social order in San Antonio. The city modernized, and Jim Crow laws proliferated. The various communities that made up its public were increasingly segregated into separate events. Greater immigration from Mexico increased Anglos' fears about social hygiene. The new "royal" roles of the Kings and Queens of Fiesta reigned over this new social order. At the same time, the carnival grew as a space to express underlying anxieties about disorder, racial difference and desire.

In my third chapter, I begin to trace the slow unraveling of the Texas Modern, with a new generation of San Antonio elite women who defined the city's tourist industry through its Spanish colonial past. The San Antonio

Conservation Society (SACS), from the mid 1920s through World War II, increasingly challenged municipal authorities who were destroying the remnants of San Antonio's Spanish colonial architecture.⁴⁶ Through the language of cultural conservation, the SACS, unlike previous voluntary associations, articulated a local form of the Spanish heritage fantasy. Restoring the mission buildings, hosting tamale dinners and dressing in elaborate Mexican dresses, these women exemplified the modern search for authenticity through the elevation of "the primitive." Their Fiesta event, called a Night in Old San Antonio, represented this nostalgia. However, they also performed a transitional ambivalence, between the social segregation of the Texas modern and the post World War II model of social integration. While previous festival pageantry emphasized a longing for the "Old South," these women shifted the festival's emphasis to "South of the Border."⁴⁷

After World War II, as the city boomed into a center for the growing defense industry, Fiesta assumed the rhetoric of cold war democracy and interethnic equality. Although San Antonio's heritage elite asserted some continuing control over Fiesta traditions, for the most part they lost the battle. This shift reflected changes in the city, especially its phenomenal postwar growth, and it also changed the model for Fiesta participation. A middle class ethic of inclusion became the dominant promotional language of the festival. At the same time, Anglos in the city "played Mexican" to articulate this new civic identity. Anglos' social relationships with Mexicanos themselves were not as friendly, but

Mexican American organizations, like LULAC, sought inclusion in the city's public culture as they did in the national social fabric.⁴⁸ While this generation had only token membership in Fiesta events, they began a long effort to control their cultural productions within Fiesta.

From the mid-1960s to the 1980s, Fiesta organizers received the most direct and public challenges to its events and membership. Many of these challenges came from Chicano activists, who protested both the lack of Mexicano participation and the stereotypes of Mexican culture. A new generation of Chicano reformers also had greater power in local politics, and they demanded greater symbolic power as well, openly challenging the Anglo-dominated Fiesta. As a result, Fiesta included a new king, Rey Feo, who symbolized a new politics of negotiation between middle class Anglos and Mexicanos.

As Fiesta organizers broke down previous boundaries, though, they also solidified others. At the turn of the twenty-first century, San Antonio's middle class civic culture is certainly multicultural. Yet Fiesta organizers and participants alike vilify the city's poor and working class Mexicano youth. Their fears center around the Carnival, the most inexpensive (and popular) event. I look at how middle class anxieties about the Carnival reveal deeper contradictions in Fiesta organizers' rhetoric about inclusion and the public. The continuing marginality of the Carnival presents a larger question about the place of these communities in the city's public culture. Their struggle to re-shape Fiesta's boundaries will be the challenge of the next century.

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- ¹ Jack Maguire, *A Century of Fiesta In San Antonio* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1990), vii.
- ² This phrase, like this beginning example, is modeled after Michel de Certeau's idea of "walking rhetoric" in *The Practices of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 101.
- ³ I credit David Glassberg with this notion of civic parades as "celebrating the city." In *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).
- ⁴ De Certeau, 99.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.
- ⁷ Here I am borrowing from de Certeau's critique of Michel Foucault's approach to power and social space. Foucault emphasizes the disciplining of society, and the many methods and technical procedures of structures of power. Through this metaphor of walking the city, de Certeau argues that social spaces are more open to human agency and creativity than Foucault allows.
- ⁸ I am using Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge's definition of public culture. "Why Public Culture?" *Public Culture Bulletin*. 1 (Fall 1988): 6.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: Women's Sphere in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ I use Tim Cresswell's terms "in" and "out" of place to refer to these boundary transgressions. In *In Place, Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- ¹⁴ David M. Guss, *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism as Cultural Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- ¹⁵ Richard Bauman. "Performance and Honor in 13th Century Iceland." *Journal of American Folklore* 99: 133. Also see Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).
- ¹⁶ Guss, 10-11.
- ¹⁷ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 4-16.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 35-37.
- ¹⁹ Steven Hoelscher, *Heritage on Stage: The Invention of Ethnic Place in America's Little Switzerland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 22.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ²¹ For an analysis of this promotion in Santa Fe, see Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).
- ²² Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 2.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.
- ²⁵ José Limón, *American Encounters: Greater Mexico, The United States and the Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.
- ²⁸ Abner Cohen, *Masquerade Politics: Explorations in the Structure of Urban Cultural Movements* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ³⁰ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.
- ³¹ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 115-116.

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- ³² Alessandra Lorini, "Public Rituals and the Cultural Making of the New York African-American Community," in *Feasts and Celebrations in North American Communities*, ed. Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Geneviève Fabre (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 29.
- ³³ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 23-25.
- ³⁴ Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 22.
- ³⁵ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 82-83.
- ³⁶ Richard Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity and the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).
- ³⁷ Trouillot, 116.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2-4. Stallybrass and White also focus on bourgeois representations of the low, and they find a great deal of contradiction, discourses which both revile and desire the lower strata. Stallybrass and White delineate the binaries of high and low; they also explore the ambivalence of these discourses.
- ⁴⁰ Flores, xvii. He takes this idea from Marshall Berman's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 18.
- ⁴² Trouillot, 115.
- ⁴³ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 2.
- ⁴⁴ Mikail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 358. I am also influenced by Barbara Babcock's work on "symbolic inversion," which I will elaborate in chapter five.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 305.
- ⁴⁶ The San Antonio Conservation Society continues to the present day. However, I focus on this particular historical period.
- ⁴⁷ See Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992). She details the broader interest in Mexico in the fields of politics and the arts.
- ⁴⁸ For more details about the ideology of this generation, see Mario T. Garcia, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); See also Juan Gomez-Quinones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990).

Chapter 2
Battle of Flowers:
Women, Whiteness, and San Antonio's Public Culture, 1891-1900

In March of 1891, Ellen Maury Slayden and Mrs. J.S. Alexander organized a meeting to discuss a “flower-celebration that would keep Texas history fresh in the minds of future generations.”¹ After witnessing flower processions in their travels to both France and Mexico, several of San Antonio’s elite white women decided to stage a similar procession of their own. The following month, to commemorate the San Jacinto battle which led to Texas’ independence from Mexico, these women organized an elaborate procession of flower decorated carriages and military bands through the center of the city. They ended the parade in Alamo Plaza, where a “flower battle” occurred. When the procession arrived on the plaza, the carriages divided in two, with each half going the opposite direction, so that in passing they could pelt each other as well as the bystanders with flowers, “which were returned at the hurlers with vigor.” When an hour had passed, the parade marshal gave the signal for the battle to end.² The press considered this first parade a great success, and the organizing committee decided that this would become an annual celebration, the Battle of Flowers parade.

The women who invented the Battle of Flowers parade claimed public space. Like many elite women of their time, turn of the century San Antonio women shaped public space through the language of domesticity. At a time when the ideology of separate spheres continued to define political and civic activities

as part of men's public sphere, women created ways to assume a limited public role by carrying their domestic duties to the world outside of the home. Women crafted their own conceptions of citizenship, and constructed "a public space located between the private sphere of the home and public life of formal institutions of government."³ They used the parade to place themselves in the center of the city's public life.

This annual parade would eventually become the foundation for Fiesta San Antonio, and these early years articulated the key social struggles in a modernizing San Antonio. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White describe urban nineteenth century parades as "a crossroads, situated at the intersection of economic and cultural forces, goods and travelers, commodities and commerce."⁴ The Battle of Flowers parade occurred in the central market space of the city. While temporarily interrupting daily commercial activities, it also provided a site of new forms of exchange among various communities. Surrounding the procession, street peddlers and entertainers went through the crowd; small businessmen set up stands. The parade also occurred at a critical historical moment, when large city fairs and parades flourished in hundreds of urban markets. As Stallybrass and White note, "the [nineteenth century] fair itself played a crucial part in the formation and transformation of local socio-economic relations and the state."⁵ Bringing Eastern tourists to what was still considered a frontier town, the Battle of Flowers Parade tied the city's local economy to the

nation. The parade also communicated new meanings to San Antonio residents themselves.

The Battle of Flowers parade, like other new urban fairs, played a crucial role in displaying the city to itself, articulating a vision of its future within a narrative of its past. By the end of the nineteenth century, American urban parades featured more symbolic representations of local history and the city itself, rather than the histories of particular ethnic groups. These parades were public rituals of common citizenship, including new flags, banners and seals. The icons were intended to promote the city to an outside national public, while encouraging civic loyalty among city residents.⁶ Previous civic parades in San Antonio focused on American patriotism, like the Fourth of July parades, or ethnic identity, like the German Volkfeste, Columbus Day and Diez y Seis. However, as San Antonio became a growing modern city, its public performances celebrated the city itself. David Glassberg synthesizes the purposes of these new spectacles. Downtown businessmen wanted to attract tourists; politicians wanted a larger venue to associate themselves with a growing commercial culture, and the elite wanted a new forum for presenting their ideas to the masses. Parade organizers designed these celebrations to present a unified portrait of the city; yet the bringing together of diverse communities created fears as well. Elite patrons talked about the possibility of rioting crowds and the loss of civic control.⁷ The Battle of Flowers parade offered new possibilities for communicating to a large urban public, and new anxieties about how this public might impact civic order.

The form of a parade itself is a crossroads—marking new boundaries in public space. City traffic is halted; sidewalks become dense with spectators, who are often separated by ropes from the civic leaders who promenade on the street. Susan Davis writes that parades are stages for the social forces of the city; they are tools for “building, maintaining, and confronting power relations.”⁸ In these spectacles, social actors both create and challenge boundaries. Many social groups separated in daily life are brought in direct contact. As these groups perform complex public identities in the parade, they display social contradictions as well. This is a hybrid space. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White define Bakhtin’s theory of “hybridization” as the “inmixing of binary opposites, particularly of high and low, such that there is a heterodox merging of elements usually perceived as incompatible.”⁹ While parades are usually highly ordered events, they also provide new combinations of social groups and ideas. The Battle of Flowers parade was no different, combining several binary categories to create hybrid performances. The parade occupied multiple intersections; mock battles participated in the real battles, as the city’s many communities struggled through the transition to modernity.

The Texas Modern

As the procession began for the first Battle of Flowers parade in 1891, mounted police officers cleared the way for the military band, followed by a cavalcade of ladies and their “squires.”¹⁰ Next came the bicycles, part of the “cycling rage” exported from Paris, immensely popular among the elite.¹¹ Then

came the carriages, all elaborately decorated with natural flowers. The occupants of these carriages made San Antonio into a modern city, and represented the changes in San Antonio's political economy. Richard Flores has called this transition the "Texas Modern," the period between 1880 and 1920 when the introduction of the railroad, the closing of the range and the rise of commercial farming occurred alongside a new ethnoracial and class order.¹² During this period an Anglo/Mexican bicultural ranching society was displaced by a new consolidation of non-Hispanic white groups.

This process had its origins in the Texan Independence movement and its annexation to the United States in 1845. From the state's independence and through the decades following the Mexican War, Texas' Anglo residents often perpetrated vengeful acts against the Mexican-Spanish population. Texan posses sometimes evicted entire towns, and many Mexicanos, even those who supported the Texan revolution, escaped to Mexico. San Antonio Mexicanos fared better than some, partly because the city's German community refused to take part in these raids.¹³ However, many Mexicano families lost their land and resources in the mid-nineteenth century. At the same time, Indians and African Americans were denied the rights of full citizenship. Freedmen who resided in Texas at the time of independence were required to flee the state.

The Civil War ensured the end of slavery, but both Anglos and some Mexicanos considered blacks racially inferior. The war also furthered divisions between Anglos and Mexicanos. After the war, Anglos acquired the best business

sites, and began to form partnerships with a prosperous German community, which had benefited from its pro-Republican stance during the war and received many political appointments in the state. “Spurred on by San Antonio’s opportunities, the various factions within the elite-- Germans, Anglos, and French, Republicans and Democrats-- began to cooperate for their mutual benefit.”¹⁴ At the same time, the region’s Mexicano population occupied a liminal position in this new racial order, between the nonwhite Indian and the marginally white Spanish.¹⁵ While some upper-class families with social standing were able to claim whiteness, Anglos treated the majority of Mexicanos as racial inferiors. Through this period, the Mexicano upper classes maintained a certain level of power and participation in an expanding ranch economy. Anglos and Germans, though maintaining greater power, had to be “mexicanized” to live successfully in south Texas. Many married into Mexicano families and conducted business in Spanish.¹⁶

This changed with the decline of ranching and the rise of commercial farming. Both the railroad and the invention of barbed wire destroyed the cattle drives that had been the foundation of the region’s economy. In 1877, the arrival of the railroad gave access to new markets as farm goods could be transported much farther and faster than before. Fencing of ranch lands also ended the cattle drives from Texas to the North. The closing of the cattle trails displaced the local and regional markets of this industry.¹⁷ These changes were particularly devastating to Mexicanos. For example, during the ranching period, cartmen

transported goods along a network of roads through the state.¹⁸ In 1856, sixty percent of Mexicanos drove the carts that carried the majority of supplies to the region. Railroad lines displaced this service. A new Anglo dominated economy based on commercial farming took its place. During this transformation, San Antonio became a boomtown that attracted Eastern capital, and these new nationally controlled markets effectively displaced older regional political economic structures.¹⁹ The change to farming was not achieved without battles, and Mexicano rebellions were violently suppressed by Texas Rangers. By 1900, Mexicanos performed most of the menial labor in the city, with 54.5% of Mexicanos classified as “unspecialized labor.”²⁰

In the decades immediately following the Civil War, San Antonio’s African American population rose. After emancipation, former slaves had one of the earliest migrations from Texas farms and plantations to the cities. San Antonio saw its black residents double by 1870.²¹ In this decade, German Americans also settled in large numbers in the city, and established residency in the eastern part of downtown. African Americans lived predominantly in the German part of town or among Mexicanos on the west side. Still in too few numbers to establish neighborhoods of their own, they often lived in housing provided by their white employers.²² During and after Reconstruction, military installations also offered some protection from hostile whites and some Mexicanos, who saw them as competition for labor. The cattle industry offered greater freedom than farming,

and African Americans made up 25% of those employed in cattle drives in 1870.²³

The railroad lines increased and solidified racial discrimination for African Americans as well. After 1877, most were forced into unskilled labor positions such as janitors, sweepers, porters, and servants. They worked in competition with unskilled white and Mexicano laborers. In particular, they were concentrated in the “domestic service trades”—work that was considered demeaning for whites and out of character for Mexicanos (as opposed to agriculture and light manufacturing).²⁴ As the city grew toward the end of the century, and elite whites moved to suburbs further east, south or north, blacks often occupied their former homes, and many worked for the railroad. They formed several distinct neighborhoods by the turn of the century, most scattered to the west or east, near the central commercial district. Though their population decreased between 1870 and 1890, from 16% to 12.5% in 1890, they had already formed distinct communities in the center of the city.

On the eve of the first Battle of Flowers Parade, San Antonio was a multiethnic city, but was clearly controlled by an emerging Anglo and German elite. A decrease in Mexicano population, stemmed in part from low immigration, and a heavy influx of Anglos from the American south and Midwest, substantially restructured race relations in the city. In 1881, the establishment of the San Antonio club represented the most important marker of this growing unification of non-Hispanic citizens. As of 1887, the membership list included only one

Spanish surname.²⁵ The Mexicano elite who remained continued to have a small role in the city's social life, but only at its edges. Life and labor were increasingly segregated along racial and ethnic lines.

When the wives of the San Antonio Club members staged the first Battle of Flowers parade, they were participating in this emerging racial order. The parade commemorated a battle that occurred fifty-five years before, yet was also a symbol of a united white, non-Hispanic elite of the present.²⁶ Directing the city's memory toward the Texan Revolution avoided the more controversial history of the Civil War. Many of the city's German families had opposed secession, and were loyal to the Union during the war. San Antonio's multiethnic population had tangled ties to both sides of the Civil War. This German-Anglo elite community preferred to revive a history of a shared cause as the basis for the city's central celebration. Though Texas was very much a part of the South, its rituals revolved around its Western and Mexican history. As San Antonio became more closely tied, both in commerce and in economy, to other American cities, the Alamo and the Texan Revolution were the central battles of manifest destiny.

Parade organizers chose a battle metaphor for both past and present wars. Commemorating the Texan victory at San Jacinto, the parade marked the end of Mexico's control over the area, and was also commemorated at a time when the Mexicano elite had lost much of its power in the city. Situated in front of the Alamo, the parade redeemed those who lost their lives during that historic battle.²⁷ Instead of a Texan defeat, the Alamo became a space where veterans from the San

Jacinto battle were honored. Though most of the parade participants were not direct descendants of the Texan forces, through this celebration they identified themselves as the heirs to the Texan victory.

Battle metaphors were also appropriate because the military represented one of the groups transforming the city, from the days of the Mexican War in the 1840s to the 1890s. U.S. soldiers quartered in San Antonio during this war later became permanent residents when the headquarters of the Eighth Military District was established. During the 1850s, the city based much of its economy on the presence of these headquarters.²⁸ In 1878, the army established Fort Sam Houston, which played an active role in the first Battle of Flowers parades, loaning horses to pull the floats and sending official representatives as well. Often, high-ranking officers would act as official coordinators of the procession.

The surviving veterans of the San Jacinto battle were also honored at the parade. Organizers drew lines between real battles and this mock flower event, as the veterans were the one group not pelted by flowers during the procession. However, the hybrid performance of war and peace blurred these lines as well. As the *San Antonio Daily Express* noted:

It is a tribute of noble womanhood to heroic manhood; for the women are its promoters, the custodians of custom. They do the work; they are the generals, the majors and the captains of the battle, and the men are only privates under orders. ...The weapons are those tender flowers, ...poems of peace and nature's lesson of fraternity to man.²⁹

The local press made a play on the social inversions of this parade, as women took on the masculine roles of war and flowers became weapons. Yet one might

be wary of battles so easily won. The limits of women's transgression would become clear in later years of the parade, a subject I will take up later in the chapter.

Origins

Sources conflict about who came up with the idea of a flower battle. A history printed in the 1899 program states that Colonel Alexander, a prominent member of the San Antonio Club, proposed the idea to the club to honor the first Presidential visit to the city.³⁰ Other sources state that weeks before the President's visit was scheduled, a visitor from Chicago, W.J. Ballard, suggested that the city hold a celebration for the bicentennial of the first naming of San Antonio de Padua, as well as honoring the fifty-fifth anniversary of the San Jacinto battle.³¹ However, the Battle of Flowers records, first written by Helene Von Phul in 1931, credit Ellen Maury Slayden as the first with the idea, which was then proposed to Alexander and the San Antonio Club. I am inclined to believe the third version, for reasons that will become clear throughout the chapter. However, letting the ambiguity remain for the moment, these three origin stories also reveal the three main groups involved in the parade's invention--tourists, military and businessmen, and elite white women.

Their three differing emphases are also revealing. For the men of the San Antonio Club, who wrote that President Harrison's visit inspired the parade, the event was a symbol of the city's integration with the nation. The rapidly industrializing, growing city was becoming a military and commercial metropolis.

For Ballard, the tourist, the anniversary of San Antonio's founding as a Spanish colonial outpost was as important to honor as Texan Independence. Visitors viewed the city's remnants of Spanish missions and its present Mexicano population as part of its "quaint charm." For the wives of these club members, though, Texas liberty took primary importance. Official histories of the Battle of Flowers Association claim that plans for the parade were already underway when President Harrison announced his visit. The parade was merely modified by a day to coincide with his arrival. In fact, the parade was actually scheduled to begin at 5 pm, after the President's train would have left the city. As it happened, the parade was delayed due to rain, yet even if the parade was performed as scheduled, President Harrison would not have seen the event. This might also explain why, on April 25, 1891, four days after the President's visit, the ladies decided to stage the parade anyway.

Women's History

Whether or not the San Antonio club wives came up with the idea for the parade, they clearly took the initiative in its organization. Von Phul notes that at this first meeting

the ladies met at the home of Colonel Andrews, San Antonio Club president. He then presented their idea to Club members...the startled gentlemen, who had not up to this time had a woman at one of their meetings, listened with attentive interest to Col Andrews... tell what the ladies had in mind.³²

The physical presence of women in the men's club represented a larger intrusion of women into the city's public affairs. Although negotiated through and financed

by their husbands, these women defined a distinct public space for themselves, one centered on the moral purpose of public events. The local press, in a rather patronizing tone, recognized the group by stating:

The gentlemen of course are going to do all the heavy work such as employing the bands, having stands erected on the plaza and other such things as the feminine mind fails to compass, but it remains for the ladies to make it a success or a failure in the way of a parade.³³

When they proposed a “flower battle” and procession to commemorate the Texan victory at San Jacinto, they were also entering another distinctly male domain—the site of the Alamo. Women temporarily occupied this space through a gendered discourse of mourning for the male martyrs. As San Jacinto veteran Captain McMasters commented the following year, women never forgot those who sacrificed for their country. Men, consumed with the business of daily commerce, did not take time to honor the dead.³⁴ Mourning was a discourse of Victorian womanhood, and so women took on the duty of memory. And they used another popular symbol of their “delicate” sensibility, flowers. Women replaced the male martyrdom of the Alamo battle with a battle of flowers. San Antonio’s elite women were using the familiar terms of the private feminine sphere to enter the public realm. The women who formed the first Battle of Flowers Association sought a hybrid space. As “custodians of culture,” the wives of San Antonio club members sought to redefine their social position.

However, the limits of their strategy became clear quite early. The women were putting together the parade, but gendered divisions occurred even within the

parade organization. While women created the theme and purpose of the parade, the “men formed a committee...to arrange financial matters and assist with the program.”³⁵ This became a familiar pattern for subsequent parades. Women would concentrate on the educational and patriotic purposes of the parade, and men would attend to the practical matters. This division of labor had severe consequences for the Battle of Flowers Association in later years. Many of San Antonio’s elite white women were struggling to deal with great social transformations, ones in which their future roles were far from clear. Their domestic lives often isolated them from the bustling commercial life of downtown San Antonio. For this parade, though, the city’s elite women were in the center of public life.

In order to find this place, they focused on Texas history, and how it should be remembered. Like other white southern women during this period, they were “expanding the conception of voluntarism to include matters of history,” and in the process, “ a generation of white women acquired expertise in and influence through public history.”³⁶ Limited in their abilities to directly shape the political economy of the New South, white women looked to history; “ and to the extent that the women’s representations of history acquired cultural authority, they also became instruments of power.”³⁷ The Battle of Flowers parade became a vital part of the city’s tourist industry, and the pageantry of Texas history played an important role in how its residents imagined the region’s past, and its future.

Alamo Plaza

In the same year that the Battle of Flowers Association staged its first parade, elite San Antonio women also organized the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), dedicated to the preservation of historic sites and the memory of men and women responsible for the independence of Texas. Modeled after the Daughters of the American Revolution, the DRT was a patriotic organization of elite women, (many of whom were also part of the Battle of Flowers parade), who utilized heritage to claim power in the city. Soon after the organization founding, the local chapter of the DRT in San Antonio began making attempts to purchase the Alamo buildings. Although the Alamo chapel was purchased in 1883 by the city of San Antonio, the Hugo Schmeltzer Company owned the *convento* structure. Up until this period, the Alamo housed several commercial establishments. After over twenty years of fundraising, all of the Alamo buildings were purchased by the DRT in 1905.³⁸

Even before the Alamo purchase, though, city officials reconfigured its plaza. In 1889, the city council allocated funds to pave the plaza and plant a garden in the center, surrounded by wide sixty foot- wide streets.³⁹ From an open, social space the plaza was restructured and “beautified” into a network of paths and greenery. After the flower parades, the local press noted the spectacle of the plaza, covered in flowers. The image of a site, once known for death in heroic martyrdom through battle, was now domesticated through the hundreds of flower bouquets on the plaza grounds.

From the mid-nineteenth century, women domesticated death.⁴⁰

Throughout the country, women transformed graveyards from spaces of simple and somber headstones into elaborately decorated parks, filled with statues and monuments, portraits of the dead and graveside flowers and statues of weeping women. Cemeteries had also become “places of resort, suited for holiday excursion.”⁴¹ They became places of leisure activity. Like a cemetery, the Alamo, covered in flowers, became a place for women’s mourning and commemoration, as well as a place of one of the city’s biggest leisure activities.

By transforming the Alamo site into a park, the Battle of Flowers Association not only located the city’s past at the Alamo, they also participated in locating the city’s present around Alamo plaza. By the end of the nineteenth century, this plaza was the social and commercial center of the city. Richard Flores outlines this process:

Before 1850 San Antonio experienced little spatial differentiation in its built environment, with its Mexican plazas serving as the center of town. But after 1875...the spatial organization of San Antonio changed dramatically, with the Alamo and its plaza becoming the new heart of the city.⁴²

In the early nineteenth century, the town’s life centered around Plaza de las Islas (now Main Plaza) and Plaza de Armas (now Military Plaza), which were located southwest of Alamo plaza. The Plaza de Armas had been a training ground for the Spanish and Mexican army, but by mid-century several residences were built around the area, and the space became an open market and commercial center. Plaza de las Islas, on the other hand, was the social center for the city’s

festivals. Next to the cathedral, the plaza hosted many religious and civic festivals such as Mexican Independence day and the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. However, by the end of the century, the social and commercial center had definitively moved to Alamo Plaza.

The Battle of Flowers parade confirmed this transition. When the San Antonio Club first began discussions for the parade, they unanimously chose Alamo Plaza. By this period, the railroad and local streetcar networks centered on Alamo plaza, attracting locals and visitors to the new commercial hub.⁴³ The Grand Opera house opened on the plaza in 1886, and in 1890 the new post office moved to the north end of the plaza, along with retail druggists, liquor stores, saloons, meat stores, a physician, an attorney, a dentist, a bank, two real estate offices, boarding houses and hotels. City officials also restructured the other two plazas. They officially designated Military Plaza as the public market for the city in 1888, but in 1889 began building the new city hall in the center of the plaza, transforming the space from an open market space to a space dominated by the imposing city building. They also constructed the courthouse and garden on Main plaza. As these new buildings covered the plazas, they disrupted the daily commerce, religious festivities and other social practices that happened there. Mexicanos moved many of their activities further west, and operated at the margins of downtown.

As the first Battle of Flowers participants paraded through the city, they navigated a rapidly changing urban landscape. The procession moved westward

on Houston Street to St Mary's, onto Main Plaza, and back down Commerce Street to Alamo Street and Alamo plaza, where the flower battle occurred and the greatest crowd gathered:

..there were signs on the streets that something unusual was to be accomplished. From the various arteries of the city leading to Alamo plaza a steady, persistent flow of animated and enthusiastic beings poured itself onto the scene of the battle. By every known method of conveyance and principally by pedalistic action from every quarter of the city the people came. Arriving at the plaza they chose their vantage points. Windows were gradually filled, balconies were occupied and awning and roof tops received their living, expectant burdens...The central portion of the plaza was bright with its living crowd...It was a cosmopolitan, metropolitan crowd and it swelled until it numbered 10,000 people.⁴⁴

As the papers described, the parade performed the centrality of Alamo plaza to this new city. In these descriptions, the crowd acted as one. The parade not only transformed the image of the city, but also depicted its residents as a cohesive social body.⁴⁵ However, the unified tone that the *Daily Express* offered masks the power relations that structured the city, and the parade. The local press, and the Battle of Flowers Committee, emphasized the parade's inclusiveness, calling for any one who has a carriage to decorate it and participate. Like other urban parades of the time, this was advertised as a public event for the entire community, not just a particular social group. Pictures and descriptions of these early parades demonstrate that those who rode in carriages were members of the San Antonio Club, city leaders and military commanders, led by African American coachmen. However, newspaper reports also indicate that at least one hundred carriages and floats participated. Apparently, residents of more moderate means also took part

in the procession. Newspapers also mention an ethnically and racially diverse procession. Mexicano *mutualistas* (benevolent associations) rode in the parade, as well as African American volunteer firemen. Perhaps the most surprising possibility is that African Americans rode as independent participants.⁴⁶ In their efforts to promote civic unity, San Antonio's elite included a diverse public in their first parade. The image of civic unity emerged in crowd descriptions as well. The crowd "besieged" buildings and "poured" into the plaza for vantage points. In a region, and a city, experiencing the rapid transformations of modernity, the elite wished to present a stable public. However, more detailed descriptions of the parade reveal that this crowd was not as unified as the organizers wished, a story I will detail later in this chapter.

Fiestas Patrias

The most interesting paradox is the story of its origin. The parade commemorated liberation from Mexico and the city's transformation into an American city. However, the event was also an imitation of very similar parades in the heart of Mexico—the flower parades of Mexico City. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz used flower battles and processions to celebrate Mexico's own entry to modernity.⁴⁷ These parades were the inspiration for San Antonio's event. As San Antonio celebrated its freedom from Mexico, the city also demonstrated its continuing ties to its ancestral country.

Elite San Antonians also had many personal ties to Mexico's elite. Ellen Maury Slayden and her husband, U.S. Congressman James Slayden, were close friends with Porfirio Díaz, and made frequent trips to Mexico City. These visits probably inspired Slayden's idea for the flower battle. San Antonio's story also paralleled Mexico's in many ways, and this becomes clear when considering San Antonio as an intersection of the regions of the American South and Greater Mexico, rather than as a city on the North side of the U.S./ Mexico border. Of course, the most obvious confluence is the continuing social life of the city's Mexicano residents. Yet there are other mergings as well. Economic links between US and Mexico were important during this era—railroads linked Mexico City to San Antonio, and American companies invested in mining, industry and transportation.⁴⁸ Comparing these two sets of flower battles, and the meanings for their simultaneous occurrences, reveals how much the two cities had in common.

Like Texas, Mexico became more industrialized and urbanized during this period. The Díaz regime, from 1876 to 1911, welcomed foreign investment, especially from the United States, which funded and controlled expanding railroad lines and the silver mining industry. As in South Texas, investors from the U.S. Northeast were connecting the country to the world economy. The profits of these investments were benefiting relatively few groups—the foreigners themselves and the native elite who allied with them. In contrast, Indians were massively evicted from their communal landholdings by rurales, mounted rural militia who broke strikes and assured greater supplies of landless peasants for

factories and large farms.⁴⁹ These rurales bore some resemblance to the Texas Rangers who exercised violent forms of land dispossession and social control in the first two decades of the twentieth century in Texas, and the displacements of Mexicano ranchers. The changing Mexican economy also solidified a particular ethnoracial order, as European, Spanish culture was elevated at the expense of “the Indian”. Mexican elites put this starkly in terms of modernity. Rural, traditional culture was associated with backwardness, and urban modern culture with whiteness and progress.⁵⁰

The urban elite of Mexico City wanted to create a culture that was consistent with their notions of a progressive society.⁵¹ A new social order was developing in both cities, and they wished their public rituals to reflect this process. The Americanization of Alamo plaza, described above, also occurred in Mexico City. One writer describes late nineteenth century Mexico City as a foreign place: “This is not a Mexican city. It was built by foreigners and is now run by foreigners.”⁵² As American and European investment came to the city, they made major changes as well, transforming the urban environment. Both San Antonio and Mexico City were hybrid, multiethnic places, experiencing modernizing transformations at the same time. Mexico city was much larger than San Antonio, and the center of an emerging national culture, rather than a small western outpost of the United States. However, Mexico City was significantly less industrialized than cities of the same size in the United States. Thus, while

Mexico City's transformation was on a much larger scale, the elite of both cities were eager to distance themselves from a far too recent rural past.

One of Mexico City's elite's first goals was to bring greater order to the city's festivities. Municipal police and fire departments expanded, and many of the social traditions of previous decades were put to the margins of the city's central districts. Mexico's "flowery war" was part of this process. Held on the Paseo de la Reforma, the main avenue for social promenading, the aristocratic class had similar passing carriages, hurling bouquets and cavalcades.⁵³ They also staged bicycle parades along the Paseo during the carnival season. These events pushed other celebrations to the streets of working class neighborhoods. European culture, particularly French culture, appealed to both the San Antonio and Mexican elite. The flower processions that Slayden witnessed in Mexico City were themselves imitations of parades in Nice and Cannes. Ironically, in order to promote a more unified national culture, Mexico City's elites looked to Europe, as did San Antonians. Like other urban elites in the late nineteenth century, Mexico city's leisure class shopped for Swiss watches and dined at Parisian cafès. These elites looked to Europe to rescue Mexico from its "backward" past.⁵⁴

At the same time, both San Antonians and Mexico City elites pushed "native" cultural performances to the city margins. While San Antonio elites staged its Battle of Flowers parade, its Mexicano community held separate festivals at the edge of the city. The center of these events became San Pedro Creek, the eastern edge of what had become known as the "Mexican quarter."

Historian Arnoldo De León writes that the fiestas patrias of Diez y Seis had assembled on Military Plaza before 1890; after this, they began further west at Washington or Paschal square.⁵⁵ Military Plaza remained an important social space for the Mexicano community, but the new city hall, which occupied most of the plaza, made this a difficult festive gathering place. Anglos considered other events such as the *fandangos* (dances) that occupied the plazas throughout the century too “rowdy” for public space by the 1880s.⁵⁶ The fiestas patrias, considered the most refined of Mexican festivities, were tolerated, but overall, public space in the city was more closely policed and monitored.

A Mexican flower battle serving as the inspiration for a Texan Independence parade blurred the lines drawn between “Anglo” Texas and “Mexico.” Slayden and the other women of the Battle of Flowers Association do not state any explicit intention to tie their parade to Mexico. Parade themes often featured images of a pre-industrial Mexican and Spanish past, yet the greatest irony is that the parade form borrowed from the Mexico of the present. As San Antonio’s Anglo elite drew borders between the United States and Mexico, they continually crossed this border during their lives.

The Flower Battle

The Battle of Flowers was supposed to provide an austere alternative to the chaos of events such as the fandango. However, the first flower battle was perhaps not quite as calm as hoped. The *Daily Express* described this massive

crowd as serene, but the less conservative, Republican paper, the *San Antonio Light*, described it differently:

The crowd on foot pressed the carriages closely and the fight began and waged furiously for nearly an hour. The occupants of the carriages had all the ammunition while those on foot had none. They began picking the fallen roses from the pavement, and even tore off the trimmings of the carriages and soon had the best of the fight. Heavy bunches of laurel thrown soon had their effect, and many ladies lost their temper and used their carriage whips indiscriminately on the crowd.⁵⁷

From this description, the flower battle was a chaotic performance of social disorderliness. The boundaries of social roles were both transgressed and violently reaffirmed, as ladies hit men with their carriage whips while others pleaded for peace, Anglo men hit African Americans, and they hit back:

One lady struck Mr Doc Fitzgerald, a passive spectator, a severe blow on the face with her whip, but did not see fit to apologize for her mistake. Mr HP Drought made an ugly cut with his whip into the crowd, struck a Negro and the boy ran into a carriage horse in front of the Menger [hotel] and nearly caused a runaway. A Negro, driving in a phaeton by himself in the procession, struck Loms Glaeser, a white boy in the right eye with the ends of his reins...One young angel with white wings appealed to the crowd for protection from the missiles saying "I wish you men would make them quit.

At the same time, electric cars clashed with runaway carriages- a clash of the new forces of technology with older forms of transportation:

While the crowd was very dense on the plaza, waiting for the procession to come along, Mr. Christoph Pfeuffer's splendid team and carriage took fright on South Alamo street, at an electric car...Dashing into Alamo street, past and into the crowd of people and vehicles, it overturned a buggy and horse on the corner, and its driver jumped out and was dragged under the carriage by the lines.

And in one of the most interesting social disruptions:

One of our tender dudes, completely carried away with the enthusiasm of the occasion, started a flowery duel with a damsel of color and considerable stoutness, under the impression that he was showering tender missiles upon his best girl. No words can portray his embarrassment when the boisterous laughs of the bystanders rudely broke him the realization.

In a social world in which the lines of race, gender and class were rigidly defined and enforced, such confusion was considered quite noteworthy. And the young man was rewarded with carnival laughter, an ambivalent sound that mocks and revives, denies and asserts.⁵⁸ His transgression was an embarrassment, yet it was also made possible in such a chaotic context. For the moment of the parade, Alamo plaza became a world where social boundaries were both transgressed and affirmed. Most importantly, Alamo plaza became a crossroads, a space where the people who were normally kept separate were juxtaposed. For in this event, the city's elite exposed themselves to the forces of a diverse public. Such rowdy battles would not continue at the same pace, though. After the first year, organizers decided that only parade participants would take part in the flower battle. The crowd would merely watch. More mounted police would monitor and segregate them from the procession.

Antiquated Foreignness

The Chicago tourist W. J. Ballard was one of many visitors to the city in the late nineteenth century, part of the rapidly developing tourism industry. The railroad stimulated this industry, inviting such "snowbirds" as Ballard to a series of new hotels and restaurants. City boosters claimed the city's climate was ideal for those suffering from tuberculosis. When visitors enjoyed San Antonio's

“quaint charms,” they were noting a mixture of nostalgia and the exotic, a place of “antiquated foreignness.”

In the discourse of civilization, prevalent at the time, such a pleasure would be understandable. Combining ideas of progress with social Darwinism, civilization marked a stage of human evolution, a departure from savagery.⁵⁹ Yet this did not preclude interest in those others who were at earlier stages of human development. Edward Said noted that western culture gained identity by setting itself off from “the Orient,” and this Other region became “an underground self” for the West.⁶⁰ Stallybrass and White elaborate this dependency. As the agents of civilization attempt to reject savagery, they find that they are dependent on this low-other culture for their own sense of self. In this way, what is made socially peripheral becomes symbolically central.⁶¹ For San Antonio, this process took two forms—as both a particular past and a particular people were both displaced and symbolically centralized. The past became somewhat of a foreign country, as the growing tourism industry depended upon images of both cattle ranching and Mexicanos to market the city to visitors.⁶² Battle of Flowers programs featured pictures of log cabins (with the label “home sweet home”) alongside images of Mexicano candy vendors. Renato Rosaldo calls this “imperialist nostalgia,” a mourning for what one has destroyed, and many historians of the American Southwest have noted the irony that as Mexicano populations were stigmatized, their cultural practices became part of Anglo imagination.⁶³ Carey McWilliams

states this most concisely with his notion that Anglos had a “Spanish heritage fantasy.”⁶⁴

Yet such images were actually portraying many relatively new practices. Though Mexicano vendors had been on the plazas for many decades, they developed a series of new services oriented toward visiting Anglo tourists. *Vendedores* created a growing form of outdoor salesmanship, peddling “quaint” products like candies, flowers, and birds. The chili stands were a unique part of San Antonio’s nightlife. Arranged in small tables around wood fire, “chili queens” sold bowls for 10 cents.⁶⁵ They even drew tourists to the margins of the city. In the “Mexican quarter” west of San Pedro Creek, families made homes into makeshift eating places for Anglo consumers. These urban entrepreneurs contributed to the tourism industry and to the image of the city itself, ensuring that even a city whose population at this moment was majority Anglo and German, would be imagined by visitors as a Spanish/Mexican village.

The Battle of Flowers parade participated in these visions. The early parades mirrored the social order, the stages of the city’s progress. David Glassberg, writing of the historical pageantry movement across the nation at the turn of the century, states that historical imagery “provides categories of experience—what is traditional, what is modern, what is timeless and what can be changed, the strange from common sense, inevitable from accidental.”⁶⁶ The Battle of Flowers processions marked and naturalized the social order. While they offered visions of pomp and progress, they also displayed marginalized groups.

From the first parade, along with the decorated carriages and military bands came a “fun-maker”, a broken down carriage with shabbily dressed occupants, drawn by an old horse with patched harness carrying a banner which read “Poor but in it.”⁶⁷ The program from the 1896 parade makes this clear.⁶⁸ The parade was organized into four divisions. First, mounted police cleared the crowd. The bicycles followed, visions of modern leisure and technology. The second division was the United States band and military processions from Fort Sam Houston. In the third division, the carriages came, with the officers of the Battle of Flowers Association, veterans of San Jacinto, and eight floats of various patriotic organizations in the city. One float presented “Our Nation” with girls dressed as each state.⁶⁹

In the fourth division, parade organizers put the symbols of an earlier age. A Mexican band was followed by carts, like the ones driven before the railroad that put most cartmen out of business. In the parade, these were driven by children. What was once the main source of goods for the city now became an object of children’s play. Cowboys and Indians followed, “dressed in costumes as blood-curling as knives, pistols, red paint and feathers.” These displays were the comic part of the parade, the “fun-makers.” The most popular of these forms was the “donkey brigade.” These “quaint beasts” were intertwined with Anglo ideas of Mexicanness. The local press described this group as “the brigade of unhurried, sinister-eyed burros and their sombreroed young riders.” They became an object of mockery. This division was described as “a striking foil to all the pomp and

pageantry.”⁷⁰ Placed at the end of the parade, they were meant to demonstrate the superiority of Anglo culture by contrast.

As such an example makes clear, carnival practices often stigmatize groups of low social status, rather than offer a critique of social power. Along with these groups came the devils, members of the Young Men’s Christian Association dressed in red, white and blue. This parody was an inversion, when social roles were reversed and those in power portrayed those without. The members of the donkey brigade were also “playing Mexican.” Another comic element was performed by Sam H. Woodward, “colored, that is artificially colored” who spent his time doing circus pranks. In such examples of racial cross-dressing, the city’s white upper and middle classes presented a profoundly mixed, a source of both desire and repulsion. As stigmatized groups were mocked, they were also objects of fascination.

The parade was an ambivalent celebration of the city’s progress, an event that looked back as often as it looked forward. And the city itself would also operate on this paradox. In the process of becoming an American city, the city’s tourism industry celebrated it for its remnants of the Spanish/Mexican past. Its vehicle for entering modernity was a commemoration of a quickly vanishing past. Although these elites were enjoying most of the benefits of these new social changes, they were also expressing uncertainty about the rapid transformation of the city. The creation of idealized pre-industrial pageants and festivals has often been a refuge from the rapid social change. The Battle of Flowers parade spoke

with a double tongue, expressing anxiety and excitement about the rapid pace of modernization.

Sentimental History

This hybrid discourse was not intended to transgress the drive of progress and industrialization. While San Antonio's elite women crafted roles to extend their personal power, they were hardly acts of direct transgression. Ann Douglas writes of women's intent on claiming culture as a form of "compensatory control" by which they could cross-gendered divisions of power. Yet this strategy was doomed to failure. As Douglas writes:

Sentimentalism is a complex phenomenon. It asserts that the values a society's activities denies are precisely the ones it cherishes; it attempts to deal with the phenomenon of cultural bifurcation by the manipulation of nostalgia. Sentimentalism provides a way to protest a power to which one has already in part capitulated. It is a form of dragging one's heels...they had agreed to put on a convincing show, and to lose.⁷¹

Women had reason to become ambivalent about the consequences of these rapid social transformations. However, their form of protest set limits on its effectiveness. Over years, as the Battle of Flowers parade expanded to several days of events, they also lost some control over the annual festival.

One of the clearest early expressions of this ambivalence is about the changes surrounding the parade itself. As the parade became larger each year, some women sensed that the parade was losing its purpose. Friction between the Battle of Flowers members and the Businessmen's club, who sponsored commercial ventures surrounding the parade, occurred over how to define the

events.⁷² As the yearly parade increased in popularity, several other festivities were added to the week's calendar. By 1904 the parade was surrounded by six days of carnival and other trades parades. In 1906 the events were named the "Spring Carnival." Many women, though, felt that the festival was losing its commemorative emphasis.

Battle of Flowers member Helen Von Phul vaguely hints at these tensions within the organization with the note: "in some years the social feature was overshadowed by the commercial."⁷³ During this same period, men often assumed the presidency. However, in 1909, the association was reorganized as an exclusively female group. McGimsey diplomatically writes: "with the beginning of the twentieth century, due to increasing population, greater business possibilities, and larger military establishments, the enlarging celebration filled the entire week. The necessity for coordination and financing became more apparent, and the ladies relinquished this task to the men, who had always shown a willingness to share these endeavors. By now there was a reason to divide the business and social features of the week."⁷⁴ Businessmen began to take a larger role in the festival, and the Battle of Flowers ladies "confined" themselves to the social and patriotic aspects of the parade.

To reconcile the conflict between the patriotic and the commercial, roles were more firmly delineated along gendered lines. Men formed a separate association, The Spring Carnival Association, and the Battle of Flowers Association became more devoted to the commemorative purposes of the parade.

This division is also apparent in the different parades themselves. By 1899, the Battle of Flowers was “the ladies parade” while other parades were controlled by the businessmen. As the program states:

The first day’s celebration will be in charge of the ladies and will be as heretofore- a parade of decorated bicycles, carriages, etc., to conclude with grand battle of roses ...The second day will be under the direction of the Business Men’s Club and will consist of a grand military parade and review in the morning, a comic parade in the afternoon.

The Battle of Flowers became a spectacle devoted to sentiment and beauty, while the men’s had military, commercial and comical elements. The businessmen absorbed all of the multiple purposes that the ladies increasingly excluded, and focused more on entertainment and developing commerce.

Using the discourse of patriotism was a way to maintain some power over what had become the city’s largest event, yet this had its limitations as well. The Battle of Flowers Association women did not openly express any objections to “the commercial aspects” of the festival; instead, they isolated themselves. In this way, the parade that was initially a strategy for entering public life was increasingly marginalized within the festival. The gendered spheres reproduced themselves in the festival itself, and what had become the “woman’s parade” was separated from the commercial life of the city.

Manifest Destinies

The parade also changed in other ways. Though the events celebrated a carnival, they were increasingly interested in social order. Frederick Jackson Turner declared that the frontier had closed in 1893, yet the imperial nostalgia of

the Battle of Flowers parade only increased. As parades and other rituals invent tradition, they also draw connections to a largely imagined past. At a time of social change, such rituals become particularly important.⁷⁵ Through references to a Spanish/Mexican past, the parades also established a historical narrative, and described themselves as heirs to a long line of ancestors, rather than relative newcomers to the region. Anglos adopted Mexican and “Spanish” culture with a particular historical purpose. At a moment when the urban environment was transforming into an American city, Anglo leaders claimed a certain legitimacy from connecting their own practices to those groups who they had pushed out. An 1899 newspaper description of the parade creates a new history for the events:

The story is recorded in Old Spanish documents that when the Franciscan monks carried the cross into the wilds of Texas and founded the missions in the valley of the San Antonio river they found several tribes of Indians among whom there obtained an annual pagan celebration falling approximately about the same time as holy week. The celebration was a barbarous sacrificial festival... The monks, taking advantage of the coincidence in time in the pagan and the great Christian celebration became prominently identified with the Indian event. Their kind treatment of the wild tribes gave them an influence which enabled them gradually to eliminate from the festivals the brutal inflictions on man and beast and at the same time infuse into the events a crude but effective form of Christian worship. And through the flowers that grew wild on the prairie...the monks wrought this refinement...in wild floral processions...celebrating rough conquests...The long cycle of near two centuries now changed not only the man and his customs, but the land itself. The open prairie is studded with farms...and on the banks of the river stands a thriving city... there weaved yesterday another pageant of garlands and wreathes...the story of mankind's advancement from darkness into light ...there are other festivals for commercial gain in far west and in this state, commemorating no event, but San Antonio's stands out in striking contrast- women's splendid tribute to patriotism.⁷⁶

This narrative connects and unifies San Antonio's long history of migrations and human conflicts, and writes the transition to modernity as a natural end to the process. As the Spanish monks' appropriated "savage" floral battles for their own purposes, so the Battle of Flowers Association attempted to reformulate and improve the rowdier elements of the crowd, to present an orderly procession and naturalize the history of conquest as a triumph of civilization. The passage ends with a vision of the "thriving city" itself. Like the monks who refined the wild prairie flowers into elaborate garlands and wreathes, these women hoped to weave together San Antonio's diverse communities with their appeals to "patriotism." However, in order to assume this role, they had to make many hybrids. They created for themselves a space between the binary spheres of public and private- a domesticated public sphere. The parade performed at the boundary of one economy and the emergence of another. Honoring the first American Presidential visit, and the city's closer integration with the United States, the parade also presented San Antonio as a site of "antiquated foreignness." A growing tourist industry would promote the city as a site of difference within the nation's borders. Finally, while celebrating the defeat of the Mexican Army in 1836, the "flower battle" itself was an imitation of flower battles occurring simultaneously in Mexico City. Performing the intersection between the American South, the West, and Greater Mexico, the parade celebrated manifest destiny with the rituals of the conquered. In a festival devoted to peace and urban unity, the Battle of Flowers also presented a spectacle of war.

Age of Empire

And the city, as well as the nation, was emerging into a new era. On April 21, 1898, the same day the United States declared war on Spain, the Battle of Flowers parade was held. Local papers made much of this coincidence. “It was a striking comparison, the two events celebrated on the same day-- almost the same hour—the declaration of war and the celebration of liberty.”⁷⁷ The coincidence is compelling for a number of reasons, for at this moment the discourses of war and peace, region and empire, progress and nostalgia, public and private, merged. The army marched through the city’s streets, pausing in front of the Western Union on Commerce Street for the Zouaves to wire their enlistment to Pres McKinley. The Excelsior Guards, the “colored” militia organization, drilled on the plaza. The bicycle club featured Uncle Sam lassoing the Spanish general Sagasta and Governor Blanco announcing “This is what we will do.” Another was a palanquin carried by “two Mexicans dressed as Orientals” who took Mr. Hilmer Guenther’s children. In the same parade, a float featured a wax doll clothed in white as an emblem of peace.⁷⁸

This procession had several of the same contradictions as the initial parade in 1891, except the “Mexicans dressed as Orientals” hinted at a mixing of the discourses of manifest destiny and American imperialism. Teddy Roosevelt, as he fought the Spanish American War with his Rough Riders, named for the troupe of Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show, made much of this link between the conquering of the west and the conquering of new territories. This new war was

less about “liberty” than about expanding American power on the continent. After the war, The United States would, for the first time, hold territories whose residents would not be entitled to voting rights and several other American liberties. The “orientals” of the Phillipines and the Puerto Ricans would not be treated so differently from “the Mexicans” of south Texas. Like the first Battle of Flowers parade, this parade marked the edges of a new socio-political order.

Both Mexicanos and upper class women, in the parades, were the principal objects of the tourist gaze; both presented their “charms” to the booming city. The ladies paraded themselves in decorated carriages, while Mexicano vendors displayed their crafts on plaza margins, and were displayed to Anglo visitors. They became spectacles for the diverse public, even as their private worlds were moved to the margins- for women in suburban homes and Mexicanos in their west side “quarter.” Before I make too much of these parallels, though, one must take into account that there were considerable differences as well. For the changes that occurred and demonstrated in the Battle of Flowers parades were often accomplished by women themselves. And the consequences of such spectacles would be very different for each group.

In 1899, the Battle of Flowers parade found “the country virtually at peace with the world and the possessor of almost twice as much land as she claimed one year ago.” At the same time, “the substitution of flowers as an emblem of peace, love and beauty is appropriate at this day-- the burial of all animosities-- the rejoicing over the era of good will that exists between the two great republics.”

Such burials would be short-lived, as the contradictions of these early parades would manifest themselves more clearly in later decades. These early flower parades celebrated San Antonio's transition to modernity, and marked a national turn towards empire-building. The commemoration of a previous war with Mexico also took on the meanings of this new war with Spain. These Battle of Flowers Parades were symbolic spaces to perform the intersections of local, regional, national and transnational battles. A parade intended to unify the city also displayed its deepest social divisions.

¹ Helene van Phul, "The Battle of Flowers Association," 1931, Battle of Flowers Association Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio.

² Mary Etta McGimsey, "History of the Battle of Flowers Association," 1966, Battle of Flowers Association Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio.

³ Sara Evans, *Born for Liberty* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 67. She does not apply this analysis to the Battle of Flowers directly. Michael Haynes was the first to apply Evans' work to Fiesta. Michael Haynes, *Dressing Up Debutantes: Glamor and Glitz in South Texas*, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998).

⁴ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 28-30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶ David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 67.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Susan Davis, *Parades and Power* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 5-6.

⁹ Stallybrass and White, 44.

¹⁰ "Battle of Flowers," *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 25, 1891.

¹¹ William Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1987), 41.

¹² Richard Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity and the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

¹³ John Davis, *San Antonio: A Historical Portrait* (Austin: Encino Press, 1978), 25.

¹⁴ David R. Johnson, John A. Booth and Richard Harris, eds., *The Politics of San Antonio: Community, Progress and Power* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

¹⁵ Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 19.

¹⁶ See David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987).

¹⁷ Flores, 47.

¹⁸ Arnoldo De León, *The Tejano Community, 1836-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 90.

¹⁹ Richard A. García, *The Rise of a Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio 1929-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1991), 22.

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- ²⁰ Arnolde De León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, Inc. 1993), 63.
- ²¹ Kenneth Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 23.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 27.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 49.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.
- ²⁵ Donald Everett, "San Antonio Welcomes the 'Sunset'-1877," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 65, no.1 (1961): 46-60.
- ²⁶ It is important to note that the participants in the Texas Revolution were not all Anglo, yet subsequent histories diminished the role of Tejano revolutionaries in the battles.
- ²⁷ Holly Beachley Brear gives a more thorough account of the commemoration of the Alamo battle as "Good Friday," and the Battle of Flowers Parade (and later Fiesta) as the "secular Easter" and rebirth of Anglo social prominence. Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).
- ²⁸ Judith Berg Sobré. *San Antonio on Parade: Six Historic Festivals* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 30.
- ²⁹ "With Flowers as Weapons," *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 22, 1896.
- ³⁰ Battle of Flowers Parade program, 1899, Battle of Flowers Association Papers. Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio.
- ³¹ Jack Maguire makes this claim in *A Century of Fiesta in San Antonio*, (Austin: Eakin Press, 1990), 1; Holly Beachley Brear also credits Ballard in *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine*, though she makes it clear that Ellen Maury Slayden organized the parade.
- ³² van Phul, 3.
- ³³ *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 12, 1891.
- ³⁴ *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 22, 1892.
- ³⁵ van Phul, 3.
- ³⁶ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South 1880-1920," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Bryant Simon, 115 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.
- ³⁸ Flores, 53.
- ³⁹ Horace R. Smith, "History of Alamo Plaza from Its Beginning to the Present" (masters thesis, Trinity University, 1966), 40.
- ⁴⁰ Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf Publishing, 1977).
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 210.
- ⁴² Flores, 38.
- ⁴³ Flores, 52. Flores gives a thorough account of the new businesses opening on Alamo plaza, as well as the transformation of Military and Main Plazas.
- ⁴⁴ "Battle of Flowers," *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 25, 1891.
- ⁴⁵ Glassberg, 68.
- ⁴⁶ Judith Berg Sobré makes this suggestion in her analysis of the first Battle of Flowers Parade. I credit her with the observation that newspaper reports limited their carriage descriptions to a dozen elite dislays, while offering only indirect references to the many other carriages in the procession. In *San Antonio On Parade: Six Historic Festivals*.
- ⁴⁷ Beezley, 128-129.
- ⁴⁸ Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations Between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1992), 1.
- ⁴⁹ George Grayson, *The United States and Mexico: Patterns of Influence* (New York: Praeger, 1984),18.
- ⁵⁰ Beezley, 128.

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- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Alfred Oscar Coffin, "Land without Chimneys: The Byways of Mexico," 1898, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Michael Johns, *The City of Mexico in the Age of Diaz* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 17.
- ⁵⁵ DeLeón, 1982: 178.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ "Battle of Flowers" *San Antonio Light*, April 25, 1891.
- ⁵⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 12.
- ⁵⁹ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 25.
- ⁶⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979), 7.
- ⁶¹ Stallybrass and White, 5.
- ⁶² David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
- ⁶³ Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).
- ⁶⁴ Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, rev.ed.n(1949; repr., New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).
- ⁶⁵ De León, 1982:95.
- ⁶⁶ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990),1.
- ⁶⁷ McGimsey, 4.
- ⁶⁸ Battle of Flowers Parade Program, 1896, Battle of Flowers Association Papers, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio.
- ⁶⁹ "With Flowers as Weapons," *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 22, 1896.
- ⁷⁰ "Grand Patriotic Fete and Battle of Flowers," *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 22, 1897.
- ⁷¹ Douglas, 10.
- ⁷² However, this friction is not directly expressed in any Battle of Flowers Association materials.
- ⁷³ van Phul, 2.
- ⁷⁴ McGimsey, 6.
- ⁷⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, in his introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, makes this argument. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- ⁷⁶ "It Was a Dream of Beauty," *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 22, 1899.
- ⁷⁷ "Flower Battle" *San Antonio Light*, April 22, 1898.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 3
The Order of the Alamo:
Heritage and Carnival in the New South, 1900-1927

Ann Elizabeth of the House of Fisher, Duchess of Imperial Jewels in the Court of African Treasures, enters San Antonio's municipal auditorium for Fiesta's 2002 Coronation. As the lord high chamberlain announces her name, she begins her slow walk on the elevated runway to the main stage. She has the audiences' full attention as she carefully moves forward, carrying the weight of a thirty-pound train, covered with beads and glass stones and extending twelve feet behind her. Her arms are slightly raised at her waist, and her head moves from side to side, acknowledging the crowd. As she reaches the stage, she is met by her escort, who waits as she crosses the stage twice and pauses for her formal court bow. Modeled after the English curtsy to the British monarch, she points her right foot, then moves it in a semicircle to the back; she lowers her straight torso, and bends her legs until she is sitting on them. Finally, she attempts the most difficult part of her task, a feat called the "Texas dip". As she bends forward from the waist, she tries to lower her head as close to the floor as possible. However, she momentarily loses her balance, and performs a more abbreviated curtsy to avoid falling sideways on the stage. Though no one calls attention to this slight mistake, Duchess Ann is clearly upset as she moves up the stairs to join the rest of the court. Sitting on her pedestal and arranging her train, she briefly wipes tears from her eyes.

Duchess Ann has much at stake in her performance. In the Coronation, San Antonio's young debutantes become adult members of the city's upper class. The Coronation assigns young women the task of performing and maintaining the social position of their families.¹ Michael Haynes thoroughly describes this process in Fiesta's contemporary Coronations. The Order of the Alamo, a private men's organization, selects young women from the city's elite families to participate in this annual presentation. Through their roles as duchesses, princesses and queens of Fiesta, Coronation debutantes literally carry their heritage on their backs. Duchess Ann's severe self-critique represents the larger pressures put upon San Antonio's upper class women as they maintain and reproduce racial and class boundaries through this embodied performance.

Duchess Ann follows a tradition that has remained relatively unchanged since the Coronation began in 1909. Two decades after Mrs. H.D. Kampmann chaired the first Battle of Flowers parade, her daughter, "Miss Eda," became the first queen of the Order of the Alamo's Coronation. San Antonio's elite women strained the boundaries of womanhood through the parade, yet their daughters were initiated into a more secluded privatized sphere, focused on "southern beauty." The middle aged women in the Battle of Flowers parade, challenging the limits of the domestic sphere, were a symbol of the first ten years of Fiesta. Their debutante daughters, shrouded in the private ballrooms, were more appropriate symbols for the Fiesta of the next twenty years. As a battle was the metaphor for the initial Fiesta parades, the order of the Alamo was the one of this new era. This

enshrined fortress became the most prominent emblem of this solidifying social order.

The walk to the Coronation stage is a precise exercise in self-control and thus, social control of the female body.² Susan Bordo views this as a “backlash phenomenon, reasserting existing gender configurations against any attempts to shift or transform power relations.”³ Bordo provides a careful analysis of process of making docile female bodies, the exacting and normalizing regimens of diet, makeup and dress that influence women to focus on self-modification. While she is speaking of a more contemporary moment, her analysis can also be applied to the moment of the Coronation’s emergence in the early twentieth century. At a time when many elite white men were anxious about the rise of the “New Woman” who challenged Victorian norms, they created rituals to return them to the domestic sphere.⁴ By elevating the southern beauty, they tried to reinforce distinct gendered spheres. To complement this vision of womanhood, San Antonio’s elite men also cultivated the image of the southern gentlemen in the “Texas Cavalier.” Beginning in 1926, these gentlemen would elect the “King Antonio”, who was crowned within the Alamo chapel at the beginning of Fiesta week.

These men were not only interested in marking gendered roles, though. They also demonstrated an increasing interest in maintaining class and racial boundaries to ensure their social distinction. At a time of dramatic urban growth, increased Mexican immigration, World War I and the Mexican Revolution, elite

white men policed the borders of upper class whiteness to maintain the social order of the Texas Modern. While the elite helped to create this rapidly modernizing city, these changes also encouraged new anxieties about public order. Like cities across the United States during the Progressive Era, San Antonio's municipal reformers created and enforced new regulations to monitor urban development. These new anxieties often focused on the regulation of individual bodies.

In San Antonio, the perceived threat came from increased immigration from Mexico. While the period of 1880 to 1900 was marked by a stagnation of Mexican immigration, from 1900 to 1930, the city's Mexicano population increased six-fold. Between 1900 and 1910, immigration increased by 75%. From 1910 to 1920, during the Mexican Revolution, the increases were even greater, as the Mexicano population jumped from 29,480 to 59,970.⁵ San Antonio Anglos' fears about disease merged with their anxieties about racial "others," as they monitored and segregated both Mexicanos and African Americans in public life.

The rituals of the Anglo Kings and Queens of Fiesta, with their emphasis on familial and social reproduction, guarded against fears of "race suicide." As "foreign" immigration increased, these Fiesta monarchs created privatized, sacred bodies, set apart from the larger public. At the same time, other Fiesta activities transgressed these symbolic boundaries. As the Battle of Flowers Parade became more popular, new commercial events and spectacles formed the "spring carnival" surrounding the women's patriotic parade. During Carnival festivities,

San Antonio's citizens expressed more ambivalent attitudes about racial others and the social order of the Texas Modern.

Patriotism and Commercial Culture

After the success of San Antonio's first Battle of Flowers Parade, elite women tried to maintain their control over the festive events that quickly grew around their famous procession. As early as 1895, the city's elite men formed an organization that would eventually challenge the women's control over the festival. The San Antonio Businessmen's Club, precursor to the Chamber of Commerce, organized in order to pursue investments and increase tourism in San Antonio. By the end of their first month, the Club had over 400 members.⁶ That year, they convinced the Battle of Flowers Association to move their parade to June, in order to coincide with the Traveler's Protective Association's meeting, the largest convention in the city to date. In return, the Businessmen's Club offered five hundred dollars to help stage the parade. The women agreed, with the provision that the parade would return to its April 21st date the following year. However, they were not as satisfied with the character of this particular parade-honoring no patriotic event and including too many commercial floats.⁷ Battle of Flowers members suggested that the festival had been overtaken by commercial interests, and had lost its patriotic purpose of honoring the battle of San Jacinto.⁸ The following year, Mrs. Elizabeth Ogden assumed control of the parade, and the women accepted only one male advisor, a local minister named Dr. G.Q.A. Rose, who served as a financial advisor. Unlike the businessmen, he did not participate

in parade planning, and other male volunteers were only marshals, policemen and the fire department.⁹ Mrs. Ogden herself had long ties to the Alamo. At seventy years old, she heard the stories of Alamo survivor Susanna Dickinson firsthand at Washington on the Brazos.¹⁰ With her Texas' lineage, and her long involvement in charity work, Mrs. Ogden was an ideal representative of the Battle of Flowers Association. Under her leadership, their parade returned to its earlier content and patriotic purposes. The Daughters of the Republic of Texas also played an increasing role in the parade, presenting several floats and decorating the Alamo.

The men would not leave the ladies alone for long. In 1898, after witnessing the success of a similar flower parade in Waco (which attracted more visitors than San Antonio's parade), the Businessmen's Club proposed to extend the parade into a two-day festival.¹¹ They lobbied the BFA for several weeks, but were unsuccessful. Instead, other women's organizations, like the San Antonio Library and Women's Exchange, held a "paper carnival" and ball. The Daughters of the Republic of Texas sponsored a cotton ball as well. In 1899, members of the Businessmen's Club repeated their suggestion, proposing an elaborate fund-raising enterprise to finance a new festival, a "Spring Carnival." They wanted to extend the parade route, invite Governor Joseph D. Sayers, and stage their own parade the day after the Battle of Flowers.¹² Mrs. Ogden and other organizers insisted on an autonomous flower parade, but allowed the businessmen to stage their own events the following day. In 1900, the businessmen decided to expand their activities even further, expanding the Spring Carnival to six days of events,

with the Battle of Flowers parade as the festival climax. Apparently, Mrs. Ogden decided to surrender. She resigned as president in March. No other women would take charge of the parade, and so the Battle of Flowers was not held in 1900.¹³

The men took over the festival.

The BFA reorganized to stage another flower parade in 1901, but they would no longer have the power to define the festival. Instead, gendered spheres of power developed within the new Spring Carnival. The flower parade stayed in the hands of its women founders; the businessmen controlled everything else. In 1905, the San Antonio Businessmen formed a separate organization to stage the growing festival, the Spring Carnival Association. Four years later, the Battle of Flowers Association officially became an exclusively women's organization.¹⁴ The boundaries solidified between men's and women's labor. The Battle of Flowers Association (BFA) did not disappear, but their responsibilities narrowed. As the week's events grew beyond the initial parade, women's responsibilities for the festival as a whole decreased. Portraits of Frank Bushick and other prominent members of the Spring Carnival Association made the front pages of the local press, while the women of the BFA moved to the society pages.

San Antonio's elite women did not give up their struggle to keep patriotism at the center of this growing festival. In 1912, they convinced the Spring Carnival Association to change their name to the Fiesta San Jacinto Association. They hoped that replacing the "carnival" with a reference to the Texan victory at the battle of San Jacinto would remind the public of the festival's

purpose. Their successful efforts also hinted at a growing division among the businessmen themselves over the character of the week's events. Some men, like attorney William H. Aubrey, organized the first Spring Carnivals to draw as many visitors and residents as possible. To do this, they borrowed elements from many other national festivals, including the Midway of Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition and New Orleans' Mardi Gras. They envisioned a festival that was "part San Antonio International Fair, part honky-tonk carnival, part extended convention, and part Mardi Gras pageant and social event."¹⁵ With this eclectic set of events, the Spring Carnival Association hoped to make San Antonio into one of the centers of a growing national commercial culture.

However, like the BFA women, some men began to feel that the carnival needed a renewed emphasis on heritage and genteel pageantry. The most prominent man to express these concerns was John Carrington. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Carrington worked with the Spring Carnival Association to promote the weeks' events, but he felt that a sense of southern gentility was missing from the carnival. In order to foster this sensibility, Carrington, along with friends Franz Groos and J.H. Frost, founded the Order of the Alamo in 1909.¹⁶ Though this organization was composed of the city's economic elite, it was formed as an association without direct business interests. The Order of the Alamo was "a distinctly social organization in which no commercial interest of any sort would be felt."¹⁷ Like the women of the Battle of Flowers Association, these elite Anglo men wished to create a separate social

sphere within the city's public culture, to oppose the growing commercial culture and emphasize an elite form of patriotic pageantry. Despite their stated intentions, this organization did further their economic interests, as the following analysis will show. These men used their club to enhance their social status. Although these men emphasized heritage, they did not have the same goals as elite women's organizations of the time. While the BFA transgressed the boundaries of domesticity through their historic pageantry, the Order of the Alamo tried to reinforce the divisions between gendered spheres.

Queens of Carnival

As part of a festival honoring U.S. patriotism and Texan independence, it may seem ironic that festival organizers would select "queens" for their annual commemoration. San Antonio's ritual of crowning temporary queens was a form of symbolic inversion, a ritual that licensed behavior outside of egalitarian norms, and opposing the democratic philosophy of many modern societies. As in other inversions, these queens had no political or official power.¹⁸ Instead, these inversions, so common in the pageantry movement at the turn of the century, represented a romantic departure from everyday social order. The queens promised to banish sadness and bring happiness to their kingdoms during carnival week.¹⁹ Before the Order of the Alamo established the Coronation, the Battle of Flowers Association selected parade queens. One of the most well known was Clara Driscoll, who was crowned "Queen of the Carnival" from 1904 through 1906. Staying true to their patriotic mission, the BFA chose her for her role in

“saving” the Alamo from demolition. Driscoll donated the funds needed to purchase the Alamo building for the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Her activities exemplify elite white women’s voluntary activity of the period. Her selection as carnival queen further elevated her status as Alamo savior.

As businessmen expanded the festival, a new men’s club took over the selection of festival queen. In 1909, the Order of the Alamo formed to focus exclusively on queen selection. Their new reigning Queen represented the end of the Battle of Flowers Association’s role in this process. The Order also formalized her selection, creating rules and voting processes. As they took away the task of selecting a Queen from the BFA, the Order of the Alamo further isolated this royal role from the public space the BFA had created. The BFA queens were prominent society women who often, like Driscoll, demonstrated their dedication to public service and patriotism. The Order of the Alamo queens did not necessarily have this history of voluntarism. As young debutantes, they were just entering adult society, and their primary purpose was to elevate the social status of their families, not advertise their individual service.

While the BFA queens were presented in the public Alamo plaza, these new queens were revealed in Beethoven Hall to a more limited audience. The Order of the Alamo selected young women of the city’s most prominent families for the Queen’s Court, and their presentation in the Coronation was part of the long series of balls and receptions that introduced these women to San Antonio elite society, and a presentation of the ideals of “southern beauty.” The Order of

the Alamo's ritual maintained social order through the elevation of this ideal. As Elizabeth Boyd writes in her analysis of the creation of this mythical ideal, the southern beauty was a construct designed to protect the boundaries of white upper class manhood.²⁰ Southern chivalry depended upon the myth of the southern beauty, who was defined as physically weak, submissive and deferential to her husband. She was innocent, and took no interest in intellectual pursuits, or in life outside of the interior space of her home. Thus, she depended upon male protection.²¹ Of course, this myth did not resemble the lives of most southern women. In fact, many southern women, especially those in voluntary associations like the Battle of Flowers Association, found little in this myth to support their own desire for a public voice.

The Order of the Alamo, like the BFA, utilized their heritage to "serve the public." Though their efforts were made in the name of public interest, like much of the historical pageantry movement of the time, they maintained a very narrow view of history, a view that gave a sense of legitimacy to their private organizations, but was relatively inaccessible to the wider public. As David Glassberg has argued, the pageantry movement presented a version of the past that emphasized consensus, rather than social change and conflict.²² They presented a simplified, narrow view of history in the name of, but not controlled by, the larger public.

Abner Cohen was one of the first to highlight a central concern of elite social groups. Elites must construct themselves, developing a set of beliefs and

practices to differentiate themselves from the masses. The Coronation is a performative language meant to distinguish elite culture. At the same time the elite must convince these masses that their social rituals serve the wider public. In other words, Cohen defines this as the need to reconcile the tension between universalism and particularism, between serving the larger needs of the public and serving their particular needs and interests. Often elites do this through dramatic performance, “by claiming to possess rare and exclusive qualities essential to society at large.” These qualities “tend to be defined in vague and ambiguous terms and objectified in mysterious, non-utilitarian symbols and dramatic performances, making up a mystique of excellence.”²³ The Order of the Alamo’s Coronation served all of these functions.

The Coronation was one among many civic pageants across the United States. In the context of urbanization, increased immigration and improved communications technologies, residents of the same locale were less likely to share the same cultural background and experiences. In response, many civic officials sought to redefine community identity and social cohesion.²⁴ These officials used the past as a source of traditions that could “offer emotional respite from the consequences of modern progress.”²⁵ Thus, many local pageants merged Progressive concerns of urban reform with antimodernist nostalgia. For members of patriotic and hereditary societies, this pageantry was a way to reinforce their own social position as well. They sought to educate the public with their notions of “civic identity, social order, and the moral principles they associated with the

past- to preserve Anglo-American supremacy in public life.”²⁶ The Order of the Alamo’s Coronation, with its elaborate ceremonies and royal robes, was a marker of Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “social distinction,” practices that are “predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences.”²⁷ The Order of the Alamo combined their mission to educate “its members and the public generally in the history of the Independence of Texas and perpetuating the memory of the Battle of San Jacinto” with their own particular interests in maintaining their elite status in San Antonio society.²⁸

As part of this ritual boundary keeping, the Order of the Alamo placed a heavy emphasis upon secrecy. The queen’s identity was kept from the public until the Coronation itself, and members voted for their choice of Queen through secret ballot. Beginning in 1921, Order meetings were held within the Alamo chapel, including the selection of the queen. Thus, as Holly Beachley Brear writes, the queen was symbolically “born” within the Alamo walls.²⁹ The queen was selected from the oldest family line, having the most female royal relatives and the father who was active in the Order.³⁰ In such a way, the Alamo became symbolically intertwined with the maintenance and social reproduction of San Antonio’s heritage elite.

While trying to contain threats from outside the elite social body, the Coronation ritual also attempted to “harness the powers of young women.”³¹ As the queen and her duchesses were introduced to San Antonio society, their

elaborate gowns separated them from their other quotidian context; they became vessels for something outside themselves, bodily representatives of their family heritage, their race and class.³² Many decades before this, PT Barnum recognized feminine beauty as spectacle, but not until public bathing, connected to personal and national health, did elite women participate in pageants on the public stage.³³ Of course, the Coronation was not entirely a beauty pageant; women did not compete against each other openly, but were selected by the men of the Order of the Alamo, and their positions were determined by family heritage and personal beauty. The *San Antonio Express* asked the bachelors of the Order of the Alamo for their requirements in Fiesta royalty. In this poll, the most important quality was “beauty,” the next was their family’s social status. As the article noted, “not one mentions brains.”³⁴ The spectacle of dozens of San Antonio’s elite women on the public stage became an important component of the Coronation.

While Carrington had some interest in Texas history, he was more interested in recreating the traditions of his native Virginia.³⁵ The Virginians’ emphasis on English tradition was common among many pageants of the time, and the pageant form itself derived from the arts and crafts movement in Britain.³⁶ Their interest in Europe was part of a larger “American Renaissance” at the turn of the century, as artists, writers and city planners used Medieval and Renaissance traditions to enrich what they believed were “the thin artistic currents of the New World.”³⁷ Though the Order of the Alamo, through its name and rituals, connected itself to Texan Independence, during the first decade of San Antonio’s

Coronation organizers had little interest in displaying Texas history. San Antonio's early Coronation themes made almost no reference to regional events. Carrington's vision was indeed nostalgic, calling forth the codes of medieval England, but he was not interested in the local. The worlds created on early Coronation stages were entirely magical and fanciful. The first Court of Flowers was followed by the Court of Roses and then the Court of Spring. These were themes of romance and make-believe.³⁸ The Coronation placed women in flights of fantasy, into a world of timeless motifs.

Beginning in the 1920s, and increasingly after 1930, more historic themes emerged. These later courts of "Empire", "Imperial Russia", "Italian Renaissance", "Eternal India" and "Heraldic Britain" were often broad, mythicized empires, but they represented a larger shift toward history throughout the South. Sectionalism merged with Old World nostalgia, as southerners asserted the South's distinct contributions to national culture.³⁹ In other parts of the South a romanticized portrayal of antebellum history and congenial race relations characterized much of their pageantry. This nostalgia had existed since the Civil War, when the defense of southern women became a focus for resisting racial equality.⁴⁰ In the 1920s, southern pageant organizers made renewed efforts to portray a proud Confederate past. In San Antonio such a performance served similar functions, differentiating a unified white elite from Mexicanos and African Americans, while also prescribing white men as the chivalric defenders of white women. Yet unlike Virginia, South Texas did not have an antebellum

planter society to idealize. Invoking the Old South in Texas was a more complicated process. Instead of invoking local history, the Order of the Alamo continued to look to Europe for its historical themes.

Some courts made direct reference to Texas history, though. For the Texas centennial in 1936, the pageant script for the Court of Adventure describes “Alien peoples...imbued with the spirit of adventure and love of freedom have appeared from the east to claim the land...the hour of departure of the Indian has arrived.” These “alien” white settlers, after struggling in the western wilderness, bring forth “a new race...whose character will be composed of the finer qualities and attributes of the peoples of their forefathers’ countries.”⁴¹ These descriptions clearly defined Coronation participants as worthy of their dominant position in San Antonio’s contemporary society.⁴² Through the rhetoric of manifest destiny and white racial supremacy, they also merge southern genteel culture with the physical hardiness of western settlers. These southern transplants, in their sojourn to Texas, described themselves as an improved, robust white race.

Grace Elizabeth Hale also demonstrates how white southerners constructed their identity in the midst of modernization. By “attaching identities to physical and geographical spaces and places” southerners made sense of an urbanized, industrialized modern world of strangers, and racial identity became the focal point for such organization. Such new constructions of whiteness converged with a growing consumer culture and its emphasis upon visual materials and the spectacle.⁴³

Texas Cavaliers

As the Order of the Alamo turned toward history, some members also turned toward new articulations of manhood. Seventeen years after John Carrington founded the Order of the Alamo, he decided to form another organization. In 1926, he founded the Texas Cavaliers, another men's social club designed to elect the King of Fiesta. Carrington drew from the southern mythology of the "cavalier"—a country gentleman who has the characteristics of leadership, bravery in war, horsemanship and chivalric loyalty to his mother and wife.⁴⁴ Since the early nineteenth century Southern writers cultivated the heroic qualities of the Cavalier as the defining expression of genteel life in the South's planter society. After the Civil War, the Cavalier became a symbol of the Lost Cause—a "figment of a utopian social world."⁴⁵ This nostalgia had a powerful effect upon Carrington, as he sought to translate these ideals into his Texas landscape.

As he had done with the queen's Coronation, Carrington wanted to create an organization that would reliably and systematically elect a king for the week's festivities. Before this, the Chamber of Commerce, Spring Carnival Association and then the Fiesta San Jacinto Association had selected the king, but this process was inconsistent and rather disorganized. The year after the Cavaliers formed, they elected King Antonio to reign over Fiesta, and they have been in charge of the role to this day.⁴⁶ Carrington had even more ambitious goals for the Cavaliers, including sponsoring the Pilgrimage to the Alamo, to facilitate social relations

between the military and civilian populations, and to “preserve the Texas tradition of horsemanship in this age of automobiles.”⁴⁷ For the first few years, the Cavaliers held a Tournament of Roses with jousts and knights in armor. Reviving a southern tradition popular in his native Virginia, Carrington created another form of southern chivalry.

Some of his goals did not survive. The tournament was discontinued after a few years. The Cavaliers could never wrest the Alamo pilgrimage from the hands of the DRT, and horse riding never achieved the popularity Carrington had hoped. In fact, Carrington himself never rode a horse, though he loved the “horseman idea.”⁴⁸ Many other Cavaliers had difficulty with their horsemanship as well, abandoning their riding activities after their stables burned down. They were not fond of their uniforms either. After the first year most Cavaliers refused to wear the tights and armor outside of the tournament itself, and wore a red military style jacket and blue riding breeches instead. Carrington did not like to see the armor go, and never wore the new uniform.⁴⁹ Unlike Carrington, many of the early Cavaliers were not as interested in medieval jousting.

Like the Texas Rangers and the vigilante posses who helped growers in the transformation of south Texas into a modern farming region, the Cavaliers presented a more sober, ordered presence in the city’s urban spectacles. And though they did not literally police this urban environment, they did provide an exclusive space for San Antonio’s Anglo elite men to fraternize and solidify the

social bonds that would help maintain their dominance in the city's socioeconomic affairs.

Race, Space, and Flies

Outside of the auditorium, and the closed worlds of these elite rituals, San Antonio's business leaders demonstrated the connections between the Order of the Alamo and the social order of the Texas modern. Like other Americans during this time, Anglo San Antonians paid closer attention to ordering public space. Order and efficiency became "the watchwords of progressive America."⁵⁰ During this time, San Antonio transformed into a modern city. In the first decade of the twentieth century, San Antonio's building activity rose by 600%, street improvements rose 900% and hotel and office facilities rose 500%. By the 1920s, San Antonio became the state's leading city in population.⁵¹ The city had a broad agricultural economy, a complex array of military facilities and an extensive railroad system. This modernization transformed the city's downtown plazas into an Americanized central business district.

San Antonio also became a center for unskilled and semiskilled labor.⁵² The city needed labor for this rapid growth, and Mexicanos, "the existing native population and the emigrating one- were the source that would build San Antonio and the Southwest."⁵³ Like other southern cities, San Antonio also became increasingly stratified by race and class. As a city with great ethnic diversity, San Antonio continued to develop into many separate ethnic "towns," each with their distinct social realities.⁵⁴ Mexicanos, predominantly, lived in the "Latin Quarter"

on the Westside, African Americans were restricted to the East side, and the Germans lived around the King William neighborhood just southeast of the central business district. In the early twentieth century, the “Germantown,” though it had its own *volkfeste*, was closely tied to the city’s Anglo community. German American families were well integrated in social clubs like the Texas Cavaliers and the Order of the Alamo. However, the West and East sides of the city did not receive most of the benefits of the city’s progress; “they remained separate towns within a growing city.”⁵⁵

Throughout the South, racial segregation “provided a way to order the more impersonal social relations and potentially more subversive consuming practices of southern town life.”⁵⁶ At the same time as business leaders participated in city growth, they “nurtured a new racist culture to contain the centrifugal forces” of a rapid urbanization.”⁵⁷ Normalizing the social body also meant new regimens for personal hygiene.⁵⁸ By 1910, cleanliness was part of being a good American, and public health officers transformed urban spaces with this new emphasis. As Mary Douglas observed, this fear of dirt was deeply connected to fears of social disorder.⁵⁹

In San Antonio, this preoccupation with segregation and personal hygiene also took the form of a curiously intense hunt for flies. John Carrington, as Secretary of the city’s Chamber of Commerce, sponsored a fly-swatting contest to improve public health. On July 4, 1911, the *San Antonio Express* announced the results of their first annual contest. Among the top five boys who won, over one

million flies were killed. The contest was the largest of its kind in the nation. In an effort to clean the city, the newspaper reporters encouraged boys to kill as many flies as possible, as flies were believed to carry many diseases including typhoid, dysentery and tuberculosis.⁶⁰ A few girls participated in the hunt as well; their results were counted, but not considered in the contest. This was specifically a contest for young boys. As Carrington helped to create the pure, elite bodies of Fiesta monarchy, he also created tests of manhood in cleaning urban space. The fly-swatting contest was part of training young men to police their environment.

Carrington's concern with hygiene was understandable. As a younger man, he was told he was threatened with tuberculosis. As a result, his family moved to central Texas, settling in the German town of Comfort, which was said to have a beneficial climate for respiratory problems. After marrying a young woman from this town, Carrington moved to San Antonio and involved himself in real estate and other business enterprises.⁶¹ During the same period, the romantic image of the delicate consumptive declined after the 1890s, and athletic, muscular man became the middle class ideal.⁶² Whether or not Carrington was aware of this cultural trend, he also remade himself, from the vulnerable young man into the chivalrous southern gentleman. In so doing, he created a new role for a generation of San Antonio's elite Anglo men. For Carrington, one concern remained paramount. As he had guarded his body from contamination when young, Carrington later sought to guard the social body of San Antonio's elite from the threats of a rapidly changing, growing city.

San Antonio was well known as a resort for consumptives, and so great concern was given to the cleanliness of its hotels, railroad cars and restaurants. As Nancy Tomes points out, throughout the United States, public home-like spaces were transformed by new vacuum cleaners, dishwashers, washing machines and refrigerators.⁶³ In 1909 San Antonio passed several laws banning tuberculosis facilities inside city limits.⁶⁴ Once pampered in the most luxurious resorts and spas, the “contagious consumptive” was now “a marked entity, politicized and racialized.”⁶⁵ Deeply connected to this new concern with public cleanliness was the fear of new immigrants, “the unwashed.”⁶⁶ Though germ theory had existed for almost twenty years, it did not gain wide acceptance in the United States until after 1900, during the same era as thousands of new immigrants entered the country. Many “native” whites considered these new immigrants, from eastern Europe, as more unclean, and thus more susceptible to disease. Fears about germs merged with fears about immigrants. “Rapidly reproducing germs threatened American bodies in the same way that hordes of new immigrants threatened the national body.” Germs were often portrayed as an invading force, and consumptives were increasingly stigmatized and racialized.⁶⁷

In San Antonio, Anglos, greatest fears were about the city’s Mexicano population. From 1900 to 1930, the city’s Mexicano population increased from 13,722 to 82,373 residents. Though many ethnic groups came to San Antonio in greater numbers, Mexicanos arrived in the highest rates. In 1900 Mexicanos made up 25.7% of the population; in 1930 they were 35.7%.⁶⁸ As the city’s Mexicano

population became a greater part of the city, David Montejano notes the Anglos' shifting negative stereotypes of Mexicanos. Nineteenth century Anglo settlers emphasized the idea of Mexicanos as a conquered people, the losing side in the battle for Texan independence and US annexation. These ideas did not disappear in the twentieth century, as demonstrated in Fiesta's emphasis on Anglo martyrdom at the Alamo. Yet newer ideas about Mexicano inferiority focused on the idea of dirtiness. Mexicanos were increasingly marginalized by the spectre of contamination, and were controlled and segregated to defend the Anglo social order.⁶⁹ The local press describes these fears clearly:

If you go down there into those filthy hovels and see men and women and children, ragged, uncombed, unwashed, sitting about dirty tables ...you might begin to realize that those people who live in such degradation might come in close touch with you. For how do you know that the big pecans in your nut cake...your salad or ice cream have not been handled by those same dirty fingers.⁷⁰

"Dirtiness" became the rationale for segregating Mexicanos. A University of Texas bulletin issued in 1923 called for separate schooling on the basis of differences in cleanliness.⁷¹ Other public spaces were segregated as well. Anglo South Texans defined both African Americans and Mexicanos as separate, inferior races whose movements in public spaces were controlled through spatial segregation.⁷²

As the city was booming economically, segregation increased. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, light rail lines improved transportation services and encouraged a boom in real estate sales on the outskirts of the central business

district. Anglo San Antonians moved to these developments north of downtown. These new subdivisions refused to sell to African Americans or Mexicanos. As Anglos moved north, African Americans occupied segregated ghettos on the East side.⁷³ By 1930, the majority of Mexicanos lived on the West side. This “Latin Quarter” had become characterized by poverty, dilapidated housing, ill health and few sanitary facilities.⁷⁴ While developers on the North side built parks and neighborhood centers, the West side had almost no city services or new construction. Most housing consisted of floorless shacks, crowded together without plumbing or electricity. With such living conditions, tuberculosis did become a severe problem for the Mexicano population, one of the major causes of death.⁷⁵ While the city utilized Mexicano labor, many Anglos resented their presence, and expressed this sentiment in continued neglect of West side development. Anglos also promoted strategies of separation and control. This segregation affected all modes of public life; the first segregated Mexican school was established in Texas in 1902; by 1930, 90% of the schools were segregated.⁷⁶ As Mexicanos entered the state in greater numbers, predominantly as agricultural labor, their relations to Anglos were increasingly marked by anonymity, and segregation functioned to organize and discipline these new Mexicano “strangers.”

These boundaries had to be vigilantly guarded, though. In South Texas, the rapid increase of Mexicano immigration also led to calls for a closed border. In 1921, congressman James Slayden (husband of the first Battle of Flowers

Parade organizer Ellen Maury Slayden) argued that the new immigrants bring high social costs and embarrassment. Farmers and urban workers joined him in his call for repatriation of Mexicano laborers. In contrast to these “restrictionists”, growers and their business allies wanted an open border to continue the influx of cheap labor. Through the 1920s, national policy supported the growers. While national legislation in 1917, 1921 and 1924 severely limited immigration from Asia and certain parts of Europe, Mexico was excluded from these restrictions. However, in 1928, U.S. President Hoover sided with the restrictionists and closed the US Mexican Border by executive order. In 1929, politicians reached a compromise between the two factions that restrained the movement of Mexican laborers to state borders.⁷⁷ Through the first three decades of the twentieth century, these immigration debates reveal the contradiction Mexican immigrants faced when they entered South Texas. Welcomed for their labor, they were reviled for their presence in the city’s social life.

New Social Orders

As these restrictionist debates demonstrated, the efforts to mark racial boundaries were always tenuous, and as Anglos tried to regulate Mexicano mobility within the city’s public space, political borders were threatened as well. The war that Fiesta organizers did not officially honor was even more crucial to its performance of social order. Revolution stirred in Mexico. San Antonio played a major role in the ensuing events. For several decades south Texas was a site for Mexican political refugees to organize for various new regimes. As early as 1890,

Catarino Garza led a rebellion against the Porfirio Díaz regime.⁷⁸ In 1911, Díaz was ousted from office. The overthrow was the result of several forces. By this time, Mexico's dependency on the United States encouraged internal criticism of his leadership, often by Mexico's middle class. The U.S. border region became a site for political refugees to organize against Díaz. In 1904 brothers Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magón crossed the border to Laredo along with the organization Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), which subsequently published a newspaper, *Regeneracion*, from San Antonio. For the next seven years they stayed in South Texas to organize opposition to the Díaz regime.⁷⁹ At the same time, a more moderate candidate, Francisco Madero, challenged Díaz in the 1910 election, but Díaz had him jailed instead. Madero fled to San Antonio to establish his revolutionary headquarters.

Though the Texas Governor Oscar Colquitt made efforts to curb maderista activities, they had difficulty monitoring the revolutionary forces. The following year Madero was assassinated, and the next decade brought a series of new Presidents as various revolutionary factions struggled for control. President Taft formed a "Maneuver Division" at San Antonio's Fort Sam Houston, and Governor Colquitt used the Texas Rangers and the Texas National Guard to try to contain uprisings.⁸⁰ In 1912 Taft threatened to send U.S. troops into Mexico to protect US residents, but the new President Wilson, did not intervene, though Colquitt urged a large scale U.S. invasion.

Colquitt left office in 1915, the beginning of the most violent period in south Texas. Though northern Mexico had long been the center of revolutionary activities, during the next two years the border region became a full-scale war zone. Both Mexican revolutionaries and Mexican Americans conducted raids on Anglo owned farms and communities; though this was related to the revolution, local displacements of Mexicano ranchers also encouraged the raids.⁸¹ In 1915 the Plan de San Diego was created, which called for independence from “Yankee tyranny” by a “liberating army” of Mexicanos, African Americans, Japanese and Indians. Groups of twenty-five to one hundred men organized companies that derailed trains, burned bridges and sabotaged irrigation pumping plants.⁸² Attacking these instruments of modernity and regional transformation, such “bandits” fought wars abroad and at home. These raids led to 21 deaths. The raids, though, and fears of race war led to severe reprisals by Texas Rangers and vigilantes, with an estimated 300 deaths of Mexicanos in south Texas. Many Mexicanos fled to Mexico, while Anglo farmers fled to Corpus Christi and San Antonio. The raids ceased due to the Mexican Army, the Rangers, and the stabilization of Mexico toward the end of the decade.⁸³

Throughout the Mexican Revolution, thousands of political refugees came to the United States, along with thousands of other laborers searching for economic opportunity. The rapid acceleration of Mexican immigration revitalized cultural ties to Mexico. Mexicanos’ geographical and cultural segregation on the West side also contributed to a heightened awareness of their ethnic identity.

Along with African Americans, Mexicanos developed separate social, legal and cultural institutions within a segregated social order. On the East side, African American churches like Bethel African Methodists Episcopal and Mount Zion Baptist nurtured a sense of community through social celebrations and financial assistance. Fraternal organizations like the Black Masons also provided other secular services to the African American community, like funds for health care and low-interest loans. The community organized to build homes for the elderly and orphanages, while bars and lounges provided separate leisure time activities.⁸⁴

Mexicanos also developed a cohesive cultural community, a separate town with its own language, customs and traditions.⁸⁵ The exiled “*ricos*,” loyalists to the Díaz regime, promoted Mexican culture in San Antonio through distribution of books, magazines and records, including establishing the Spanish language newspaper *La Prensa* in 1913. While the *ricos* focused on politics in Mexico, others focused on local concerns. Mexicanos formed many *mutualistas*, self help societies which served as sources of social support and financial assistance.⁸⁶ In 1911, *La Agrupación Protectora Mexicana* formed in San Antonio, a group of farm renters and laborers, both native and foreign-born, who organized for changes in working conditions. And in that same year, two years after the founding of the Order of the Alamo, representatives of the *mutualistas*, newspapers, and other leaders gathered in Laredo, Texas for the *Primer Congreso Mexicanista*. During this meeting, they proclaimed the need for unity and denounced inferior schooling, lynchings, labor exploitation, and land loss. While

individual organizations differed in their strategies for community improvement, Mexicanos in Texas organized throughout South Texas to work for the interests of this growing ethnic community. In the 1920s, a new generation of Mexicanos established societies like the *Orden de Caballeros de America*, founded in 1927, which encouraged citizens to assimilate to given conditions, pay poll taxes, become bilingual, and become more politically active. In 1929 leaders of the Order Sons of America in Corpus Christi, the Order Knights of America of San Antonio and the League of Latin American Citizens of South Texas came together in Corpus Christi to form the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).⁸⁷ Eventually, LULAC became the largest Mexican American voluntary association in the United States.

These social movements occurred outside of Fiesta's boundaries, yet many of them, LULAC in particular, would later play a major role in the festival. And while not officially recognized by Anglo elites, these new organizations performed their own critical nostalgia. The name *Orden de Caballeros* recalls Spanish horsemanship and genteel culture. They articulated a parallel "gentleman's club" to the Order of the Alamo and Texas Cavaliers. Like the Texas Cavaliers, some Mexicanos developed their own code of chivalric masculinity. Decades later, their vision would become a part of Fiesta as well. For this moment, though, these developing orders created community within the context of segregation. The leisure-time activities of San Antonio's Mexicano and African American activities were "out of place" in the rituals of the Anglo

heritage elite. However, one Fiesta space demonstrated the instability in the social order of the Texas modern. As the commercial spectacles of the Spring Carnival took over San Antonio's streets, San Antonians of all ethnic backgrounds mingled with a greater amount of mobility than at other times in the city's public space. These carnivals were not utopian moments of interracial harmony, but they opened a symbolic and geographic space for expressing the complexities and contradictions of modernity.

In the Lugar Festivo

While some of San Antonio's elite focused on the rituals of the Coronation and the Texas Cavaliers, other city boosters developed an elaborate "Spring Carnival" of commercial amusements. Trades day parades and burlesques competed with the more austere Battle of Flowers parade. Traveling carnival shows occupied the public plazas every night of the week, and midway shows drew great crowds. These events were part of a national rise in a shared leisure culture. In a rapidly urbanized society, immigrants and native-born residents, men and women, and various social classes participated together in these new commercial spectacles. These amusements, in turn, presented more varied, complex versions of contemporary events, and of history, than the hereditary organizations envisioned.

Like the circus and the worlds' fairs, San Antonio's Spring Carnival offered new spectacles including "human diversity, gender difference, and bodily variety."⁸⁸ Carnival organizers closed part of Commerce Street to traffic and set

up booths to any business that would rent them for the week. Garlanded and illuminated arches covered each intersection. At the north end of Main Plaza and the west end of Alamo Plaza, the organizers designed “*lugares festivos*” by temporarily enclosing these spaces for attractions, and charging a fee. The shows on Main Plaza would be for men only, featuring attractions like a “wargraph with moving war pictures” and “Happy Holmes’ dancing girls.”⁸⁹ Alamo Plaza was reserved for less risqué behavior, including “an electric fountain and theater, an ossified man, baby incubators, and a man who bites off the heads of rattlesnakes.”⁹⁰ As the new social order of the Alamo formed among the elite, San Antonio’s streets became a new Coney Island. While the language of the Coronation was refined, ordered, carefully articulated and racially purified, carnival language was multivocal and riddled with contradiction. The discourse of the early Battle of Flowers Parades was splitting in two—the elite Coronation expressed the firm borders of modernity, while the Carnival expressed its ambivalence.

These ambivalent gestures were also part of making race. San Antonio Anglos, like whites across the United States, “made modern racial meaning not just by creating boundaries but by crossing them.”⁹¹ In these carnival transgressions, San Antonio Anglos played with “other” identities, and the Other they fixated upon was the Mexican. When the Spring Carnival Association became the Fiesta San Jacinto Association in 1912, the BFA hoped this change would bring San Antonian’s thoughts back to the Texan battle for independence.

However, this new “Fiesta” also articulated a continuing paradox of the festival--the commemoration of the battle to sever Texas’ ties with Mexico would always depend on the symbols and practices of Mexicanness. The burlesque parades and carnival participants would frequently “play Mexican” in an ambivalent performance of racist prejudice and desire. Through the Carnival, white San Antonians superficially celebrated mexicanness, yet their parody often served to reinforce normative ideologies of racial and gendered difference. In this way, the carnival was often complicit with the Coronation in promoting the Texas Modern.

When Carnival opened on April 17, 1900, King Alegria and his royal court arrived via the railroad to Alamo Plaza. Twenty miles south of the city, this “king” boarded the car of the International and Great Northern Railroad, and was greeted at San Antonio’s Sunset Station. By taking the train, he signaled his ties to an instrument of Texas modernization, but this king spoke a more riddled tongue. He had an “imperfect knowledge of the great English’s tongue,” and thus had to speak through a translator.⁹² His country of origin was unclear, as his messenger, “refused to tell” for unspoken reasons. The mayor of San Antonio, speaking to the royal, noted that he lived “in a land where the sweet, soft Spanish is the native tongue” and that whether this land be Mexico or Spain, he was welcome here. Clearly, King Alegria spoke with a carnivalized tongue, a sound shrouded in ambiguity. Yet his language was also strangely familiar. This local Anglo San Antonian king performed his role as a foreigner, arriving from a mysterious land

of the most familiar “exotic” in the city. His arrival signaled that this festival would be both modern and Mexican.

Until the Texas Cavaliers came onto the scene in the 1920s, this carnival king was at the center of San Antonio’s Spring Carnival and Fiesta. Based on Mardi Gras’ “King Rex,” he used a mocking language. In 1905 King Selemat (“tamales” spelled backwards) and his Knights of Omala (“Alamo” backwards) opened the week with a blazing spectacle of electric lights and fire. As he arrived at the plaza, the monarch raised his mask and revealed his identity to the crowd.⁹³ Secrecy was an important component of the king’s role, but the context of his appearance, and the revelry that followed through to midnight, created a more jubilant tone than the king of the Texas Cavaliers would create twenty years later. King Selemat differed from the Cavaliers’ King Antonio in many ways. The King Selemat of 1905 wore a long satin robe and wide sash around his very broad girth. He wore a large gaudy crown and several tin or metal decorations on his robes. He looked every bit the part of a robust medieval king. The Cavaliers’ first King Antonio also wore long velvet royal robes, but by the following year, 1928, these were abandoned for the more military style jacket and breeches described earlier. While both kings called for merriment, and an end to the troubles of daily life, the new Kings Antonio provided a more sober display of the new social order.

Though Fiesta’s royal roles sobered through the decades, the daily carnival continued to provide a space for San Antonians to represent multiple histories and to imagine alternative social orders. And though the city’s “Mexican

Quarter” was increasingly marginalized in daily life, “mexicanness” saturated these carnivalesque performances. All of the parodies, the burlesque parades that mocked the royal court, took on the vestige of Mexican cultural life. As Mexicanos became more segregated from public life, they became more symbolically central to San Antonio’s public culture.⁹⁴ However, these new representations were unlike the early Battle of Flowers parades that portrayed the Mexican with a form of imperialist nostalgia. During three decades of high Mexican immigration, Anglos could be sure this was no vanishing race. Instead, new carnival practices attempted both to degrade and to emulate Mexican culture. Carnival space could present the most repressive aspects of social life. The mocking laughter of carnival often served as “hegemonic humor,” containing transgressive rituals and behavior.⁹⁵

However, in the process of parody, “mexicanness” was performed and openly expressed, though distorted. The heretical behavior allowed during carnival time may “persist in memory as images of difference that continue to challenge the known and the now.” This repository of practices was “kept alive as impossible possibilities that can affect the future.”⁹⁶ Through the midway shows on Alamo plaza, people were both allowed to mockingly laugh and sometimes fear the dangers of “primitive” cultural displays, but were also introduced to a baffling array of alternative possibilities. A quote from the *Daily Express* describes this well:

At times the scene was one that the spectator would instantly think had been taken from Dante’s inferno’ magnified a thousand times and

suddenly dropped into the heart of the city. At another ...one really imagined ones' self mysteriously transformed into a character in the 'Arabian nights' where weird, opalescent many shaded, inconceivable views unfolded themselves before ones' startled vision.⁹⁷

Significant here is that the displays are said to “transform the self” through these visual displays. The thrill of electricity, the orientalist visions of difference, were experiences that took one “out of place” in order to share these “inconceivable views.” At the same time that the city’s Mexicano population was marginalized and made radically other by the modernizing project, mexicanness became a symbolic repository for oppositional practices and views, as well as the object of parody.

Like the Coronation, Fiesta’s commercial displays took flights of fantasy, taking spectators out of their social world through the wonders of electricity and imaginative displays. Ironically, though, this allowed a space to express multiple contemporary concerns. Some spectacles commented directly about current events and struggles, particularly the trades’ parades and the burlesque performances. Others provided visibility for San Antonio’s diverse population. The days after the first Coronation, a trades’ parade presented floats from the city’s industries. One, by the A.B. Frank Company, carried women who worked in the factory where “Alamo overalls” were made. The women, dressed in white with fancy yellow hats, were surrounded by a sign that read “we are the girls who make them.”⁹⁸ African American teamsters also drove two-dozen wagons from

the Carr Wood and Coal Company. Such parades offered a limited visibility of the diverse communities that made up San Antonio.

Other parades presented a history filled with conflict. In 1915, the “Pageant of Caliph” presided over San Antonio streets. Gendered and racial cross-dressing abounded as the “Duchess of Chili Con Carni” and her court of men in gowns presided.⁹⁹ The “Bingville police department” carried a wagon loaded with black-faced “Negroes” and chickens. The parade portrayed the worst stereotypes along with political satire. A float of the Presidents of Mexico and the “Dogs of War” commented on the numerous leadership changes. Díaz, Madero, Huerta and others occupied different sections of the float, surrounded by the gates of hell and wolfish dogs. Another float of the “happy family” alluded to the war in Europe, as “the Kaiser, the Czar, a Japanese, a Frenchman and an Austrian carried on a continuous battle royale along the line of march of the parade.” A shepherd and his wandering flock symbolized the victims of the stock exchange, and the “Suffer-Yets” in hoop skirts blew instruments of “flamboyant discord” through the crowd. These floats portrayed a social world of conflict and struggle. And the Coronation did not escape their satire. In 1917 a mock coronation, sponsored by the Rotary Club, entertained the crowd at Alamo Plaza. Her Majesty Queen Loco and her 200 pound “flower children” tossed vegetables around the stage. After falling down several times, and boxing the ears of some flower children, the Queen later dragged the king to center stage and forcibly crowned him.¹⁰⁰ In a reversal of Coronation ritual, the queen’s court members are heavy, clumsy men

who dominate their escorts. They are the symbolic inversion of the southern beauty, performing dominance rather than passivity and weakness. However, these are no feminists. Instead, this ritual also portrays the dangers of empowered women. As it parodies the Coronation, this mock performance also reifies the feminine sphere. Presenting monstrous, overpowering women, this spectacle of men's play serves to reinforce the gendered social order.

On the same day as the mock coronation, another newspaper article bemoaned the changes to Alamo Plaza. "Right in front of the sacred Alamo, a snake charmer had his artistic sign" indicating a low state of civic pride. The Alamo, as it stood, was "relegated to the background" of the festival. Yet the article was only partially correct. Though the solemn ceremonies of the Alamo pilgrimage, the Coronation, and the Texas Cavaliers moved to the background during carnival festivities, the two types of events were closely entangled as well. As the name Fiesta San Jacinto itself suggests, festival organizers would continue to define themselves through the language of the Other. The festive King Alegria performed mexicanness as a way to maintain the boundaries of whiteness. Positioning this "foreign" king as an exotic outsider, temporarily relieve white men from their daily modern lives. Yet this temporary expression of mexicanness served as a way to normalize whiteness.

At a time when carnival rides, burlesque shows and street vendors encouraged large crowds, Fiesta organizers made increased efforts to control crowd behavior as well. As the Spring Carnival expanded, organizers created new

regulations for public behavior. An article in the *San Antonio Daily Express* in 1906 posted a list of the “ethics of the carnival,” declaring a list of rules for the crowd and parade participants. The crowd was told not to blow horns while the parade was passing, and not to bring whips, return balls or slap sticks.¹⁰¹ No confetti throwing was allowed on the sidewalks, only in the streets. “Second-hand confetti” picked up from the street was also not permitted (probably for hygienic reasons). Three years later, confetti was banned entirely from the parades.¹⁰² The line between participant and spectator was firmly set. As the article states: “the streets are for the maskers and revelers, who have the right of way. The sidewalks are for the spectators and those who do not desire to take part in the revelry.”¹⁰³ The line between sidewalk and street also represented the distinction between passive spectator and active participant. And the means by which the sidewalk crowd would participate in the parade, through horns, balls, confetti, was increasingly regulated or eliminated. Along with the rise in visual culture so predominant in the early twentieth century, came the increasing delineation of those who acted and those who merely watched. And Carnival Parades brought particular anxiety, where this line was often blurred by the close proximity of audience and participant.

Perhaps only this juxtaposition of the ordered rituals of the heritage elite with the chaotic displays of the Spring Carnival could capture the complexities of modernity in San Antonio. If, as Baudelaire wrote, modernity is both “the transient, the fleeting” and “the eternal and immutable,” Fiesta’s dual spectacles

captured it well.¹⁰⁴ While the Coronation queens carefully walked within the framework of elite, timeless motifs, and reproduced the dominant social order, the Texas Cavaliers guarded them. At the same time, the Spring Carnival Association and its King Alegria celebrated an ephemeral, fragmented world. These two visions were not entirely separate—the Coronations referenced exotic flights of fantasy, and public regulations and anxieties circumscribed Carnival-goers’ festive behavior. Seen together, these dual performances presented the “paradoxical unity” of modernity—presenting a social reality of “perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish.”¹⁰⁵ At a time of rapid economic transformations, the heritage elite tried to maintain the oppressive structures of their social worlds, while other San Antonians played with these boundaries.

The Coronations continue, remarkably unchanged, to the present day, yet they are no longer the center of Fiesta San Antonio. As Fiesta grew through the twentieth century, the order of the Texas Modern began to unravel. The heritage elite maintained their rituals, but they eventually became less effective in assuring their dominant place in the city’s civic culture.

¹ Michael Haynes, *Dressing Up Debutantes: Pageantry and Glitz in Texas* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998), 7.

² Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1993), 166.

³ Ibid.

⁴ I am using Carol Smith-Rosenberg’s definition of the “New Woman” as an upper or middle class woman who chose to challenge the bonds of domesticity. “The New Woman as Androgyne: Social Order and Gender Crisis, 1870-1936” in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* Smith-Rosenberg, ed. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985). I am also following

Janet M. Davis' enlargement of this term to include all women in the public sphere at the turn of the century. *The Circus Age: Culture and Society under the American Big Top* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Many of the women of the Battle of Flowers Association were married and had children, but also tried to increase their public role through their pageantry.

⁵ Richard Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 29.

⁶ *San Antonio Daily Express*, January 8, 1895; January 14, 1895; January 15, 1895.

⁷ Judith Berg Sobré, *San Antonio on Parade: Six Historic Festivals* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003).

⁸ Haynes, 31.

⁹ Sobré, 177.

¹⁰ Frederick C. Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio: Genealogies of Early Latin, Anglo-American, and German Families with Occasional Biographies; Each Group Being Prefaced with a Brief Historical Sketch and Illustrations* (San Antonio: Artes Graficas, 1937), 339-43.

¹¹ *San Antonio Daily Express*, February 11, 1898.

¹² *San Antonio Daily Express*, March 17, 1899; March 3, 1899; March 24, 1899; March 31, 1899; April 7, 1899; *San Antonio Light*, March 3, 1899, 4; March 17, 1899; March 24, 1899; April 7, 1899.

¹³ *San Antonio Daily Express*, March 4, 1900.

¹⁴ However, the BFA's charter is not approved until 1914.

¹⁵ Sobré, 195.

¹⁶ Haynes, 38.

¹⁷ Order of the Alamo, *Courts of the Order of the Alamo 1909-1925* (San Antonio: Order of the Alamo, 1925).

¹⁸ Beverly Stoeltje, "The Snake Charmer Queen: Ritual, Competition, and Signification in American Festival" in *Beauty Queens on the Global Stage: Gender, Contests and Power*, ed. Colleen Ballerino Cohen, Richard Wilk, Beverly Stoeltje, 15 (New York and London: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁹ *San Antonio Daily Express*, April 21, 1909. Each year, the queen would make a promise to San Antonio's public, to bring "mirth, melody and sweet song" and to "banish sorrow."

²⁰ Elizabeth Bronwyn Boyd, "Southern Beauty: Performing Femininity in an American Region" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2000), 4. Also, Anne Goodwyn Jones makes this argument in *Tomorrow is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South 1859-1936* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 10.

²¹ Boyd, 2-3. The first historian to define this myth of southern womanhood was Anne F. Scott in *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

²² David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

²³ Abner Cohen, *The Politics of Elite Culture: Explorations in the Dramaturgy of Power in a Modern African Society* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1981), 1-2.

²⁴ Glassberg, 282.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 283.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 64. Not all pageant organizers had these goals. Glassberg distinguishes the patriotic and hereditary societies' interests from progressive educators and playground organizers, who used pageants to not only educate the public, but to encourage their direct participation as a democratic exercise in civic unity.

²⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 7. Michaele Haynes also connects Bourdieu's concepts specifically to the Order of the Alamo's Coronation, 7.

²⁸ Order of Alamo charter. Order of the Alamo, *Membership Roster*. (San Antonio: Order of the Alamo, 1925).

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- ²⁹ Holly Beachley Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 77-80.
- ³⁰ Haynes, 77.
- ³¹ Stoeltje, 15.
- ³² Haynes, 23.
- ³³ Boyd, 4.
- ³⁴ *San Antonio Express*, February 23, 1913.
- ³⁵ Carrington seems to offer a selective version of his own history. While he was born in Virginia, he spent much of his childhood in Kentucky. However, he frequently identifies himself as a Virginian.
- ³⁶ Glassberg, 43.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ³⁸ Haynes, 40.
- ³⁹ Glassberg, 252.
- ⁴⁰ Scott, 17.
- ⁴¹ Order of the Alamo. *History of the Order of the Alamo, Volume Two, 1926-1939* (San Antonio: Order of the Alamo, 1939).
- ⁴² Haynes, 107.
- ⁴³ Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 134.
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Chapter 4
Night in Old San Antonio:
The San Antonio Conservation Society and the Chili Queens, 1924-1948

One of the casualties of San Antonio's health reforms was the banning of the famous "chili stands" in 1936. For over a century, Mexicano families set up outdoor chili stands on the city's downtown plazas, and many well known travelers had commented on their distinctive role in San Antonio's night life. O. Henry wrote of the delights of chili con carne in "The Enchanted Kiss," when he came to town in 1895. That same year, Stephen Crane visited the stands as well.¹ In the nineteenth century, these open-air booths filled Military Plaza, offering tamales, enchiladas, chili con carne, tortillas and coffee. In 1889, when the new City Hall was built on the plaza, most of these stands moved further west to Haymarket Plaza. They gained enough national recognition to secure a place in the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893, which featured a booth with a sign reading "The San Antonio Chili Stand."²

In the Depression era, sanitation regulations mandated the end of this distinctive feature of the city's nightlife. In response, a concerned group of city boosters, women cultural conservationists, and an emerging Mexican American middle class, in one of their few coordinated efforts, tried to save the chili stands. For them, this action represented both the loss of heritage and a harmful blow to a burgeoning tourist industry. They were unsuccessful, but they re-invented a powerful mythology of the reign of the "chili queens" in San Antonio guidebooks.³ In 1934, Frank Bushick, one time president of the Fiesta San Jacinto

Association and later city commissioner, wrote of the old chili stands in

Glamorous Days, his book of San Antonio tales:

But the chief attraction which made Military Plaza a show place at night were the chili con carne stands...little hollow squares formed of wobbly tables covered with greasy oil-cloth and surrounded by benches on the outside for the customers. ...All classes patronized them, some attracted by the novelty of it, some by the cheapness. A big plate of chili and frijoles, with a tortilla on the side, cost but a dime, ten cents. A Mexican bootblack and a silk hatted tourist would line up and eat side by side. Cowboys, merchants and hack drivers touched elbows. It was a genuine democracy of Bohemia. All were free and equal at the chili stands.⁴

Bushick describes these stands as the meeting place for downtown's diverse population of natives, tourists, Anglos, Germans and Mexicanos of all classes.

With romantic rhetoric, he described these stands as part of life at the "frontier" of American civilization. Although men often worked at the chili stands, Bushick focused on the "chili queens," the women who ran these all-night booths, as the reigning "monarchs" and hosts of San Antonio's exuberant nightlife. Bushick's elaborate descriptions of these queens, with their "bewitching black eyes" and "rich olive skin" evoked plenty of ambivalent desire for a Mexicana other.⁵ This desiring "democracy" of cowboys, bootblacks and hack drivers represented, as José Limón suggests, a longing "that brings into question...the full psychic and cultural legitimacy of Anglo-American domination in the Southwest."⁶ Such nostalgia for the egalitarian world of the chili queens would seem particularly understandable as San Antonians, like other Americans, experienced the hardships of the Depression. Yet Bushick was not primarily interested in returning to the pre-industrial days of the chili stands. He was not a cowboy, but a well-

known businessman who was invested in recreating the “atmosphere” of the open-air chili stands, and he was appealing to many American tourists who were looking for greater authenticity in the southwestern United States, America’s “orient.”⁷ For a rising Mexican American middle class, on the other hand, the chili stands represented a continuation of Mexicano cultural practices and a viable business. As LULAC fought to preserve the chili stands, they also fought against their increased spatial marginalization on the city’s West side, and against these “unsanitary” depictions of both Mexicanos and their cultural productions.

The most vocal group in the effort to restore the chili stands, though, was a group of mostly Anglo, middle and upper class women who called themselves the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS). For these women, saving the chili stands was part of a larger process of reinventing the city, and themselves. Bushick wrote about desiring the chili queens, but the SACS had a powerful longing as well. As they tried to re-create the chili stands, they performed a distinct nostalgia. Though they could not restore the booths permanently to downtown public life, they did recreate a modern chili stand for tourist consumption. For the 1936 Texas Centennial, they won a temporary reprieve from the ban. Joined by the Centennial Association’s Arts and Atmosphere Committee and LULAC, the SACS gained permission for the chili stands to remain at Haymarket Plaza to create “a typical Mexican atmosphere project of chili stands, arts and crafts shops and a flower mart.”⁸ In order to accommodate city officials, the SACS promised to retain safe and sanitary measures. They suggested

“screening begin at home, that food sold at chili stands be prepared in sanitary homes and brought to the stands where it would be kept warm and served under sanitary conditions.”⁹ These “sanitary homes” were the residences of the SACS members themselves. In the process of this temporary restoration of the chili stands, the SACS literally removed them from their social context, the homes and the neighborhoods of the “Mexican section” of the city, and placed them in their own upper middle class homes. As Sarah Deutsch argues in her analysis of federal programs of the Spanish colonial arts revival in New Mexico, such a project brought about the intrusion of the local Anglo elite to supervise Mexican culture itself.¹⁰ The SACS took cultural custodianship of the “mexicanness” of the city and appropriated the role of defining San Antonio’s “atmosphere.” Eventually, in 1948, they would incorporate their own fundraiser into Fiesta. This street fair, eventually called a “Night in Old San Antonio” (NIOA), transformed one of the city’s oldest neighborhoods into their romantic vision of San Antonio’s nineteenth century plazas. Here, they reconstructed the gas-lanterned chili stands. During Fiesta, the SACS made themselves into the city’s new chili queens—hostesses of San Antonio’s biggest party.

From the mid 1920s to World War II, Fiesta took a decidedly westward turn in its imagery and symbols. Encouraged by a “Spanish revival” across California and New Mexico, better relations with the Mexican government on both a local and national level, and changing gender relations, some of San Antonio’s elite women turned away from the southern pageantry of Fiesta’s royal

courts, to restore the missions, sponsor a Mexican Christmas pageant and dress in indigenous costumes of Mexican “peasants.” In the process, they demonstrated a growing fissure in the social order of the Texas Modern. The SACS’ interest in “things Mexican” participated in a gradual shift toward the political and cultural integration of Mexicanos in San Antonio.

The Mexican Vogue

The San Antonio Conservation Society participated in new ways of thinking about culture and cultural difference. In the late nineteenth century, their predecessors defined “culture” as the best of what was thought and produced, especially from Europe. The Battle of Flowers Association emulated Mexico City’s elaborate flower parades (who themselves emulated the French flower parades of Nice and Cannes); like Mexican elites, the organizers of the parades were interested in “high” forms of cultural display. Three decades later, the SACS articulated a more relational concept of culture, and a new tolerance and affirmation of cultural difference. The SACS became interested in the arts and crafts of the “folk.” Like other Americans at the time, they were attempting to “reposition themselves in the map of the world and to redraw the boundaries between themselves and others.”¹¹ During this period, anthropologists emphasized the notion of separate and integral cultures, a way of identifying groups and setting up distinct value systems within each culture, rather than judging them on an evolutionary scale of progress.¹²

Part of this effort was to reevaluate American identity, as something more than the poor relative of Europe, but as having a distinct culture worth preserving and studying. As Phillip Deloria writes, “American identity was increasingly tied to a search for an authentic social identity, one that had real meaning in the face of the anxious displacements of modernity.”¹³ Molly Mullin adds that some of these intellectuals found this authenticity in the Indians and Mexicans of the Southwestern United States: “[they] felt that by affirming the value of people and things that had long been undervalued they would find an authentic identity.”¹⁴ For many Americans, the Southwest became a place to find a pre-industrial simplicity that the modern city could not offer.¹⁵ The SACS did not view Mexicano cultural practices as continually changing and adaptive.¹⁶ Instead, they encouraged a static Mexicano culture that, with its unchanging nature, was an antidote to their own modern lives.

Before the mid 1920s, American awareness of Mexicano culture was limited. They admired Mexico’s picturesque qualities, but their perceptions of the people were “colored by racism, ethnocentrism, and antipathy toward Catholicism.”¹⁷ During the Díaz era of the late-nineteenth century, travelers noted what they considered positive changes in terms of how they conformed to American standards, and U.S popular culture promoted negative stereotypes of Mexicans as bandits or insurgents, the “greaser” in many early American motion pictures.¹⁸ However, important political and economic developments also stirred a greater international awareness among Americans. The U.S. became a major

economic and military power after 1900, which accelerated after World War I, and this new international role brought increased attention to the cultures of other peoples, including a greater interest in Latin America. U.S. hegemony in the Caribbean after the Spanish American war, along with expanded investment encouraged this trend.

As American individuals and corporations made more financial investments in Latin America, some intellectuals also began to assert “a commonality of experience and identity among Western hemisphere nations.”¹⁹ Americans used this sense of commonality to emphasize ties to Latin America as well as distinguish American culture from Europe. These intellectuals had an increased interest in cultural nationalism—recovering the material traces of an American past and promoting distinctive American art, literature and music.²⁰ Connected to this concern was a sense of antimodernism and romantic primitivism. Critics of industrialization found an appealing antidote in the cultures of seemingly more simple and authentic communities.

The more stable and peaceful situation in Mexico after 1920 also contributed to this new interest. Alvaro Obregón’s administration sought to decrease the power of the military and enact a program of land redistribution and improve the conditions of industrial workers as well as other programs of educational and social reform, while also protecting private property and foreign investment. He had a moderate pragmatic program of reform. He encouraged a period of cultural renaissance for Mexico, as the country’s indigenous traditions

became fashionable.²¹ In 1921, the Obregón administration celebrated the hundredth anniversary of Mexican independence with a series of events highlighting Mexico's national traditions, including folk art, dances and music. Diego Rivera and other muralists painted the themes of Mexican history on the countries' public walls.

From the late 1920s through to World War II, Mexico became a mecca for North American travelers who wanted to “imbibe the atmosphere of authenticity and harmony” that they saw in Mexico, while Mexican artists and performers found a warmer welcome than ever before, even as their compatriot laborers found a closed border after 1930.²² The U.S. government, partly to counter the activities of fascist governments and the Soviet Union, also approved treaties providing for the exchange of publications, students and professors among all American republics. In 1940 the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was established, under Nelson Rockefeller, exhibiting an anti-European orientation and an intense interest in pan-americanism.²³

These Americans' interest in Mexico was twofold. On the one hand, government officials and intellectuals fostered a sense of commonality, a pan-Americanist sameness. On the other hand, artists and cultural critics sought Mexico as a site of difference. For the SACS members, this dual movement characterized their ideas of Mexican “Others” within San Antonio as well. Through their efforts to preserve the material traces of a Spanish/Mexican past, these women linked the Spanish era to the American present. Yet by promoting

Mexicano expressive culture as a static relic of a simpler, primitive time, the SACS also participated in orientalizing the Southwest.

Mexicanos and the City

While SACS members restored Spanish missions, the majority of Mexicanos in San Antonio were living in poverty, with high rates of tuberculosis, virtually no public facilities, and a death rate ranked second highest among the five largest cities in Texas.²⁴ Despite these conditions, the late 1920s to the early 1940s marked a time when the Mexicano community became a greater part of the city's economy and its political life. During this period Mexicanos did most of the menial work in the city and provided the vast pool of surplus labor. Class differentiation also accelerated during this period. After three decades of high immigration, San Antonio's Mexicano community in 1930 was made up of a very small upper class of exiled "*ricos*," who came after the Mexican Revolution, a middle class of professionals and a large laboring class.²⁵ By 1941 this middle class achieved some success in altering the political climate of San Antonio. A new "self knowledge and power on the part of the Mexican Americans was beginning to bring about integration and some political and social recognition."²⁶ A new organization, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), entered into the cultural debates. LULAC was created in 1929 in Corpus Christi, Texas, and its members were primarily part of this rising Mexican American middle class.²⁷ Their entry into local politics signaled the first time a Mexican American organization had exerted significant influence on city affairs since the

Civil War. LULAC articulated a growing Mexican American consciousness. This new identity contrasted with the *ricos*, political exiles who sought to maintain allegiance to Mexico.²⁸ Instead, this new middle class expressed “a dual consciousness” and a program for integrating and functioning in American society. They aimed to “be proud of being Mexican in culture, but be American in politics.”²⁹ World War I was one catalyst for this change. Returning veterans had greater access to education and began to believe that their future was in the United States, not Mexico. These veterans “had a new sense of pride and mission, to fight against the injustices against Mexicans.”³⁰ This new generation of middle class leaders sought integration, but they also nurtured cultural pride.

This new middle class sought the full benefits of American citizenship and participation in local political life. Unfortunately, they were hindered by the Great Depression. Many new immigrants, unable to find jobs, became destitute. This period also marked the greatest deportation movement in U.S. history. During the decade there was the “voluntary” return of hundreds of thousands of people to Mexico.³¹ The exiled *ricos* had new opportunities to return to their original homes, as the Mexican government urged them to return to help rebuild the country. Those who remained in the United States experienced a dual oppression-discriminated against in the job market and as a racialized, inferior cultural group.³² In 1930, Mexicans’ racial status in the census was changed from “white” to “other races,” demonstrating this increased racial discrimination.³³ As a result the rising Mexican American middle class distanced themselves from the laboring

class. They tended to call themselves “Latin Americans,” rather than “Mexicans” and to emphasize their Americanism. Geographical discrimination also contributed. In home and housing contracts, Mexicanos (like African Americans) were not allowed to buy houses or land outside designated on the West side, unless they claimed to be “Spanish” instead of Mexican.³⁴

Richard Garcia delineates four views Anglos held about Mexicanos during the 1930s in San Antonio: indifference, a wish for repatriation and deportation, that Mexicans were criminal, and the hope for more of an interrelation between the communities.³⁵ The last two were the most prominent. Many Anglos still regarded the Mexican Other as the treacherous “greaser.” Racism and prejudice still dominated Anglo views. Yet many Anglos also recognized that the impoverished conditions of this community hindered the city’s overall economic growth. The city’s political elites worried as Mexican cigar workers, garment workers, and pecan shellers were striking. At the same time as Mexicanos were scapegoated for taking “native” jobs during the Depression, some city leaders began to call on the business sector to help the city provide better housing, financial rehabilitation programs, an improved school system, employment benefits and civic beautification programs. City government advised that plans for the 1936 Texas Centennial celebration employ Mexican and African American workers. Garcia summarizes:

By the mid-1930s the city’s elite finally began to recognize that San Antonio had developed as a city with various ethnic communities that had never been integrated fully and saw the city’s recovery programs as a

possible means of strengthening social and cultural life as well as integrating the city's body politic.³⁶

In addition, the Mexican American middle class enthusiastically advocated this political integration.³⁷ Organizations like the Mexican Businessmen's Association, the Latin American Department of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, and the West Side Improvement League had some political influence, though minor.³⁸

Maury Maverick, a "Rooseveltian liberal" from a well-established San Antonio family, was the first politician to fight the city machine by focusing on the West Side. As a U.S. Congressional representative in 1935, he became the "Mexican's friend," targeting his campaign on the West Side and to low income Anglos in the suburbs of Harlandale and South San Antonio. He had supported the pecan-shellers' strike in 1934, and supported the CIO. In 1938, he was defeated by conservative Paul Kilday. Immediately after his defeat, he joined the San Antonio mayoral race. His support on the West side showed when he won the race.³⁹ Through Maverick's congressional and mayoral campaigns, urban politicians were forced to address the issue of ethnicity. Maverick was elected mayor in 1939 in election marked by heavy voting, due to Mexican community's turnout and Anglo dissatisfaction with the political machine. This election also showed the political interdependence of Anglo and Mexican communities, and revealed the rise of a strong but diversified Mexican American middle class.⁴⁰

Maverick was also popular among some members of the Mexican American middle class because he addressed them as Americans. Unlike other candidates, who tried to speak to the Mexican community in Spanish, he spoke to them in English and acknowledged their role as full-fledged citizens.⁴¹ He fought for better wages for pecan-shellers and supported unionism, which gave him the backing of many working class Mexicanos. As mayor, he also brought about the census reclassification of Mexicans as “white.” Thus, he participated in efforts to not only give Mexicanos full citizenship, but the benefits of a white racial identity. He also restored the chili queens to downtown plazas, though he required vendors to follow new sanitation regulations.⁴² Maverick, more than any previous mayor (or any subsequent mayor for several decades) advocated for Mexicanos’ full social and political inclusion. Though he was defeated in his attempt at a second mayoral term in 1941, his politics brought about a new philosophy among the city’s governing elite.

The SACS did not make public statements embracing the political inclusion of Mexicanos in the city, but their efforts were part of a larger recognition among many of the city’s Anglos. In 1940, the San Antonio business community, the religious community, and the political elite appointed a fact-finding committee on social welfare to evaluate the changes of the 1930s. They found that there was an “awakening in San Antonio of the *élan vital*”...with the following political purposes:

a determination to make San Antonio the modern city it has the position and the power to be; an awareness that the welfare of its citizens is of

basic importance to its economic health; a growing consciousness of the people in power that discrimination against a strong segment of its population [the Mexicans] is not wise...in fact that it is not healthy politically, educationally, economically or socially to discriminate. Political recognitions [must be extended to] its Latin American Population.⁴³

Anglo politicians and businessmen needed to integrate Mexicanos as American citizens in order to facilitate citywide growth and prosperity. However, “the city had to keep them Mexicans as well.” As the SACS and other organizations realized, promoting San Antonio’s Mexicano culture was also the key to its modern identity. For different reasons, both Anglo urban politicians and Mexican American middle class leaders embraced a dual approach—Mexicanos would be politically integrated as Americans, but culturally defined as Mexican. In order to both industrialize the city and preserve its special “atmosphere,” the Anglo elite now took this dual approach to inventing the city. This approach would shape the city’s interethnic relations and its tourism industry for decades to come.

Construction and Restoration

While the SACS often spoke in the language of anti modernist nostalgia, their appropriation of Mexicano cultural practices was decidedly modern. Dean MacCannell links the preservation movement to the development of tourism and modernity. He argues that this preservation of history is not only an act of recovery, but of construction. He describes the tourism industry as a “catalogue of displaced forms,” where the structures and practices of an earlier historical period are taken out of their previous context and re-articulated into the logic of

modernity.⁴⁴ As the SACS removed chili from the “Mexican section” and remade it in their own upper class homes, they displaced other cultural practices from the producers. The SACS saw themselves as the sole guardians of a disappearing culture and atmosphere. The San Antonio Conservation Society took the lead in revitalizing San Antonio’s tourist industry. Through a combination of campaigns to both preserve historic buildings and to construct new tourist landscapes, the SACS encouraged and financed a number of preservation projects that would put the city “at the forefront of the national historic preservation movement.” They initiated or greatly contributed to the efforts to enlarge the grounds of the Alamo, to the San José Mission and the Spanish Governors’ Palace, and to construct la Villita and the Riverwalk.⁴⁵ Charles B. Hosmer notes of the SACS, “It was a woman’s world with a pleasant admixture of Latin culture...the women were years ahead of the men because they viewed their city as a total environment; they wanted to save the things that went into making the community lively and beautiful.”⁴⁶

One of the SACS’ main influences was Charles Lummis and his Landmarks Club of California. Lummis combined an interest in local history and tradition with a belief that art could profoundly influence society through moral uplift.⁴⁷ He published five books about his travels throughout the Southwest and tales of Spanish pioneers. From 1894 to 1909, he served as editor of *The Land of Sunshine*, the magazine of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Through this magazine, Lummis combined boosterism with regional art, literature and

ethnography. He also campaigned against American imperialism, ethnocentrism and racism, and for the restoration of the California missions.⁴⁸ In 1924, he advised Rena Maverick Green, one of the SACS founders, on how to purchase and restore San Antonio's missions. Green followed his guidance, reporting to other SACS members that Lummis viewed the missions as both art and as historical relic, "as the expression of the artist's vision and the embodiment of a great spiritual idea."⁴⁹ SACS meetings also featured speakers from California. One speaker, Miss Gail Harrison of Santa Barbara spoke about Santa Barbara's preservation of its "Spanish atmosphere" in the preservation of the mission and "a street in Spain" where adobe houses of tea rooms, gift shops and other shops were housed, along with a community arts center. This also influenced new architecture, as a new bank, library and hotel were built in this Spanish mission style. Harrison argued that San Antonio had even more buildings and artifacts to preserve, and thus could capitalize on the Spanish mission style as much as, or more than, Santa Barbara.⁵⁰ Harvey Smith, an architect who worked on the restoration of the Spanish Governor's palace, also wrote an article emphasizing the importance of drawing tourists to this unique city. He argued that tourists from the East and North are not interested in modern skyscrapers and factories, as they have plenty in their own towns. Instead, they look for the "picturesque" assets.⁵¹

Rena Maverick Green hoped to influence local philanthropists and civic boosters with these stories of California's success. "San Antonio has all the qualities as to physical beauty; racial peculiarities, and old architecture that sends

hundreds of people to Europe each year” she stated. She suggested preservation of homes, parks, establishing farmers markets in each section of the city, and constructing a public laundry of Spanish design on the West side.⁵² In March of 1929 the SACS sponsored a historic tour of the city, called “Vuelta de la Ciudad de San Antonio,” to benefit their annual competition for who had the best city plan which promoted growth and also kept the city’s “individuality” by conservation of its quaint and historic buildings. The tour was conducted by the SACS, and featured several speakers who detailed their experiences in several historic houses. They also visited the chili stands and ended the tour with a dinner at El Fenix.⁵³

Green’s comment about the city’s “racial peculiarity” demonstrated that San Antonio’s tourist industry relied on things Mexican. Though the city had promoted the allure of its “Mexican section” since the mid nineteenth century, this activity accelerated in the late 1920s and 1930s. City boosters sold San Antonio as a site of difference within the nation’s borders, and an escape from daily modern life. Steven Hoelscher points out that “the ‘native’ or ‘ethnic’ is an integral component of the tourist spectacle. The ethnic becomes an object of the tourist gaze, an actor whose ‘quaint’ and ‘different’ behavior, dress and artifacts are themselves significant attractions.”⁵⁴ Dean MacCannell observes that the tourist searches for authenticity to counter a modern sense of rootlessness. While MacCannell oversimplifies tourists’ multiple motivations for travel, he does

describe a key aspect of San Antonio's tourist industry. Many visitors came to San Antonio to observe the perceived authenticity of things Mexican.

Visitors' relationships to San Antonio Mexicanos themselves was a more complicated matter, as it was for those who created these modern cultural displays.⁵⁵ Richard Garcia writes that there was an intellectual tension with the Anglo population of San Antonio between acceptance of the "Spanish fantasy" and the rejection of the reality of Mexican Americans in the twentieth century.⁵⁶ Carey McWilliams was the first to describe Anglos' participation in the historic pageants of the Southwest that featured Spanish conquistadors and wealthy hacienda owners as a "Spanish heritage fantasy" that ignored the role of the poor, the Indian and the Mexican. Garcia takes this further to critique Anglos' interest in Spanish buildings of the past while neglecting Mexicano residents in the present. During the great influx of Mexican immigration from 1900 to 1930 San Antonio Anglos welcomed the labor, but many were clearly anxious about the dramatic increase in Mexican population. Politicians, professors, ministers and eugenicists warned about the negative consequences of this immigration.⁵⁷ The Reverend Robert McLean compared the influx of Mexicans to a bad case of heartburn: "this chili con carne!! Always it seems to give Uncle Sam the heartburn; and the older he gets, the less he seems to be able to assimilate it!"⁵⁸ Though many San Antonians wanted a taste of chili, they also feared the effect that over-indulgence of this new "carne" would have on their civic (and national) public.

For the SACS, the tension between Spanish fantasy and Mexican reality was particularly complex. They did not express much direct concern for Mexicano city residents. They concentrated on preserving buildings, not people. Yet they did not entirely retreat to the fantasy of Spanish heritage either. As they embraced the chili stands and other Mexicano cultural practices, the SACS recognized Mexicano residents' place in the city's public life. They did not express anxieties about the growing population of Mexicanos in the city, but they did not seek their cultural empowerment either. The SACS operated within a space between the Spanish fantasy and Mexican reality. They embraced Mexicano culture, and Mexicanos' presence, but wanted to supervise their role in the city's public culture.

Cultural Conservation

The San Antonio Conservation Society articulated its relationship to both Mexicanos and Mexicanness through their distinct concept of "cultural conservation". In their first meeting, the women defined themselves broadly as "interested in the preservation of all things characteristic of San Antonio, things of historic as well as aesthetic value—losing which, San Antonio loses local color and atmosphere."⁵⁹ Their goal was to preserve buildings, documents and "anything admirably distinctive of San Antonio."⁶⁰ They found the term "preservation" too narrow for their ambitions, and so they chose the term "cultural conservation."⁶¹ In doing so, they hoped to not only preserve buildings, but to save the natural environment. The SACS also showed an interest in

maintaining cultural practices, which set them apart from other women's organizations in the city.

Thirteen women attended their first meeting on March 22, 1924. Many of these middle class women were artists, and many were also active in numerous other voluntary organizations. The cause that united the organization's founders was the potential demolition of the Market House for street widening. Though their campaign was unsuccessful, their effort was unlike any previous preservation campaign in the country because they targeted a purely commercial building. The Market House was less than a hundred years old and was not connected to any prominent historical event or family. Unlike most preservation organizations that focused on buildings' roles in well-known historic events, the SACS was interested in buildings' aesthetic appeal as well. The Conservation Society argued that the building's Greek Revival style made it one of the few examples of classic architecture in the city.

The SACS wanted to conserve the historic landmarks, but they articulated a broader definition of saving the city's "heritage." The Market House was their first concern, but the SACS quickly took on a number of new causes as well. Within that first year, they began their effort to obtain temporary leases from the Catholic Church to make parks on the lands around San Antonio's four missions (all except the Alamo). The following year, they joined with the DRT Alamo chapter to purchase the remaining private property around the Alamo church. In 1926, they supported the opening of San Antonio's first public museum, the

Witte. In 1929, they headed a restoration committee for the Spanish Governor's Palace. By 1936, they completed restoration of the San Jose Mission, and held their first "Indian Harvest Festival" on the grounds, an event that later became NIOSA. From 1939 to 1941, they aided in the creation of San Antonio's Riverwalk.⁶² These multiple projects demonstrate that the SACS was concerned with both historic preservation, contemporary beautification and promoting a distinct "atmosphere." In 1931 they created their official seal. They included the tower of the San Jose Mission church that represented their concern with historic buildings. Underneath, a wild olive branch symbolized their interest in the natural environment. Above, an "all-seeing eye" watched over these two elements.⁶³ This seal shows their "guardianship" of San Antonio's heritage. Though they did not focus exclusively on San Antonio's Spanish colonial landmarks, their extensive work on the missions and the governor's palace fostered a particular interest in this era of the city's history.

The Conservation Society's two founders highly influenced their distinct sense of purpose. The first co-founder, Rena Maverick Green, was an artist, as well as an established civic activist. As the granddaughter of Mary Adams Maverick and the widow of Robert B. Green, who served as county judge and in the Texas Senate, she had long-standing political connections in the state. She was one of the first women elected to the San Antonio board of education. She also worked to get women appointed to the San Antonio police department and campaigned for woman suffrage through her position as state chairman of the

National Woman's Party. In addition to these efforts, Green was a watercolorist and sculptress who studied art in Provincetown, Massachusetts and San Francisco. In 1924, Green was already chairperson of the Missions committee of the DRT. Later that year, when she joined with Emily Edwards to form the Conservation Society, Green was fifty years old. As a widow, Green could sign legal documents without her husbands' co-signature, which gave her greater ability to lead SACS projects.⁶⁴

Emily Edwards was also an artist, and had a similar interest in civic service. However, Edwards showed this interest through social work and teaching. Born in 1889, Emily Edwards was raised in San Antonio. When she was nine, her mother died, and her father enrolled her in the Ursuline Academy, a convent and boarding school in the center of downtown. Edwards later commented that when she and her two sisters moved into the convent "we had gone away from home into the heart of the city."⁶⁵ From this early age onward, Edwards lived in spaces that merged domestic living with public service. As a teenager, she left San Antonio to stay with her aunt in Jane Addams' Hull House, where she taught and attended the Chicago Art Institute. She then taught art in Chicago. When she returned to San Antonio, at the age of 35, She became an art teacher at San Antonio's Brackenridge high school.⁶⁶ She was highly influenced by the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. After a few years in the Conservation Society, she left to study under Rivera in Mexico City, returning to San Antonio for frequent visits.

Green utilized her previous political experience, while Edwards used her artistic skills to organize their first challenge to city government. In September 1924 Edwards, elected the first president of the SACS, staged a puppet show for city commissioners in an effort to encourage preservation of the “uniqueness of the city.” Edwards made the puppets herself, based on sketches that she and Green had previously made while sitting in the back row of a city commissioners’ meeting.⁶⁷ The puppet show succinctly dramatized both the purpose of this newly formed group as well as how issues of gender and race were intertwined in this society’s construction of San Antonio’s public history. Entitled “The Goose with the Golden Eggs,” the play represented the city as a goose whose eggs were its unique characteristics. The eggs were named the Heart of Texas, Missions, History, Tourists and Beauty. The actors (or puppets) were “Mr. And Mrs. San Antonio,” an unnamed “Stage Manager” and five current city commissioners. The Stage Manager introduced himself as “The Spirit of Yesterday.” His brown skin and long mustache marked him as Mexican, distinct from the other puppets. Mr. And Mrs. San Antonio were a white middle class couple, from their dress and skin color. As this demonstrated, a Mexicano man embodied the “spirit of yesterday”, while the actors of today were Anglo San Antonians.

The manager introduced Mr. And Mrs. San Antonio standing with the goose, and Mrs. San Antonio held up each of her eggs admiringly. After she described each of the city’s fine characteristics, however, Mr. San Antonio impatiently declared that “income is too slow, I want more Prosperity.”⁶⁸ The

couple struggled as Mr. San Antonio went for his knife to kill the goose, but Mrs. San Antonio begged the city fathers to decide the goose's fate.

In Scene Two, the mayor and city commissioners discussed the incoming Texas governor, "Ma" Ferguson, and Commissioner Lambert declared, "Boys can you beat it, a petticoat seated!" Commissioner Wright replied "But now we'll have the surprise of our lives, if we find we have to listen to our wives."

Afterward, Mr. and Mrs. San Antonio entered and spoke before the commissioners. Mr. San Antonio complained about the crooked, narrow streets: "Now, I'd have only Broadways, and cut her lanes and make this speedway." He noted that his wife has different tastes: "her home is old buildings that simply won't fall down...she has her own customs...She even eats chili not served in Duluth." At the end of the play, Mrs. San Antonio pleaded, "Ah, spare this goose for future use; the voice of culture begs. Your reward will come, for this precious goose will lay more golden eggs." The mayor put the question to the audience, who, filled with Conservation Society members, shouted "No!" The curtain fell with Mrs. San Antonio clutching the goose. The stage manager stood before the curtain with a shiny new egg: "See, the egg laid on the way...Save Old San Antonio, ere she die."

The contrasting roles of Mr. and Mrs. San Antonio clearly illustrate a gendered vision of the conflicts between the forces of progress and preservation. While the men, represented by business interests, developers and some city officials, were interested in profits and industrialization, their wives fulfilled the

role of preservers of culture.⁶⁹ This dichotomy reflected nationwide preservation movements of the time, yet the Conservation Society's mission was distinct in its emphasis upon combining preservation with a concern for future tourism. These women did not see their cause in opposition to progress, but saw a way to market the city more successfully to tourists, through preserving its "distinctive" characteristics. These women played the roles of keepers of the past, but they also fully wished to participate in the modern industry of tourism. And they echoed other efforts during this period to market the city not only as a center for commerce and industry, but a commodity itself, sold to visitors for the experience it offered.

The SACS' first effort to save the Greek Revival Market demonstrated that this organization, from its beginning, was keenly invested in the marketplace. The SACS used their position in the cultural marketplace as a source of racial and gendered power. As members of a non-Mexican social elite, society members used their political influence to adopt Spanish and Mexican buildings and performances and practices and reformulate them into commodities for tourist consumption. The "spirit of yesterday," as embodied by a Mexicano man, set the stage, but white women would make San Antonio's golden eggs into the commodities to sell the goose.

Sentimental Restoration

In Emily Edwards' puppet show, the stage manager was presented, literally, as an apparition. In the Conservation Society's version of history, living

Mexican American actors (for the most part) were displaced. The stage manager set the scene for the “actors of today” and then bowed out of the story. In doing so, he gave guardianship of San Antonio’s history to the women of the Conservation Society. Yet their cultural custodianship did not go unchallenged by the social actors of the early twentieth century. Soon after news of the SACS founding spread, Adina De Zavala, head of the Texas Historical and Landmarks Association (THLA), contacted Emily Edwards. Many years later, Edwards recalled: “Miss De Zavala called me up and told me that that was her field...there was just room for nobody else. She was furious.” Edwards tried to reassure De Zavala that the SACS did not see itself as a historic society. “When we went to incorporate there was no category except the historic society in which we could enter without a great deal of trouble,” Edwards explained. The category they desired, cultural conservation, did not exist.⁷⁰ Edwards efforts to soothe De Zavala failed. In response to the SACS founding, De Zavala’s THLA increased its activity, doubling their production of historic tablets and hosting a number of dedication ceremonies.⁷¹

De Zavala’s concerns reflected her long, embattled position as defender of San Antonio’s landmarks. By the time of the SACS founding, she was already one of the most active preservationist in the city’s history. Her most well known efforts are those to restore the Alamo, and how her vision conflicted with another Alamo preservationist, Clara Driscoll. De Zavala was the granddaughter of the first vice president of the Texas Republic, Lorenzo De Zavala. For many years

she had been one of the most active and vocal members of the DRT, and led the organization's efforts to purchase the Alamo grounds. Although the state had taken control of the Alamo chapel in 1883, the *convento* walls of the mission were owned by the Hugo Schmeltzer Company, and were used for commercial interests. For several years, the DRT worked at restoring the mission chapel, and lobbied for custodianship of the Hugo Schmeltzer building. Eventually, De Zavala secured an agreement with Gustav Schmeltzer that he would not sell the property before giving the DRT the opportunity to acquire it, but they needed funding. De Zavala knew of Clara Driscoll, the daughter of a wealthy railroad and ranching entrepreneur, as a prominent young woman who might have some interest in helping her efforts.⁷² She approached Driscoll about the Alamo in 1903, and afterward the two worked to purchase the site. In 1904, Driscoll personally donated \$17, 812.02 to complete the \$25,000 needed for the purchase. For this, she became known as the "savior of the Alamo," and in 1905 custodianship of all the Alamo grounds was given to her by the state of Texas. However, De Zavala and Driscoll had serious conflicts over what to do with the newly purchased building.

From her research, De Zavala believed that the walls of the Hugo Schmeltzer building were originally part of the *convento* structure of the Alamo mission. She wanted to restore this piece of Alamo property. Driscoll, on the other hand, believed that the chapel was the only structure of importance to the battle, and therefore the only building worth preserving. She claimed the monastery had

fallen to pieces long ago anyway, and advocated the demolition of the Hugo-Schmeltzer building in order to highlight the Alamo chapel and “beautify” the site. The state DRT, and many San Antonians, became deeply divided over the issue, dividing into the “De Zavalans” and the “Driscollites”. In 1908, De Zavala actually barricaded herself in the building in order to save the walls from destruction, in an event that is often called the “second battle of the Alamo.” The fight eventually split the DRT, as Driscoll and her supporters created a separate Alamo Mission Chapter of the DRT and forced De Zavala’s chapter out of the DRT in 1910.⁷³

Ultimately, a portion of the walls remained, as the Texas governor Oscar Colquitt, in a special meeting in December 1911, decided that there was enough evidence that the walls were part of the original *convento*, and thus should not be destroyed. De Zavala, though ousted from the DRT, had partially won her fight to preserve the walls. However, in 1913, funds were extinguished before the restoration was complete, and the Lieutenant Governor (who seemed to side with Driscoll) ordered the upper story wall demolished while Governor Colquitt was out of state.

Richard Flores argues that this disagreement over the Alamo restoration reflected a difference in Driscoll and De Zavala’s private visions of the Alamo. For De Zavala, restoring the mission was part of a “poetics of restoration”, an effort to place the Alamo within its wider historical context, chronicling its long history of Indian, Spanish, Mexican, Texan and U.S. presence. In this process, the restored Alamo would also symbolically address the socioeconomic displacement of Mexicanos in the Texas Modern.⁷⁴ Driscoll was more interested in legitimizing the prominence of Anglos. Thus, her private vision followed a “poetics of

sentimentality” that presents the Alamo story focused solely on Anglo martyrdom at the 1836 battle, and isolates this fight from its complex social and historical grounding. Her sentimental narrative separated the Anglo heroes of the battle from their wider context, and served to show Anglo Texans’ superiority to the Mexican other.⁷⁵

After she left the DRT, De Zavala continued her preservation work through her new organization, the Texas Historical Landmarks Association, begun in 1912 with the purpose of preserving San Antonio’s other mission buildings and establishing a “Texas Hall of Fame” in the Alamo’s long barracks (previously the Schmeltzer property). She was unsuccessful, for the time, in this latter goal, but she did begin to preserve the other four missions, and placed plaques on several other historic buildings of the Spanish colonial era (including the governor’s palace). However, her vision of social restoration of the Alamo itself would be overshadowed by Driscoll’s sentimental goals.

After struggling with Driscoll for so many years, De Zavala was probably wary of yet another preservation group competing for custodianship of the city’s landmarks. Rena Maverick Green was also chairing the Mission chapter of the DRT, the very same chapter that had replaced De Zavala’s chapter. The Conservation Society, with their interest in the missions and the governor’s palace, threatened De Zavala’s specific projects as well.

In terms of saving the city’s historic landmarks, the SACS had much in common with De Zavala. They also agreed with her vision of Alamo restoration.

In 1929, the DRT, the THLA and the Conservation Society joined forces to ask the city to provide funds to purchase the remaining private property surrounding the Alamo in order to create a park.⁷⁶ Their unity quickly dissolved over specific park proposals. Seven years later for the Texas Centennial, these organizations were divided over the DRT's new plans (once again) to tear down all the adjacent buildings in order to clear the view of the Alamo chapel. The Conservation Society, like De Zavala, felt that many of these buildings were of historical significance, and together they petitioned the Junior Chamber of Commerce to oppose the DRT's plans.

The DRT ignored their protests. One member of the DRT offered their defense: "it was the purpose of the centennial celebrations to observe the one-hundredth anniversary of the independence of Texas, not the Spanish period, the Civil War period or any other era."⁷⁷ The different philosophies of the two organizations were very clear. The DRT pushed historical considerations aside, and was solely interested in a memorial to the defenders of the Alamo. The Conservation Society, like the THLA, was more interested in accurate rebuilding of structures from the Spanish colonial period. In this case, the SACS followed a poetics of restoration. Like De Zavala, they were interested in maintaining links to the city's Spanish and Mexican past through historic preservation. Conserving historic buildings and opposing mass culture and industrialization, the SACS seemed to long for a restoration of a Spanish and Mexican past. Colonial

buildings were part of this process, but contemporary Mexican American customs became cultural property as well.

Unlike De Zavala, though, the SACS did not act out of a (repressed) concern for the social displacement of Mexicanos by the forces of modernity.⁷⁸ Instead, their efforts worked toward growth of a modern tourist industry. In this way, the SACS was just as sentimental as the DRT. The DRT participated in a preservation movement that served to justify the members own social and ethnoracial positions; as descendents of the Anglo Texan defenders they were honoring, the DRT made themselves guardians of the Alamo as symbol of the racial stratification of the Texas Modern. The SACS also claimed cultural custodianship of the city's past, yet they took charge of re-creating its Mexicanness. Their romantic rhetoric was in the service of modern tourism. Their efforts were sentimental in that they participated in the displacement of buildings, cultural practices (like the chili stands) and the natural environment and reconstructed them into the context of tourism.

The SACS operated within a middle ground between the poetics of restoration and sentimentalism. Their eclectic mix of causes reflected a restorative concern with incorporating all elements of San Antonio's diverse architecture, cultures and historical periods. Yet, as their puppet show makes clear, their interests also re-invigorated efforts to sell the city to modern tourists. The SACS articulated their sentimental restorative purpose through several projects, spanning a period from the mid-nineteen-twenties until World War II. During this

time, the SACS was aiding a modern social order, but this was not the order of the Texas Modern. Instead, the SACS efforts contributed to a slow unraveling of the racial stratification of the Texas Modern. Through their various efforts to maintain Spanish architecture and Mexican cultural practices, the SACS participated in larger citywide efforts to incorporate Mexicanness, and Mexicanos themselves, into the city's life. Unlike the DRT, the SACS did not represent the Mexican Other as "the greaser," or a corrupt defeated enemy. In the SACS vision, the Mexican Other became "quaint", a vestige of a "vanishing" social world, but also a vital component of a new tourist economy.

Usually the SACS expressed these concerns in terms of the city's landscape. Early in the SACS history, they began to fight efforts to change San Antonio's downtown streets. In December 1929 some San Antonio Anglo residents petitioned the city to change "Zarzamora Street" to "Aviation Boulevard." The petitioners stated that Zarzamora was not of historical significance and difficult to spell. The SACS counter petitioned, noting the beauty and rhythmical sound of the original name. The name Zarzamora was an example of the Spanish colonists' "adaptation of his language to a new environment...It literally means brambled, or thorny mulberry and was the name applied to the dewberry the Spanish found growing around San Antonio."⁷⁹ Two weeks later the society used the same strategy to defend Losoya street, which some businessmen wanted to rename "Broadway." A society committee further argued that every city has its Broadway, but none have a Losoya street. The name should

be retained for its reference to Jesus Losoya, an early Spanish settler, and for the names' musical cadence.⁸⁰ The SACS combined historic preservation with aesthetic concerns, but they also had a particular interest in cultural adaptation. Like the Spanish colonists, who created the word zarzamora to respond to their new environment, the SACS used romantic language to adapt to changing social conditions. Their keen interest in how San Antonio's multiple communities conformed to their environment in the past was also a concern about how the city's pre-industrial past could be reconciled to its modern present.

La Villita

One example of the way the SACS, and other civic officials, struggled to construct a new social order was in the restoration of one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, La Villita. Originally a Coahuiltecan Indian Village in the early eighteenth century, Spanish soldiers then moved to the area by the end of the century. After a great flood in 1819, many of San Antonio's Spanish residents also moved to its high ground. German immigrants arrived in the 1840s, followed by immigrants from France, Switzerland, and Mexico. By the Depression, the area had deteriorated, and was housing for some of San Antonio's poorest Mexican residents.⁸¹ In 1935, the chairman of the Conservation Society's planning committee recommended that this neighborhood be targeted for renovation, as it was also the site of the Mexican General Cós' surrender to the Texans in 1835. In 1938, the Society held its first meeting in La Villita, and the speaker proposed a restoration modeled after Los Angeles' Olvera Street, remade

into a center for Mexican handicrafts and activities, and “of great interest to tourists and lovers of the quaint and picturesque.”⁸²

San Antonio’s new mayor, Maury Maverick, quickly took up the cause. The cousin of Rena Maverick Green, Maury Maverick had previously helped the SACS in their efforts to restore the San José mission when he was a U.S. Congressman. Through Maverick’s friendship with Franklin D. Roosevelt, the National Youth Administration began the cleanup. Typical of the New Deal era politics, Maverick proposed that the restoration of La Villita would also provide jobs for the unemployed and unite the Western Hemisphere in an act of Pan-American friendship. On October 12, the Villita Ordinance was passed. Maverick envisioned La Villita as a “project that would ennoble the lower-class Mexican American barrio” as well as establish a link to Latin America and San Antonio’s Mexican past.⁸³ Maverick quickly acquired the land and began the cleanup.

In part, La Villita’s restoration was modeled after the nationally known recreation of Williamsburg, Virginia. Similar efforts were also made in New Orleans, Charleston and Cape Cod. Yet the architect of the Villita project, O’Neill Ford, proposed that this neighborhood had styles “infinitely more varied and original” than those other projects. After several meetings with the mayor and the SACS, he proposed “a sensitive and carefully restored group of little houses that show clearly that our own culture has produced, from a varied source, an architecture not based on any ‘style’ but definitely establishing a character that is native.”⁸⁴ Such comments reflect a cultural nationalist concern with defending

American architectural traditions. Yet his goals also reflect an emphasis upon “atmosphere.” Ford wanted La Villita to “create a mood rather than be a museum-style restoration to a specific period of time.”⁸⁵ This was partly due to confusion of houses several times rebuilt. The architecture of La Villita, therefore, would be rebuilt to show how various styles were adapted over time, by different cultural groups, to yield a unique style. The result would be “one general atmosphere...[with]no sharp separation of things that make houses and grounds and furniture one fine whole.”⁸⁶ The SACS heartily endorsed Ford’s plan. By the end of Maverick’s mayoral term, in 1941, La Villita was completed.

The mayor and the SACS considered La Villita a great success. For each of the projects’ backers, La Villita’s restoration represented a new civic unity, one that restored the fragments of the city’s diverse ethnic communities into a coherent social whole. However, the one group left out of this new unity was the residents of La Villita who were relocated during the “clean up.” The families of this “slum” were picked up, relocated, and “written out of the history” of the neighborhood. La Villita became “less a neighborhood and more a commercial marketplace, a decontextualized collection of artifacts.”⁸⁷ A few testimonies from La Villita’s relocated residents remain. Connie Pena Solis recalled memories of her childhood in La Villita. Despite the poor living conditions, Solis described the neighborhood as a cohesive community, while progress reports on the clean up described the removal of “human wreckage.”⁸⁸ Though Ford attempted to show a continuous history of varied architectural adaptations, he and other

preservationists did not recognize the radical rupture that their own work made in the social worlds of La Villita's contemporary residents. Maverick's utopian language of hemispheric unity and barrio ennoblement masked a careless disregard for this community.

The Canary Island Fantasy

Like Maverick, the Conservation Society showed a glaring disregard for contemporary Mexicano social actors. The cultural landscape of La Villita was now peculiarly disembodied—devoid of its numerous former residents or sparsely populated with Mexicano craftsmen and tourists. Instead, as the Society took custodianship of Mexicano spaces and practices, Society members tried to embody these cultural attributes themselves. At their meetings and fundraisers, SACS members often wore dresses from various Mexican states. They sold Mexican crafts at the San José Mission and hosted innumerable Mexican suppers.

In 1931 the Conservation Society celebrated the restoration of the Spanish Governor's Palace. They also wanted to honor the two hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Canary Islanders, the original Spanish colonists of San Antonio, and so they sponsored a historic pageant with Society members playing the roles of these early colonists. Rena Maverick Green was amazed, though, when the descendents of these Canary Islanders insisted that they play the parts themselves. Eventually, Green worked out a compromise so that Society members would still play certain roles in the production.⁸⁹ The SACS did have one member who was actually a Canary Island descendent, Esther Carvajal, who helped organize the

pageant. However, Green's statement reveals that she was baffled by the Canary Islanders' protests. Her surprised response to the Canary Island descendents also reveals the degree to which many SACS members absorbed this sense of cultural custodianship.

Their appropriation of the Canary Islanders dress was a form of mimetic play. Phil Deloria defines mimesis as a particularly modern performance. In his study of "playing Indian" throughout U.S. history, Deloria describes white performances in the early and mid-twentieth century as distinctively concerned with cultural authenticity. Mimetic play of Indianness was part of the modern quest for an authentic identity. These performers "imitated and appropriated the Other viscerally through the medium of their bodies." This channeling of difference had a "powerful material reality."⁹⁰ For SACS members, performing the roles of Canary Islanders offered them an opportunity to "become" the city founders. Their performances gave them the symbolic heritage of San Antonio. As they took the place of the Canary Island descendents themselves, they also legitimized their role as cultural custodians.

SACS members did not insist on performing in all the pageants they sponsored. In 1928, when they began to sponsor the Spanish-language play *Los Pastores*, they hired the group of Mexicano actors who had been performing the play for many years on the city's West Side. Mrs. Carvajal also organized the society's 1928 sponsorship of the *Los Pastores* play. This shepherds' play was based upon a Spanish medieval practice, but had continued within San Antonio's

Mexican American community each Christmas season. The performance could last from three to five hours, and consisted of a reenactment of the hazards confronting the shepherds who were making their way to see Jesus Christ in the manger. The Society sponsored a performance at Mission San José for two years (and resumed sponsorship in the mid 1940s). They hired Mexicano players from the Guadalupe church, who performed the play in their own community as well. However, the performances at the Mission differed from its Guadalupe counterpart.⁹¹ At the mission performance, the Society hired a translator to provide summaries of the play's scenes. The translator's narrative, though, was spoken at the same time as the Spanish-speaking players, often drowning them out. The socioeconomic and cultural differences between the majority of the audience members and the players also encouraged little interaction between the actors and the crowd. At the Guadalupe church, there was no translator; the audience was socially and culturally similar to the actors, and the performance was in a small church.⁹² Although some SACS members were fluent in Spanish, they often failed to understand the meaning of the play. One translator commented that the play was so confusing that very few people would understand what it is all about.⁹³ A newspaper review of the 1928 Mission performance described the play: "Forty scenes in loose or far fetched sequence followed each other through the weird religious performance."⁹⁴ The SACS sponsored this "confusing" production to invest in the spectacle of the Mexicano performers, not in the meaning of the play itself. The English translator, instead of bridging

between the social spaces of the performers and the audience, reified their separation by speaking over the actors' voices.

The SACS decided to perform in the Canary Island pageant and not in *Los Pastores*. They do not offer explanations for this distinction, but I suggest that they were not willing to cross the social space (and the perceived racial boundary) between their white selves and these Mexican Others. By the twentieth century, the descendants of the Canary Islanders were integrated into San Antonio's "white" society, rather than the Mexican one.⁹⁵ Their Spanish ancestry distinguished them from the contemporary "Mexican." By portraying themselves as Canary Islanders, the SACS could link themselves to the city's Spanish past. However, the limits to this mimetic contact are clear as well. While embodying the presence of a Spanish past, SACS members also distanced themselves from the Mexican of the present. They distinguished between Spanish ancestors and Mexican contemporaries as a way of confirming the social distance between themselves and the Mexicano actors. The women of the San Antonio Conservation Society played the Canary Island fantasy in order to reinvent themselves, yet they also participated in continuing racial divisions.

NIOSA

Unlike many of the women cultural preservationists in New Mexico and California, transplanted northeasterners, the women of the SACS were primarily San Antonio natives, from established families of late nineteenth century San Antonio. They looked to San Antonio's Spanish and Mexican past to establish a

public voice, but they were also embedded in the racial order of the New South. Like the Battle of Flowers Association, the SACS articulated a public role for themselves that differed from the myth of the passive, domestic southern lady. As they took custodianship of San Antonio's Mexicanness, they also found new ways to redefine southern womanhood. Yet the public roles of SACS members largely depended upon the private labor of Mexicanas. Most of the SACS "Mexican dinners" were cooked by their Mexicana maids. Mexicanas also performed most of the labor for one of SACS' biggest events, the Night in Old San Antonio (NIOA). During this street fair, SACS members' activities showed a continuing tension between their public custodianship of Mexicanness and their reliance on Mexicana labor. This fair also demonstrated the continuing gap between the romantic rhetoric of restoration and the reality of a racially stratified society.

This street fair began as the "Indian Harvest Festival" in 1936 and was held in the newly restored San José Mission. It portrayed the imagined life of the Indians at the missions, including live farm animals and an elaborate pageant featuring the Matachin dance. The event continued for several years, bringing profits from the candy selling booths and gypsy numerology readings. In 1940, the festival evolved into the "River Jubilee" in order to celebrate the San Antonio River Beautification project, which featured a parade of boats. In 1946, the Fiesta San Jacinto Association encouraged the Conservation Society to stage their festival during Fiesta week, and promised to underwrite the event. In 1947, this River Festival moved up to La Villita, and featured sidewalks lined with

concession stands. In 1948, the festival assumed its current name, A Night in Old San Antonio.

The events grew, and volunteers increased. Attendance rose past 1000 in 1942. Elizabeth Graham, a Society member, created donkey carts for children to ride down the streets, reminiscent of the carts that carried produce and other supplies around San Antonio's nineteenth century plazas. In another feature, a flock of geese were herded down the street. In 1947, Mrs. Ed Leighton, who had run the Indian Harvest Festivals at San José, announced she would put replicas of the old-time chili stands on Juarez plaza to serve Mexican food.⁹⁶ The SACS would now have a more permanent construction of the chili stands, as well as a wide variety of other ethnic foods. Organizers divided NIOSA into several sections, representing different historic periods like "Villa Espana," the "Mexican Market" and "Frontier Town."⁹⁷ For children, the SACS designed "Clown Alley." During NIOSA the SACS created a more family-oriented version of the Spring Carnival attractions. They presented vestiges from the city's diverse cultural history, but displaced these practices from their earlier context and re-constructed them as tourist commodities.

Some of the booths featured Society members' own home-baked cookies and pies, but the most famous food-maker, and the namesake of one NIOSA's most crowded stands, was Maria Luisa Ochoa, the housekeeper for Society member and one time president, Ethel Harris. For many of the festival's early years, Harris pressed Ochoa to make tortillas for the event. Apparently, this was

not always the easiest relationship. Another SACS member, Esther MacMillan, recalls:

Every year, Ethel [Harris] would call me and say, 'Esther, you've got to come out and talk to Maria. She's not going to do it.' And I would say 'Why don't you do it? She works for you. She's living in your house.' 'You've got to come out and talk to her,' she'd say. I would go out and talk to Maria. And every year we gave her workers just a little more money...And I watched...what she did. She ordered the maize...And she mixed them and the lime water until she could *feel* [my emphasis] when it was right. And, somehow or other, those were the best tortillas that ever were.⁹⁸

Unfortunately, SACS members recorded little else about their personal relationships to Maria Luis Ochoa, but this negotiation reveals several interesting possibilities. First, Ochoa's "unwillingness" to make the annual tortillas demonstrated her ability to bargain for better pay. She seemed well aware of the profits that the SACS gained from their annual festival, and wanted to negotiate for higher wages for her work.

Secondly, the tension shows a deeper conflict. Hiring Mexicana housekeepers like Ochoa relieved Harris, like other white upper class women, from the burdens of private domestic duties. As Ochoa labored, Harris could do the public work of cultural conservation. Grace Elizabeth Hale argues that in the South, white women constructed the "mammy" image of black women "to ease the constrictions of southern white womanhood." Black women's physical labor mattered, but their symbolic labor mattered even more.⁹⁹ As self-sacrificing mother figures, more devoted to their white owners than their own families, the mythical mammy provided a mother figure and a source of inspiration. Often,

women who had public roles as activists praised their mammies as their liberators. The mammy “let them out of their home in the unnamed liberation of their whiteness to be temperance organizers, suffragists, artists, and writers.”¹⁰⁰ In San Antonio, this racial stratification also played out in Anglo/Mexican social relations. Mexicana housekeepers served many of the same functions as mammies. They also revealed the deepest contradiction within southern womanhood. “The mammy figure revealed...a desperate symbolic as well as physical dependence on the very people whose full humanity white southerners denied.”¹⁰¹ For SACS members, this symbolic dependence was particularly acute. These white women spent much of their public lives constructing and representing ideas of Mexicanness, yet their presentation depended upon Mexicana labor.

Esther MacMillan, in her account of Maria Luisa Ochoa’s preparation of the tortillas, is fascinated by the way she seems to “feel” the appropriate mixture of ingredients. For MacMillan, Ochoa’s method is almost magical. She watched Maria make the tortillas, but she could not imagine accomplishing the same feat herself. MacMillan naturalizes Ochoa’s labor. At times, SACS members would make some of the food for NIOSA, yet their accounts of these efforts are riddled with trial and error. Jane Maverick McMillan and her husband tried to modify a Peruvian antichucho recipe for over a year. “One set we made tasted like vinegar sticks,” she recalled. By the time they found a good recipe, their efforts had “ruined all the family iceboxes.”¹⁰² While they romanticized the cooking of their

housekeepers, SACS members became more aware of their anxious, modern selves. Furthermore, their attempts to reformulate southern womanhood, to reinvent themselves as public custodians, were also dependent upon modern racial segregation.

As the SACS made themselves the new chili queens and became the hosts of one of Fiesta's biggest events, they transformed both the festival and the city. They worked to integrate San Antonio's Spanish colonial architecture and Mexicano practices and performances into the city's tourist industry. They were not as interested in lessening the social distance between themselves and the Mexicano actors in the present. Instead, like the Battle of Flowers Association, they wanted to create new public roles for themselves in San Antonio's civic culture. They celebrated the city's Spanish ancestors, rather than its Anglo pioneers, but they acted as other members of the heritage elite—taking cultural custodianship of the past to affirm their own social power in the present. As they embraced mexicanness, though, they complicated the Anglo/Mexican binary of the Texas modern. The SACS' nostalgic vision in NIOSA came at a time when Mexicanos became a more integrated part of the city. Segregation and discrimination certainly continued, but these performances showed the cracks in San Antonio's racial order.

¹ Charles Ramsdell, *San Antonio: A Historical and Pictorial Guide* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1959), 281.

² *Ibid.*, 282.

³ *San Antonio Express*, March 5, 1936.

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- ⁴ Frank Bushick, *Glamorous Days* (San Antonio: Naylor Publishing, 1934), 96-100.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.
- ⁶ José Limón, *American Encounters* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 113. Limón suggests that folk ballads about Anglo cowboy's brief romantic relationships to Mexicanas represent an ambivalence, a "partial and unconscious challenge to the ruling cultural order." The cowboy, occupying a low position in American capitalism, is the central ambivalent figure. His desire for Mexican women also represents "a fissure in the colonial enterprise." (111)
- ⁷ Barbara Babcock was the first to name the Southwest as "America's Orient." "A New Mexican 'Rebecca': Imaging Pueblo Women." *Journal of the Southwest* 32 (1990): 400-437, 406.
- ⁸ *San Antonio Express*, March 5, 1936.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 188.
- ¹¹ Molly Mullin, *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 13.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 101.
- ¹⁴ Mollin, 28.
- ¹⁵ Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press), 1996.
- ¹⁶ Deutsch, 190.
- ¹⁷ Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992).
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 10-12.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 56.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 205.
- ²⁴ Richard Garcia, *The Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio: 1929-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 40.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 216.
- ²⁷ Marquez, 17.
- ²⁸ Garcia, 4-5.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 258.
- ³⁰ Garcia, 255.
- ³¹ Garcia, 32.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 34.
- ³³ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas: 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 315.
- ³⁴ Garcia, 43.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 204.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 210.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 214.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 212-214.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 211.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 214.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 216-217.

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- ⁴⁴ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. 2nd ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1989).
- ⁴⁵ Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Precarious Preservation of a Heritage* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1996).
- ⁴⁶ Charles J. Hosmer, *The Presence of the Past* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), 288-90.
- ⁴⁷ Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 88-89.
- ⁴⁹ SACS meeting minutes, October 4, 1924, San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio.
- ⁵⁰ "How Santa Barbara Utilizes Spanish Atmosphere For Profit Told to Conservation Society," *San Antonio Express*.
- ⁵¹ "Architect Who Restored Palace Appeals to San Antonio to Keep Individuality All Its Own," *San Antonio Express*.
- ⁵² "San Antonio Offers to Tourists Many Attractions of Old World, Says Prize-Winning Essay," *San Antonio Express*.
- ⁵³ *San Antonio Express*, March 17, 1929.
- ⁵⁴ Steven Hoelscher, *Heritage on Stage: the Invention of Ethnic Place in America's Little Switzerland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 23.
- ⁵⁵ Like Steven Hoelscher, I am defining "cultural display" as "a nonordinary, framed public event or object that requires participation on the part of a substantial group in a community in either its preparation, presentation, or performance." 23.
- ⁵⁶ Garcia, 16.
- ⁵⁷ Montejano, 180.
- ⁵⁸ Robert M. Mclean, *That Mexican As He Really Is, North and South of the Rio Grande* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1928), 163.
- ⁵⁹ SACS Minutes, March 22, 1924, San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio.
- ⁶⁰ This appears on the society's earliest letterhead.
- ⁶¹ "A Message from Emily Edwards," undated typescript in San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio.
- ⁶² Fisher, 519-521. This is a very abbreviated chronology of the SACS projects. They continue to fund restoration projects to this day, but their work is beyond the scope of my analysis.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 94.
- ⁶⁴ Fisher, 96. As reported from Rena Maverick Green's daughter, Mary Vance Green.
- ⁶⁵ Emily Edwards OHT April 27, 1967. San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio. She made this remark during a tour of the Ursuline Convent.
- ⁶⁶ Emily Edwards OHT, July 24, 1971. San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio. She was interviewed by Charles J. Hosmer for his work *Preservation Comes of Age, From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press for the Preservation Press, 1981).
- ⁶⁷ Rowena Green Fenstermaker OHT, Feb. 2, 1984, 28-29. San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio.
- ⁶⁸ Excerpts from Fisher, 3-7.
- ⁶⁹ Yet this also hints that these roles are changing. The recent election of Ma Ferguson points to the changing roles of women in political offices in the state and the nation..
- ⁷⁰ Emily Edwards OHT, 2-3. San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 97.
- ⁷² Richard Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity and the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 64.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 66.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 74-77, 82.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

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- ⁷⁶ *San Antonio Express*, April 23, 1929, 15.
- ⁷⁷ *San Antonio Express*, October 11, 1936, 13.
- ⁷⁸ Flores, 91.
- ⁷⁹ *San Antonio Express*, December 25, 1929, 6.
- ⁸⁰ *San Antonio Express*, January 25, 1930, 22.
- ⁸¹ Fisher, 198.
- ⁸² SACS minutes Jan 27, 1938, San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio.
- ⁸³ Monica Michelle Penick, "A Preservationists' Dissonance: Maury Maverick and the Restoration of La Villita, 1939-1941," (Masters thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2001).
- ⁸⁴ O'Neill Ford to J.C. Kellam, Aug 30, 1939. San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio.
- ⁸⁵ Fisher, 204.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ Penick, 24.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 36-37.
- ⁸⁹ Rena Maverick Green to Lola Maverick Lloyd, September 24, 1931. In Schwimmer-Lloyd Collection, New York Public Library.
- ⁹⁰ Deloria, 120.
- ⁹¹ Here, I borrow from Richard Flores' contemporary analysis of the SACS performance, because this analysis applies to early versions of the play as well. Though some elements of *Los Pastores* have changed over the years, the differences that Flores describes between the performances at the Mission San Jose and at the Guadalupe Church are relatively unchanged. *Los Pastores: History and Performance in the Mexican Shepherd's Play of South Texas* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).
- ⁹² *Ibid.*, 33-35.
- ⁹³ Fisher, 132.
- ⁹⁴ *San Antonio Express*, December 29, 1928, 4.
- ⁹⁵ Garcia, 27.
- ⁹⁶ Fisher, 223.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 352-354.
- ⁹⁸ Esther MacMillan OHT. October 8, 1992, 12-13. San Antonio Conservation Society Library, San Antonio.
- ⁹⁹ Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 107.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 113.
- ¹⁰² Mary M. Fisher, "NIOA *antichuchos* her claim to fame," *North San Antonio Times*, April 14, 1988, 10.

Chapter 5
Juan Q. Public:
Reynolds Andricks and the Fiesta San Jacinto Association, 1950-1970

The editorial page of the *San Antonio Express News* in April 1956 featured an illustration inviting the city's public to its annual Fiesta celebration. In the drawing, a mailman delivers a letter to a man at "123 Everystreet." The man smiles as he opened his "Fiesta Fun" invitation, which is addressed to "Mr. And Mrs. Juan Q. Public."¹ This image represents a constellation of changes during the postwar period. First, the cartoon reflected an increasing emphasis on Fiesta as an inclusive festival, a party for "every man." Before World War II, Fiesta was divided into two types of celebrations. The city's "first families", those in the Texas Cavaliers and the Order of the Alamo, had a series of private parties and charity balls. The rest of San Antonio's public watched the Battle of Flowers parade and went to the Carnival. However, when the Fiesta Association invited the San Antonio Conservation Society to include their "Night in Old San Antonio" as part of Fiesta week, they signaled the beginning of many new events during the festival.

By the late 1950s, the annual celebration grew to ten days of events, including two new parades. Many of these new events celebrated the modern commercial attractions of the city, and contributed to an ever-growing tourist industry. Most of these new events were either free or charged a modest admission price. The Fiesta Association wanted to encourage more Fiesta

participation, particularly from the city's Anglo middle-class residents. In the 1940s, San Antonio experienced rapid growth, almost doubling in population and, like other Sunbelt cities, heavily participated in the developing industries of defense and tourism. As these new residents moved to the suburbs of the North Side, Fiesta organizers tried to bring them back downtown for the festival. In order to do this, these festival boosters would rely on the rhetoric of democracy and inclusion, so prevalent in other realms of postwar discourse. This rhetoric of inclusion affected Fiesta's political organization, its reigning monarchs, and its promotional materials.

Unlike other cities, though, San Antonio's democratic discourse would take on a Spanish accent. During this time, Fiesta represented a week when "John" became "Juan", and San Antonio "dressed Mexican." The rhetoric of inclusion merged with an increase in "ethnic cross dressing" by the city's Anglo public. San Antonio's Anglos could endorse notions of both sameness and difference in multiple material practices. While Fiesta celebrated civic unity, the festival also embodied "difference" in its emphasis on Mexican culture. This "everyman" discourse was targeted toward the Anglo middle class, while making only tenuous gestures toward San Antonio's Mexican American community. In addition, this new rhetoric was clearly directed toward every *man*. While so many previous Fiesta events were organized by elite women's sensibility, these new events were structured around the male gaze.

Challenging the Heritage Elite

When the ladies of the Battle of Flowers Association organized the first parade in 1891, the primary purpose was a patriotic celebration of Texas' victory at San Jacinto. The Battle of Flowers Association was a space for elite white women to domesticate public space. In a gendered division of labor, commercial promotions became a male sphere while women reserved the loftier goals of patriotism as their distinct domain.² As the festival grew beyond the parade, though, the Battle of Flowers Association lost its power to control the festival. Civic boosters, often upper- and middle-class businessmen, made the parade and its surrounding events into a larger commercial spectacle. The charter of the Fiesta San Jacinto Association, adopted in 1905, reflected a compromise between the commercial purposes of the festival with patriotism:

This Association is a non-profit, benevolent, educational organization, created and existing to honor the heroes of the Alamo and San Jacinto, to commemorate their sacrifice and victory, and to keep alive among the people, near and far, at home and abroad, the history and traditions of the great and glorious past of San Antonio and Texas. To this end, and to further the recognition of San Antonio as the historic and cultural, as well as commercial, center of the Southwest, this Association shall act as the planning and coordinating agency to assure the appropriate and credible series of parades, pageants and other events staged by this and other agencies and organizations of the community.³

Such a flexible constitution maintained a space for remembering historic battles, but the ways in which San Antonio could be promoted as “the historic and cultural, as well as commercial, center of the Southwest” was open to multiple

interpretations. And although membership was limited to “reputable citizens, firms or corporations of metropolitan San Antonio,” and had to be elected by the Board of Directors, such requirements were far less stringent than San Antonio’s more elite social clubs, where family lineage or sponsorship was necessary to enter. Within FSJA’s membership, a few member organizations had privileged positions. The Battle of Flowers Association, the Texas Cavaliers, the Order of the Alamo, the San Antonio Conservation Society, the San Antonio Woman’s Club, the San Antonio German Club, the San Antonio Pioneers Association, the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas were all excluded from membership dues and were guaranteed positions on the Board of Directors. The majority of these organizations had restrictive membership requirements.⁴ Thus, the heritage elite, who ushered in the Texas modern in the late nineteenth century, enjoyed a privileged place in Fiesta.

At its inception, the membership of the FSJA was almost identical to the constituency of its most prominent participant organizations (listed above). However, after World War II, FSJA’s membership changed significantly. Although these organizations continued to be represented on the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee became the group responsible for most FSJA decisions. Significantly, none of the participating organizations had a representative on this committee from 1948 to 1959. Instead, the San Antonio businessmen on the committee, who included the President and the Executive Secretary, were not necessarily part of the board. The Executive Secretary, in

particular, could not be a board member. As a result, the organizations on the board had no direct control over FSJA decisions during this period. The conflicts between the goals of the organizations on the Board of Directors and the goals of the Executive Committee would lead to the eventual collapse of the FSJA.

These two groups, the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, maintained fundamentally different concepts of Fiesta. The Board of Directors, represented most consistently by the Battle of Flowers Association, wanted to emphasize the commemorative intentions of the festival, and thus they relied upon a discourse of heritage, education and patriotism. As members of San Antonio's heritage elite, they conceptualized their role in terms of civic duty to the larger public. Most of these organizations used family lineage to justify their prominence in San Antonio's public culture. The Daughters of the Republic of Texas traced their ancestry to the Texas Revolution; the Texas Pioneers to nineteenth century Anglo settlers who arrived in Texas before statehood. The Battle of Flowers Association, the Texas Cavaliers and the Order of the Alamo traced their familial roots to the origins of Fiesta itself.⁵ As Fiesta "heirs," these groups justified their leading role in the festival.

The Executive Committee members, on the other hand, hailed from the city's new business class, upper- and middle-class men who did not have family ties to the Texas Republic, or to Fiesta's origins. In order to increase their role in Fiesta, they utilized a different language, one of democracy and inclusion to widen the scope of Fiesta celebrations. The Executive Committee also took

greater interest in Fiesta's potential role in promoting San Antonio's commercial growth, particularly its tourism industry. They wanted to expand the variety and number of Fiesta events to encourage participation from more diverse segments of the city's population. While the Executive Committee did not evenly represent San Antonio's diverse middle class, their calls for inclusion struck a responsive chord. Many residents, particularly from the suburban Anglo middle class, embraced their crusade to open up Fiesta's ranks.

Two Cities

For these newly settled residents, Fiesta, like the city itself, needed to incorporate this wider public. In the two decades following World War II, San Antonio would face a crisis of urban growth. During the Great Depression, New Deal growth policies and powerful southern congressional delegations had directed great amounts of public capital to the region, providing the foundation for postwar growth. The availability of cheap land and labor, coupled with the city's lack of unions, also encouraged private investment. Like other Sunbelt cities, San Antonio invested in new postwar industries to spur economic growth as well, especially defense and tourism.⁶ These two industries would become the core of the city's postwar development. Local boosters promoted San Antonio as a city of military labor and tourist leisure.

Fiesta literature of the time expressed this sense of San Antonio's dual identities. A 1953 Fiesta Invitation states: "we have always had two cities—one of peace, the other of conflict." Local boosters developed a downtown landscape

of a peaceful riverwalk for tourists, while building military bases on the outskirts of the city. San Antonio had become the location of nearly all Air Corps training during World War II. These bases attracted thousands of civilian jobs, so that the population increased during the 1940s from 253,854 to 406,442.⁷ Postwar growth encouraged another sense of dual identity. As middle-class families moved out into the modern suburbs, downtown restoration and development would emphasize San Antonio's history as a Spanish colonial outpost. The city of peace and war was also the "San Antonio of yore" and a modern city, a city of "traditional Mexican markets" with military bombers flying overhead.

However, the greater contradiction in this historic/modern city was continual racial segregation. The most marked contrast between the "two cities" of San Antonio was the difference between the growing Anglo city to the north and the "Mexican town" of the Westside. City growth exacerbated the problems with providing adequate services to both the city's older central neighborhoods and new, unincorporated suburbs. San Antonio was already "notorious for poor delivery of [public] services."⁸ Many of the new suburbs were poorly planned and also had inadequate services as well. Because Anglo residents sought to maintain racial segregation, other suburbs moved to incorporate during the 1940s, which threatened the city's tax base. Along with other sunbelt cities, San Antonio's political and economic elite sought municipal reform.⁹

In 1946, the Council-Manager Association was formed in order to challenge the machine that had dominated city politics during the 1930s. The

group accused the city's representatives of hindering progress and of inefficiency in handling service problems. Their goal was to gain greater political stability and orderly urban development to attract developers and investors.¹⁰ In 1948, Jack White, one of the leading reformers, became mayor, and in 1951 a full slate of reform candidates won the city commission from the machine. This new council quickly moved to expand city services and annexed enough territory to double the municipality's total area. However, by 1953 this council was beginning to resemble the machine it replaced, as White attempted to increase mayoral power. To counter his efforts, and to ensure a longer lasting political change, reformers created the Good Government League (GGL) in 1954, a political organization whose aim was to defend a non-partisan council-manager government while limiting the power of the mayor.¹¹

The conflicts over city government's uneven spending for neighborhood improvements also demonstrate a less-than-peaceful relationship between the city "of yore" and the rapidly developing north side. The GGL increased its membership efficiently, winning the majority in the council in 1955. Many members came from the city's wealthy neighborhoods of Olmos Park, Alamo Heights and Terrill Hills, but the League directed much of its public monies to newly annexed areas on the north side. The League passed bonds toward highway building and sewer and water infrastructure in the expanding suburbs. This growth oriented strategy presumed that these expenditures would benefit the entire city; however, the GGL paid little attention to the older neighborhoods in

the west, east and south sides of the city, which were also the ones in greatest need of basic improvements.¹²

In the process of consolidating power into one “reform” league, they eliminated smaller organizations that had served low-income communities through jobs, favors, and public projects.¹³ Because the majority of San Antonio’s Mexican American and African American populations lived in these older areas, the GGL benefited the city’s Anglo population at the expense of other constituencies. Although Anglo dominance was already firmly entrenched in the city’s political and economic structures, the Mexican American and African American communities’ neighborhoods had actually fared better under San Antonio’s earlier machine. Through a system of patronage, a variety of neighborhood improvements were guaranteed. Thus, Mexican Americans in the city were consistently against the GGL, and displayed this antipathy in their support of anti-GGL candidates and in low percentages of voter registration and turnout rates.¹⁴ In fact, Mexican Americans were more likely to support Anglo independent reformers than Mexican American GGL candidates. Frequently, the GGL would attempt to lure west side voters by promising drainage projects and other service improvements. These projects were approved, but the council and city administration would never build them.

Although the city’s growth was uneven, important national and regional factors also led to the development of more empowered Mexican American community. Along with the growing middle-class organizations that developed in

the late 1920s and 1930s, returning World War II veterans increased their civic activity. They protested against segregation, launched voting registration campaigns, and fought for educational reform. These returning veterans, recipients of the GI Bill and college degrees, expanded the base for the middle and skilled working classes throughout South Texas. Such developments also led to the growth of a Mexicano consumer market. In order to accommodate this new market, Anglo businesses began to promote an atmosphere of tolerance and cooperation. In 1954, San Antonio passed a desegregation ordinance for city facilities. While these middle class organizations were unable to acquire much more than symbolic rewards, especially for working class Mexicanos, the political activity of this community and Anglo accommodations of the period signaled an important change in the city's interethnic relations.¹⁵

The GGL also attempted to incorporate Mexican American and African American candidates on their slates. Among other candidates they selected over their history, seventy-eight percent of them were Anglo. However, in 1955, they selected one Mexican American candidate, and subsequently, selected two Mexican Americans each election. From 1964 on, they also endorsed one African American. With such token membership, the GGL hoped to discourage much protest. Other organizations attempted to challenge the League's candidates, but few met with any success.

The GGL maintained its power by at-large elections.¹⁶ They were also consistently able to select members of the Mexican American middle class in an

initial step to incorporate them into city government.¹⁷ Mexican American participation in GGL politics did provide a consistent source of conservative leadership within the Mexican American community. As Rodolfo Rosales points out, this approach was based upon the idea that direct confrontation would undermine political inclusion; these conservative leaders used these new “inside” positions to gain entry into municipal decision-making and to join forces with the business communities’ reform agenda.¹⁸ Alfred Vasquez, a stockbroker from El Paso, was the most visible leader of this conservative middle class. He and others formed the Committee for Community Progress, also known as the “Westside GGL,” an informal organization dedicated to this goal of political inclusion.¹⁹

Not all Mexican American middle class leaders followed this political agenda; in fact, liberal middle class leaders actively organized in Democratic state politics, though they were shut out of municipal government. However, it is important to note that for those who chose the conservative route into the GGL, a price would be paid. In order to accommodate the growth interests of the GGL reformers (which they believed would eventually extend to Mexicano barrios as well), they eschewed their role as spokespersons for the Mexicano community within the city. For municipal government of the time, political inclusion also meant the erasure of ethnic or class based partisanship. In addition, other state and national policies threatened the political gains Mexican Americans had made during the previous decade. The forced repatriations which broke up many families during initiatives like Operation Wetback in 1954, in which citizens and

non-citizens were often equally at risk of deportation, were continual reminders that although Mexican Americans had American citizenship, they were often the recipients of discrimination.²⁰

Heritage and Democracy

Like the GGL, Fiesta's postwar leaders would emphasize a festival dedicated to political inclusion, rather than elite patronage. Also like municipal politics, this shift would come after a long battle for reform. The first public discussion of FSJA's internal conflicts came in the *San Antonio Express*, in a letter written by columnist Paul Thompson March 14, 1959. He commented that "the battle for control of the FSJA...could wreck Fiesta as presently organized."²¹ He claimed that Reynolds Andricks, FSJA Executive Secretary, caused most of the conflict. In this sense, Thompson was correct. Andricks was the most active representative of the postwar FSJA membership, and he created most of the recent changes to the festival. In 1948, Andricks, a civil engineer, was elected to the board of the FSJA. Between 1950 and 1960, he served as President or as Executive Secretary of the Association. His name appears on almost all Association letters and publicity materials. Andricks' defenses for expanding Fiesta were an interesting mix of boosterism and populism, and his main goal was to open up the ranks of Fiesta organizations to the Anglo middle class. He was also interested in making Fiesta a more nationally known event, thus attracting greater tourism to the area.²² He complained that up to this point, Fiesta was more like a private party for the city's social clubs than a citywide celebration.²³ In

order to encourage greater participation from other sectors of the city, he spearheaded the creation of several free and/or public events.

Part of the reason for Andrick's success was his tight control over the association. As Executive Secretary, he controlled all of the books and financial records. Under his leadership, the Executive Committee began to make most of the decisions about how the Association's funds were allocated to the various groups who sponsored Fiesta events. However, this committee did not, at the time, include any representatives from the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Order of the Alamo, or the Texas Cavaliers—a few of the organizations responsible for many of Fiesta's older events. Thompson's column voiced the protest of these groups against Andrick's "one man rule."²⁴ Under his leadership, these organizations stated that their own events, including the Battle of Flowers parade, the Queen's Coronation, King Antonio and the River Parade had been overshadowed by the new Fiesta Flambeau.

Over the past ten years the Association's promotional materials had devoted greater attention to the FSJA's new parade, the Fiesta Flambeau, which Andrick founded in 1948. The "Flambeau" parade was named for the many electric lights that decorated its floats. This new parade attracted greater crowds than the Battle of Flowers, as many enjoyed the cooler temperatures of a night parade. The FSJA had also channeled more money to the Flambeau, and to "goodwill trips" to other national parades, while failing to also increase spending for other Fiesta events.

On top of all this, the Association was at a deficit. In a meeting in May 1958, the FSJA was \$16,000 in debt. State Representative Raymond Russell called for an independent audit, but Andricks blocked his efforts. The protesting groups also discovered that the Association was running most of the festival on advance payments made by the Fiesta Carnival, which was controlled by a private contractor. Any changes in carnival ownership, or refusals by city councilmen to issue permits for public land use, would threaten the entire festival. Thompson also claimed that Parker Southern, the president of the FSJA, and Prospero Zottarelli, another member of the committee, had decided to run for city council this year. These decisions, the organizational leadership claimed, “plunged the association into politics.”²⁵ They believed that the Fiesta Association, as a non-profit civic association, should not have its representatives participate in city government. Ironically, many members of the FSJA had held positions in the city. The FSJA’s first President, Frank Bushick, later became City Commissioner. Frequently, participation in the FSJA provided an opportunity for visibility that encouraged many members to seek public office.

However, Andricks was also interested in maintaining the fiction of Fiesta’s non-political purposes. Never one to keep silent in these matters, Andricks sent a letter of response to FSJA members two weeks after Thompson’s column was published. Andricks emphasized the non-political purposes of the Association, in that it “exists solely to coordinate and stage events of the Fiesta.” He also refuted Thompson’s claim that his position in the association was a

dictatorship.²⁶ However, much of Andricks' response did more to encourage his opponents. He attempted to show that each of the objecting organizations had positions on the board, and that their approval was necessary for all spending decisions. At the same time, he revealed that the Executive Committee, which was responsible for all actions between the board meetings, did not have representatives from these groups. He also gave inadequate explanations for the Association's deficit spending (attributing most of it to "recession" and "rain"), and failed to give full access to the financial records.

More importantly, the language of his rebuttal reveals that the source for much of these conflicts had much more to do with "politics" than either side would recognize. While defending the FSJA's practices, Andricks argued that the institution of new events during the last decade had

increased the scope of the celebration in order to include people from all walks of life who previously had had no part in Fiesta. These people were not members of certain social groups and had been virtually left out.²⁷

And, in case this very thinly veiled attack on the protesting organizations was not already clear, Andricks included that when the Executive Committee attempted to address the aforementioned conflicts, and sought advice from the board, "it did not receive any recommendations from the participating organizations, including the strictly social groups to which the complaining parties belonged." Andricks also claimed that those who were criticizing his policies were simply jealous, and "do not understand the purposes and proper operation of a festival and the part it plays in directing nationwide attention to the

city.”²⁸ A fundamentally different conception of Fiesta was embedded in Andricks’ remarks, a distinct philosophy that worked well with the growth-oriented political climate of the city.

Don’t Reign on My Parade

As the FSJA fought this internal battle, new practices that critiqued the traditional Fiesta royalty emerged as well. The first overt parody of the Queen’s elaborate Coronation began within NIOSA, the “Corniation.” The Coronation was (and is) a space for demonstrating the superiority of the city’s oldest and wealthiest families.²⁹ In the context of Fiesta’s new “democratic” ethos, this public spectacle was quickly became the target of critique. Beginning in 1951, NIOSA sponsored a light-hearted spoof of the event, the “Corniation,” to benefit San Antonio’s Little Theatre. This new parody featured the “Court of the Cracked Salad Bowl” with “King Anchovy” presiding over the “Duchesses of Scallions, Radishes, and Parsley.”³⁰ However, even as the Corniation turned to local political satire at the end of the 1950s, very little direct critique was aimed at the Coronation participants themselves. In the mid-1960s, the SACS discontinued their sponsorship of the event, perhaps due to its increasing political satire.³¹ The Corniation, with its grotesque displays of breasts and buttocks and cheap fabrics, was a direct inversion of the Coronation, much like the burlesque parades of the early twentieth century. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White explain, “grotesque realism images the human body as multiple, bulging, over or undersized, protuberant and incomplete. The openings and orifices of this carnival body are

emphasized, not its closure and finish.³² Bakhtin's distinctions between the classical and the grotesque body offer a dialogic relationship between the "high culture" of the completed, individuated body and the mobile, disproportionate body of the "low culture" of the carnival. However, for its sponsors, these carnivalesque inversions were not wholly embraced in its early years.

The more successful role of this period was the creation of "Miss Fiesta." As the new reigning monarch of Andricks' Fiesta Flambeau, Miss Fiesta became the symbol for Fiesta's new democratic ethos. Miss Fiesta expresses another form of Bakhtinian parody, hybridization. While inversion reverses hierarchical relationships among different categories, it does not change the categories themselves. Hybridization is a more complex process of the grotesque, because it offers "new combinations and strange instabilities."³³ By intermingling high and low culture, hybridity offers the possibility of shifting the terms themselves. Miss Fiesta does not parody the Coronation queen; she offers a more subtle critique. By imitating the classical ideals of the queen's court, she seeks to become part of the high culture of Fiesta's royal ranks. At the same time, her role transgresses discourses of class and racial distinctions. Although seeking to legitimate their "high" positions in official Fiesta events, the incorporation of these new roles also shifted the terms of inclusion and exclusion in Fiesta representations.

Both the Queens of the Order of the Alamo and these new "Fiesta beauties" provided idealized feminine forms to be consumed by the male observer. Yet Miss Fiesta not only presented an inviting image to consume, her

role was also created an alternative to the Queen's court. Miss Fiesta imitated the more modern "beauty pageant" form with values and symbols specific to the middle class, and challenged the aristocratic and eurocentric classical bodies of the Queen and her court. Robert Lavenda describes similar small town queen pageants in Minnesota as hybrids between the debutante ball and the beauty pageant. Lavenda argues that these towns, with an egalitarian ideology, reject the elitism of the debutante form.³⁴ Instead, they use the popular democratic form of the beauty pageant, because it purportedly values talent and community service as well as physical beauty. The beauty pageant is "fundamentally a bourgeois play form: the winners get material goods in the form of money, trips, cars, scholarships, modeling contracts, and so on."³⁵ However, festival organizers seek a community representative whose election is based on achievement, not beauty. Thus, physical attractiveness is not as important as embodying the character of the middle class. As Lavenda writes:

[The pageant] must reward what have become appropriate 'democratic' achievements as it celebrates upwardly-mobile young women, offering to teach them fully in the life of the class fragment they seek to join.³⁶

Thus, these small town pageants are a hybrid of the debut and the beauty pageant. Like the Order of the Alamo queens, Miss Fiesta pageant members represented a larger civic body. However, the debutantes reproduced elite status in the Coronation, while the Miss Fiesta pageant espoused middle-class community ideals of democratic achievement through the form of the beauty pageant.

The role of “Miss Fiesta” resulted from a similar interest among San Antonio’s middle class. While Carrington wanted to bring a greater sense of gentility to Fiesta’s events with his Queen’s Coronation, Reynolds Andricks wanted a more democratic form with Miss Fiesta. The Coronation queens were always taken from the names of the San Antonio Country Club, and many families had long uninterrupted dynasties. Because membership in these clubs was so limited, Andricks decided to create a rival role in 1950. Instead of having the aristocratic title of queen, though, this new representative would simply be named “Miss Fiesta.” Andricks also emphasized that Miss Fiesta would also be “democratically elected.” Each subsequent year, the Association sponsored a contest in which candidates were nominated from the city’s four colleges. The finalists would be selected in a public vote in the Municipal Auditorium.

In one of the main promotional photos of 1957’s Fiesta, “Miss Fiesta” sits on top of her float, the Alamo in the background. During the 1950s, the Fiesta Association made her not only the reigning monarch of the Flambeau parade, but of Fiesta entirely, diminishing the roles of the Queen of the Order of the Alamo and King Antonio. Miss Fiesta reached her position through a contest in which she demonstrated her particular oratorical skills and past accomplishments. Her initiation was a representation of individual achievement, rather than a presentation of family lineage. Much of the structure of the competition was modeled on the Miss America Pageant. However, promotions of Miss Fiesta did not emphasize physical attractiveness. Special attention was focused on the

historical essay that each Miss Fiesta finalist must write and present as part of the contest. As the position continued, and after the Flambeau parade was given less attention by the new Fiesta Commission, Miss Fiesta has also become a representative of the festival itself.

The differences between the Queen and Miss Fiesta are also demonstrated on the body. Instead of wearing gowns and long trains reminiscent of the English monarchy, where the Queen literally carried her family lineage on her back, Miss Fiesta wore a much simpler formal dress. Her outfit has not changed significantly, usually reflecting contemporary prom dresses. The outfits have no trains, and are not connected any particular theme. The wearer selects her own wardrobe as well. Thus, the difference in costume not only made the position more economically feasible for most San Antonians, the dress also communicated a distinctly middle class sensibility. Miss Fiesta chose her own dress, rather than fitting into a previously-designed Coronation gown and train. Miss Fiesta's humbler attire made her appearance in the Flambeau parade less dazzling, but less removed as well. While Miss Fiesta's appearance was more individuated, cut off from family lineage, she also diminished the boundaries between herself and the audience. She was placed on a pedestal, riding atop an elevated flat, and yet she also represented the middle-class myth of a classless society. While Miss Fiesta embodied many of the familiar classical values of privatization and elevation, she also demonstrated an emphasis on mobility and process. While set apart from the crowd, Miss Fiesta simultaneously communicated that her role was accessible to all.

This message was not only written on the body, but was reiterated in the experiences of those riding the floats. For the first time, middle-class San Antonio residents had new opportunities for attention during Fiesta. Bettsie Guerra Heis, Miss Fiesta of 1954, expressed this sentiment well:

I was from the East Side of San Antonio and that was a big deal, and I was so proud. My dad had a service station on the East side. I remember one day riding by with a police escort in a convertible. And daddy was standing out in front of the station and he had a handkerchief in his hand and he was waving it. He was so proud. I'll never forget it.³⁷

For Heis, a Mexican American from a less affluent part of the city, her participation in Fiesta was a unique opportunity for public visibility. Unlike the Queen, she also had a more expansive public role. While the Queen's duties were largely limited to appearing at private parties and decorating parade floats, Miss Fiesta often traveled to other cities to promote the parade and participate in the FSJA's publicity campaigns. In many of the early years, Miss Fiesta would attend the Tournament of Roses parade on her own float. Because her title was named before Fiesta week, she also had pre-festival publicity. The Queen, nominated in secret and not revealed to the public until her Coronation, had fewer opportunities to talk to the press. While the Coronation's rituals fall into the private/domestic sphere of young women as units of familial reproduction, Miss Fiesta transgressed some of the limits of this domain.

As multiple Fiesta queens passed spectators in the Battle of Flowers Parade, one of the most frequent shouts was for them to "show us your shoes." They may then lift their skirts to reveal tennis shoes or fuzzy slippers. This

demonstration is certainly mild compared to the women who respond to different catcalls by taking off their tops during Mardi Gras. However, perhaps the growing popularity of such foot-baring practices was a comment on the unstable boundaries between classical and grotesque displays. The elevated, spiritual bodies of the Queen's courts were asked to reveal their feet of clay. Miss Fiesta presented a lasting critique of San Antonio's Coronation. She challenged the legitimacy of a single queen to reign over Fiesta.

Losing the Battle

For Andricks, Miss Fiesta was the ultimate symbol of a "democratic" Fiesta. The heritage elite, though, would no longer tolerate his continuing monopoly of the festival. Although Andricks and the FSJA President, Parker Southern, made several attempts to reconcile the rift, including organizing a "planning committee" to discuss the problems, the protesting organizations decided to withdraw from the FSJA. On April 28th, 1959, the leaders of the Battle of Flowers Association, Texas Cavaliers, Order of the Alamo, German Club and Junior Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Fiesta San Jacinto Association to announce their resignations. Henceforth, they decided that they would continue to stage their own Fiesta events independently. Shortly after their letter to the FSJA, the groups also sent a letter to the press, explaining their reasons. In a draft of this public announcement, the groups responded to Andricks' March letter. Many of their comments simply restated previous concerns about finances and unequal treatment for their own events, yet the main sore point seemed to be Andricks'

dismissal of the “social clubs.” In the group’s letter, Mrs. William H. Spice Jr., President of the Battle of Flowers Association, refuted Andricks’ claims:

A look to the history of these organizations fails to document that they came into being to promote social aspirations. The Battle of Flowers started Fiesta in 1891 by staging a parade to commemorate patriotic ideals. The Fiesta Association itself came into being about 1906 because the business men of the city were asked by the Chamber of Commerce to form an organization that could give these ladies some help...To add to the color and festive mood deemed proper in memorializing the winning of our freedom at the San Jacinto Battlefield, the Cavaliers were asked to organize and take over the furnishing of a king...and the Order of the Alamo to add to the celebrations a beautiful Coronation spectacle and the furnishing of a Queen, all for the purpose of emphasizing the patriotic aspects of the San Jacinto victory.³⁸

This response redefines Andricks’ attack on “the social clubs.” These organizations were not created to promote social aspirations, the letter claims, but to promote patriotic ideals. Thus, such lofty goals serve to legitimize the organizations. However, Andricks was not criticizing these groups’ purpose so much as their membership policies. What the organizations’ response fails to address are issues of access. Becoming a Texas Cavalier or a member of the Battle of Flowers Association was not an easy task. In both these cases, potential new members have to be recommended and sponsored by an existing member, as well as voted in by the organization as a whole. In addition, the number of members was severely limited. Thus, becoming a member involves longstanding ties to San Antonio’s social elite. By shifting the “social club” debate to issues of purpose, these social clubs could more effectively deal with Andricks’ claims.

The letter also emphasizes organizational histories to remind the public of where Fiesta had its origins. The Fiesta Association itself is defined as coming into existence in order to “help the ladies.” Thus, the Association originally served to assist the Battle of Flowers Association, not direct them. Furthermore, the Battle of Flowers was the original event of Fiesta. Mrs. Spice was putting Andricks in his place, and asserting her organization’s role as the primary caretaker for the festival. However, she ignored the reality that several men’s organizations had already diminished the Battle of Flowers Association’s prominence. She portrayed the Texas Cavaliers and the Order of the Alamo as those men who answered the women’s call to help with the festival, without acknowledging that they now controlled most of the pageantry for the festival.

Yet Mrs. Spice’s assertions were lost to Andricks. He was not concerned with respecting elite women’s volunteerism. Reynolds Andricks’ attacks were directed at the ghost of John Carrington. When Carrington formed the Texas Cavaliers in 1927, one of his motivations was to provide “better management” of Fiesta itself.³⁹ Carrington felt that the elite, and particularly a male elite, should establish control over Fiesta. Carrington believed that the festival was an extension of the country club roster’s role as the guardians of tradition. Andricks, on the other hand, was searching for ways to incorporate middle class Anglos into San Antonio’s civic activities. A coalition of those organizations who followed Carrington’s philosophy led the revolution of 1959. However, Andricks was not

alone in his criticism of the social clubs; several other San Antonians echoed his comments.

While Paul Thompson supported the elite protesters, San Antonio's other citywide paper, the *San Antonio Light*, defended Andricks. *Light* columnist "Don Politico" provided a background to the conflict that was very similar to Andricks' claims. When Fiesta began, the columnist wrote, San Antonio was a small town that did not need a big festival, yet after World War II the city had grown "from a one-horse town to one of the great metropolitan areas of the country." Fiesta, however had not matched the city's development. "The Fiesta wasn't big enough for the town- not to mention visitors- and it was based on too narrow a segment of the city's growing population." As the FSJA, under the leadership of Andricks, made Fiesta big enough to accommodate the new city, "the old social organizations were left behind, but didn't realize it."⁴⁰ By incorporating many new events that were mostly free and open to the public, Don Politico argues, Fiesta had broadened the festival to include all. New events such as the Flambeau parade have become equal to, if not more popular than, the older ones. The columnist largely dismissed the financial disputes, and claimed that "the real rub" was the diminished power of the social organizations.

The battle continued in the press long after the Association's membership divided. On May 4, 1959, Mrs. Spice wrote two more letters to the city's papers. One letter was to Paul Thompson and the *San Antonio Express* newspaper, praising his "straightforward and factual reporting" of the participating

organizations' reasons for withdrawing from the FSJA. Her second letter was to Col. Dwight Allison of the *San Antonio Light*, as a response to the Don Politico column. She begins her letter with a refusal to be quoted by the *Light* in the future, stating that her words have been misrepresented. Her most important refutation, however, was once again the accusation that the Battle of Flowers Association is "purely a social group." In fact, she ends her letter with a manifesto of the BFA's mission, which is worth quoting at length:

I strongly refute the suggestion that the work we do to commemorate the ideals of the men who won our freedom at the Alamo is a decadent work... We hold to the undisputable fact that these events are sponsored as a part of our responsibility to the youth of the community and to help them to live up to the great heritage our past has given them. While most of the world struggles against oppression, regimentation and tyranny, we maintain that the spirit of the Alamo is one which we wish to commemorate as an example to our youth, this country's most valuable asset. We believe that in these days when a questionable set of values is being made attractive to them on all sides, such as the dope peddlers around the corner, the rock-and-roll type places of entertainment, the glorification of the mobster and gang rule, the philosophy of the beatnik, we believe it necessary to honor some plain old-fashioned virtues such as bravery, courage, honor, self-sacrifice, the courage of one's convictions and the faith in the right... The parade is not entirely chicken wire and crepe paper, but in the development and building of the floats, long hours were spent in historical research and they are executed by groups learning to work and live thru [sic] cooperation with each other, and sharing in the pride of group accomplishment. The "importance of the traditional Fiesta events" HAS NOT (her emphasis) 'declined' and will never decline regardless of the size of this city... We are acting as a small beacon shining in a confused world.⁴¹

Mrs. Spice's depiction of contemporary San Antonio does not quite match what Don Politico called one of the greatest metropolitan areas of the country. Instead, the modern city is filled with corrupting influences. Of course, Spice's

combination of cultural conservatism and cold war anti-communism saturates the rhetoric of many discourses of the period. Yet, her battle with urban growth and consumerism is particularly revealing. For San Antonio's elite women, commemorating Alamo heroes was a refuge and a source of power. The women who spent all year building crepe paper floats fostered and maintained an exclusive community, which was expressed through the language of heritage. These women attempted to secure a place for themselves in the future by an emphasis on education. Teaching the youth offered a role for the "social clubs" of the present. San Antonio's elite maintained a private culture within the public culture of Fiesta. Through a series of private balls and fundraisers, this group set itself apart from the wider city public. They justified their social position through their "service" to the larger community.⁴²

Eventually, Spice and her heritage-based coalition reached a partial victory. Andricks could not successfully run Fiesta without these organizations' participation. A new organization formed, called the Fiesta San Antonio Commission (FSAC). Like the previous organization, this new commission relied on a board of many "participating member organizations (PMOs)." The new commission did not have an Executive Committee, and so each PMO had a stronger voice in Fiesta changes. The FSAC had a president, but this role was not as powerful as the Executive Secretary. The city's heritage elite would regain its prominence in Fiesta. However, this new commission also had many new PMOs, including Andricks' San Jacinto Association. Many of these new PMOs

represented a wide variety of middle-class civic organizations. These previously warring factions found a compromise where the heritage groups could retain their prominence, and yet would also share their power. This new arrangement allowed each group to maintain its own event, but elite women had the most to lose in this compromise. The Battle of Flowers Association, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and the San Antonio Conservation would maintain their custodianship of particular events, but Fiesta would definitively move outside of their domesticated public domain.

Andricks lost his personal battle for control of Fiesta, but subsequent Fiesta organizers would have to accommodate to the sentiments he represented. Fiesta would now be organized under the egalitarian rhetoric of inclusion. While the newly formed Fiesta San Antonio Commission represented a return of the old guard, this reinstatement included a rhetorical distancing from the commemoration of the Texan independence battle. The prevailing language of inclusion had to simultaneously become a language of forgetting.

The Fiesta City: Forgetting the Alamo

In order to understand this shift, one must understand the centrality of Alamo memory for San Antonio's heritage elite. As the self-appointed guardians of tradition, the Battle of Flowers, the DRT, the Order of the Alamo and the Texas Cavaliers all used the Alamo as their symbolic "inheritance." As a commemoration of Texan Independence, Fiesta celebrated these organizations' social and political prominence. This elite would also merge the Texan's cause

with wars in the twentieth century. In 1918, when the Fiesta Association decided to suspend the festival during World War I, the DRT sponsored a pilgrimage to Alamo plaza. Various patriotic and military organizations would lay wreaths in front of the Alamo chapel and the names of the 189 Texans who died in the battle would be read. The ceremony became an annual Fiesta event, further tying commemoration of the Alamo battle with U.S. patriotism. Each year, Fiesta's invitations would feature a description of the pilgrimage by Frank Davis.

This focus on commemoration was not so important to those who could not utilize these ancestral ties. For those who were not part of the heritage elite, the Alamo was not central to constructing their legitimacy in the city. However, these San Antonians did not simply forget the Alamo. Instead, they renegotiated its meaning within a growing consumer economy. The process of Alamo refashioning came at a time when the Alamo was a widely known symbol of patriotism, and the principal tourist site in the city. This would have profound consequences for the custodians of the Alamo, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. The heritage minded Daughters of the Republic of Texas wanted to maintain their exclusive role in Alamo custodianship. For them, the Alamo was a shrine of Texas nationalism, while other members of the city reformulated the Alamo as a space to celebrate a larger diverse public.

By 1958, The Fiesta San Jacinto Association's official festival invitation included the familiar Alamo inscription, stating "at this shrine the people of Texas promise 'We Shall Not Forget.'" And yet, by this time, many San Antonians did

not focus on the Alamo remembrance, at least during Fiesta. In the decades after World War II, Fiesta organizers increasingly promoted the festival as a celebration of the city's history and development, not as a commemoration of Texas Independence.

The diminishing role of the Alamo corresponded to a new negotiation of its place in the city's economy. After World War II, additions to the Alamo grounds and the creation of the Riverwalk began to re-structure the city's downtown environment. For city boosters, the Alamo was a resource to market commodities for a tourist consumption.⁴³ The DRT maintained official custodianship, but the public image of the Alamo was controlled by these business interests. The DRT's vision was inconsistent with Anglo consumer culture, which stressed the "canonization of commodities, not shrines, as the primary ingredient of cultural identity."⁴⁴ Yet the DRT had more to lose than whether coonskin caps would be sold on Alamo grounds. Their custodianship of the center of San Antonio's public culture depended upon their definition of the Alamo as a space apart from the commercial activity of the city. Like the Battle of Flowers Association, the DRT had refashioned the Alamo into a domesticated public space. As they lost the ability to define this space to the public, they also lost much of their distinctive role in the city's public culture. The DRT would maintain its control over the Alamo grounds, but they did not control the place it would occupy in the tourist economy.

As Fiesta grew, solemn commemoration was less important than festive leisure. In 1948, Davis' description of the Alamo pilgrimage disappears from the invitations. While subsequent invitations would continue to include information on the pilgrimage, these later narratives were simplified and reduced. To replace them, more stories about Fiesta as a whole emerged. These new stories emphasized a peaceful landscape. In 1949, the first cohesive history of Fiesta supplanted the pilgrimage:

The Fiesta has grown up as naturally as any flower that grows out of the rich earth. In the atmosphere of old San Antonio, with its soft, semi-tropical air, its dramatic history, its blend of mellow traditions from Spain and Mexico with many other, different ways of life, a Fiesta of some kind was as inevitable as the blossoming of the huisache or the bluebonnet.⁴⁵

In this description, Fiesta emerges out of nature and the "mellow traditions" of Spain and Mexico. Rather than a commemoration of the historic event, Fiesta's creation seems "inevitable," the product of the mixing of cultures. In fact, the only mention of "history" in this passage is to say that it is "dramatic." Later in the narrative, the anonymous author writes, "Wherever you go in the city during Fiesta week, there is something colorful to see, and there is music and laughter in the air." Instead of honoring a battle site, Fiesta grew out of this "local color." Alamo remembrance was not central to the vision. A short time is set aside for Alamo memory, but this was increasingly circumscribed:

Because Texas will be recalling once more a proud page from the Lone Star state's most patriotic past, the week-long fete will be fraught with overtones of the utmost solemnity, although for the most part, gaiety will be unrestrained.⁴⁶

During the Alamo pilgrimage, the DRT would maintain the solemn tones of commemoration, while civic boosters emphasized a “festive” atmosphere.

During this time, Fiesta was presented as feminine and Mexican—closer to nature than to civilization.⁴⁷ To develop an atmosphere of peaceful leisure, Fiesta boosters utilized popular stereotypes of both women and people of color as passive and self-indulgent. A 1958 newspaper cartoon promoting Fiesta depicts NIOSA (the Night in Old San Antonio festival) as a woman in Mexican costume. She cries “Afuera!” as she kicks a man out of the door of the festival’s gate, which is surrounded by signs for “tamales, fun, street dancing and cascarones.” The ousted man represents the current economic and political troubles. He has “gloom, recession, taxes and cold war” written on his jacket.⁴⁸ The NIOSA representative crying “Afuera!” is a woman, perhaps a Mexicana. This brings up a familiar conflation of race and gender, where Mexicanos are depicted, as women are, in passive terms. NIOSA is depicted as a space where one can escape the modern world, a place for laziness, indulgence and consumption. Miguel de Oliver refers to this process as “therapeutic primitivism,” that constructs Otherness as an antidote to modern life. The depiction of NIOSA was also the dominating discourse of the city’s tourism, which is “fundamentally reliant on a gender and race hierarchy that constructs ‘otherness’ as being self-indulgent, emotional and idle—in short, ‘Latino’ and female.”⁴⁹ This also explains how the Alamo became less central to Fiesta. Perceived as the site of masculine heroism,

and a battle marking the Anglicization of Texas, it was a sharp contrast to the romanticized, mexicanized tourist landscape celebrated during Fiesta.

While De Oliver's analysis clearly articulates this gendered and racialized hierarchical vision, he does not account for the meanings that San Antonian's performed when they went to Fiesta. Embedded in these "festive" tones is a new hybrid identity for the city's Anglos. For middle-class Anglos in particular, celebrating Fiesta was also a way to establish their own place in San Antonio's public culture. Unable to demonstrate family lineage to Alamo heroes, many Anglos found a powerful performative language for expressing this a new sense of civic equality and unity through the process of "playing Mexican."

Embodying Difference

As the discourse of inclusion dominated Fiesta invitations and newspaper debates, more and more images of "Mexicanness" appeared in the promotional materials. Highlighting the city's "mexicanness" during Fiesta was not new. Carnival participants of the early-twentieth century reaffirmed racial boundaries when they played Mexican. When the women of the Conservation Society wore Mexican dresses in a form of mimetic play in the 1920s and 1930s, they searched for a new identity for themselves within the parameters of southern womanhood. This ethnic cross-dressing had a different meaning for San Antonio's postwar Anglo public. When the "Mr. And Mrs. Juan Q. Public" were invited to attend Fiesta in the 1950s and 1960s, they found a way to perform a doubled, hybrid civic identity.

In 1946 the Fiesta San Jacinto Association began a drive to encourage city residents to wear costumes during Fiesta week. In honor of the centennial anniversary of Texas' annexation, the FSJA wanted celebrants to wear clothes that were typical of 100 years ago, either "frontier, colonial or Mexican costumes."⁵⁰ In addition to a huge publicity campaign, FSJA members suggested encouraging girls' sewing classes in public schools to make costumes and meeting with major retail stores to have their employees in costume.⁵¹ According to the papers, the campaign was a success. City councilmen, county commissioners, and Chamber of Commerce members were photographed in costume. The FSJA promoted the idea as a way that everyone could participate in Fiesta. Wearing costumes will also "achieve the objective of making San Antonio known as the most colorful city in Texas" by reminding visitors of San Antonio's "romantic" past as a cattle-raising center and frontier city.⁵²

This new "democratic" form of dress was also meant to be easily accessible to the city's populace as a whole. Press statements frequently mentioned that any small gesture would be sufficient for a costume—a belt, vest, or hat would do. The most popular costumes divided into two categories—the "Western" and the "Mexican." Racial divisions were encoded in this division. The "Western" was clearly the Anglo cowboy, including boots, a fringed vest, jeans and a cowboy hat. As the "Mexican" men would wear a zarape over their shoulders, plain white cotton shirts and pants, sandals and a sombrero. Women would wear brightly colored full skirts and off the shoulder "peasant blouses."

Some public figures made clear distinctions between the two. City Commissioner R.W. Stappenbeck claimed he would not wear a zarape because he represented “Texas, not Mexico. I will wear an old cowboy outfit like my forefathers who pioneered here.”⁵³ Stappenbeck repeated a common idea of the Anglo cowboy, but of course this outfit is itself derivative of the Mexican *vaquero* tradition.

Though he, like many others, made clear divisions between the Anglo and the Mexican dress, these categories were more entangled than he suggested. Both costume styles were removed from modern life. The gringo cowboys and Mexican “peasants” were romanticized images of a premodern west, unlike the lives of contemporary Anglos and Mexican Americans. In addition, the cowboy represented an “ethnicized” version of rural, working class whiteness.⁵⁴

During this time a range of new ideas suggested that social boundary crossing was a question of behavior—Carey McWilliams identified closely with California Latinos, and Norman Mailer “sang the black virtues of the hip” in the “white Negro”. In a time of the “lonely crowd,” of shallow conformism, some San Antonio Anglos found escape into a time and a race apart.⁵⁵ Unlike the tourists who visited New Mexico to find redemption in the authentic vision of Otherness, or the white-middle-class hobbyists who sought this same authenticity in replicating Native American ritual, Anglos during Fiesta performed sameness while they performed difference. These cross-dressed gringos were hybrid creatures, incorporating a remote nineteenth-century cattle ranching town into a modern industrializing city. Fiesta’s Anglo middle class boosters were interested

in hybridity. Their metaphorical cross-dressing allowed them a liminal space. Anglo Mexicans were performing a double identity; they imagined themselves as both Anglo citizens of a growing modern city and part of an ethnically diverse public with a long history.

Thus, Mexican play became the performative metaphor for this new democratic language of inclusion. Yet Anglos were more ambivalent about the place of Mexican Americans themselves in the city's public life. City boosters felt that one of the keys to invigorating their modern city lie in selling its diverse past, and many recognized "Mexicanness" as part of the city's present and future. However, as they continued to segregate public facilities and ignored the development of the city's west and east sides, they also kept distinct ethnoracial boundaries. Negotiating the social relationships between Anglos and people of color was a more contradictory process. As Phil Deloria writes:

Triggered in part by a war in which people of color had caught a glimpse of freedom and opportunity, Americans of all classes and colors struggled to address the contradictions between the nation's rhetoric of social equality and its history of race-based oppression.⁵⁶

Like other Americans, San Antonians made efforts to reconcile the difference between the city's inclusive rhetoric and the city's history of racial segregation. For San Antonio's Anglos, Mexicans were on a contradictory axis, "so close as to be part of a slowly forming multicultural society; so distant as to be racially distinct."⁵⁷ In order to address their contradictory feelings, San Antonians tried to "forget history" during Fiesta. Yet they also re-evaluated this history.⁵⁸ While

negotiating new relationships among an ethnically diverse population, Fiesta promoters turned, once again, to the Alamo. In their narratives of the 1836 battle, Fiesta promoters re-evaluated the meaning of the Alamo for a postwar public.

Re-membering the Alamo

One of the first hints at this new form of reconciliation was the name change from “Fiesta San Jacinto” to “Fiesta San Antonio.” As the details of the organizational upheaval have been pushed from newspaper headlines into the folders of the Fiesta archives, what is most cited is this name change. Fiesta organizers did not record any lengthy explanations for the new name, except that it was part of a desire to reach out to the city’s Mexican American community. Apparently, the name change was recommended by the Municipal Advertising Commission in order to “promote friendship with Mexico.”⁵⁹ As municipal government made attempts to include (in a limited sense) Mexican American representatives, Fiesta boosters made efforts to incorporate Mexican Americans into San Antonio’s public culture.

A rhetorical distancing from the Alamo battle was an important part of this process. Yet several popular renditions of the Alamo changed as well. In 1960, John Wayne’s rendition of the Alamo battle, merged with post World War II patriotism and anticommunism, helped make the Alamo a symbol of US nationalism. San Antonians eagerly participated in the shooting of Wayne’s film and attended its opening at San Antonio’s Woodlawn Theatre.⁶⁰ Yet Wayne’s film was not like previous Alamo movies. His movie demonstrates a refashioning of

the Alamo story. Unlike the earliest Alamo films, including *Martyrs of the Alamo*, which depicted Mexicans as treacherous, lazy and savage, Wayne's Alamo movie made great efforts to portray Mexicans in a more positive manner.⁶¹ Wayne's Alamo story presented Santa Anna's Mexican army as loyal soldiers, and also portrayed the Tejanos who fought alongside the Anglo forces within the Alamo's walls.

While literature and films in the early twentieth century emphasized the Mexican Other as a treacherous enemy, these new Alamo tales offered an inclusive lesson in Texan loyalty. Discourses of racial unity began to intrude on the story of the Alamo.⁶² The annual Fiesta invitations demonstrate these changes. For several decades the FSJA issued annual invitational booklets to its members (and sold to the wider public) with descriptions of each festival event, schedules, and a story of the Alamo.

In the 1948 invitation, the story of the Alamo is told as before, but with an important revision. While earlier narratives emphasized the Anglo Texans' bravery against the Mexican soldiers, this description adds a new clause:

Outsiders, unacquainted with the real reasons for the Texas Revolution, who perhaps think that there was a racial cause for the strife, are astonished at the fact that it is a celebration shared by those of both Latin-American and Anglo-Saxon heritage.⁶³

The reason for this shared celebration is a victory over a "dictator," not over a particular ethnic group. This revision offers an acknowledgement that the historiography of the Alamo battle had taken on racially based explanations. If

these “outsiders” thought that the Texas Revolution had a “racial cause,” the perception was due to hundreds of previous narratives that emphasized revenge for the death of Anglo Texan defenders. The anonymous author of the 1948 story gave no explanation for the source of this misunderstanding, though. The “racial cause” is merely forgotten. The story also seemed to imply that if visitors come to San Antonio and see how Anglos and Mexicans relate, they would see how well both groups get along together in the present. In such a revision, the moral lessons that the Alamo teaches were reversed. What was once a story told to reinforce discriminatory practices against Mexican Americans now represented cooperation between these two groups. A symbol of war became a symbol of interethnic peace. Yet this new social arrangement between Anglos and Mexicans remained uneven, as a closer examination of these stories will reveal.

The theme of interethnic harmony continues through several years of Fiesta invitations. For many years, the Fiesta San Jacinto Association would invite a local historian or writer to contribute a biography of one of the Alamo defenders each year. The earliest biographies in the late 1930s included many of the most well known figures in the story—William Travis, Jim Bowie, and Davy Crockett. In 1951 the first Tejano’s story appeared, Gregorio Esparza, who was a private in the company of Juan Seguin. Esparza’s tale was written in the same romantic tone as many other heroic figures, and yet it soon became clear that his story was not only an attempt at filling in the gaps in Alamo defender biographies, but also served as a symbol of interethnic cooperation. In the picture

accompanying the story, Esparza and an anonymous Anglo Texan are readying themselves for battle. The writer asks:

Who are these men beside the cannon? One is Anglo-American. The other's name is Esparza; he is of the same nationality as Santa Anna, but he doesn't think like Santa Anna. He, like many of his countrymen, prefers the dignity and equality that comes with freedom.⁶⁴

Esparza is said to be the same "nationality" as Santa Anna, and yet in terms of citizenship, all three men were probably Mexican. Though many Americans and Europeans fought with the Texans, the Anglo Texan settlers of the region were still considered Mexican citizens. Clearly, this description is marked by the modern social order, writing the Alamo defenders as "Americans." It is also important that the Anglo man in the picture is anonymous. The story continues:

One [man in the picture] is a Mexican boy who grew up in San Antonio. The other? Who knows? Perhaps a lawyer from Philadelphia, a wheelwright from West Virginia, a counting clerk from New Orleans. But both understand the unspoken speech of free men, even though they can't converse in the same language.⁶⁵

The ambiguity of the Anglo man's identity reaffirmed his larger, "American" identity. The "Mexican boy" of the picture, though, is specifically located by the term "boy" and by his hometown. Gregorio Esparza was embedded in the local landscape, a native. His function as "boy" is a dis-empowered, yet loyal, symbol of San Antonio's Mexicano community. On the other hand, the Anglo man's primary identity was his middle class status. As a lawyer, wheelwright or counting clerk, he could be an urban professional or a skilled artisan. While the official call was for cooperation, these men are not social

equals. Esparza has had to separate himself from his “nationality,” and take the side of the Anglo settler. Although the Alamo story was retold to include a place for Gregorio Esparza as a patriotic hero, his new position was unequal and unstable.

In 1949 a local press published *City of Flaming Adventure: the Chronicle of San Antonio* by Boyce House. The book gives a general outline of San Antonio’s history, written for a broad public audience. House’s version of the Alamo story was very similar to Fiesta materials. After he described the battle, and the coming of Texan independence, he included a long explanation of Mexicans’ role in the conflict. He stated “the winning of Texas is familiar to everyone—but there is one phase of that story which is not so widely known. And that is the aid which the patriots of Mexican blood rendered.” House tells the story of a company of Mexicans who fought on the side of Texas. He details their bravery and their loyalty to Texas. He also states that they “had a more difficult choice to make than did the Anglo-Americans...they were siding against the government of their native land, whose language and traditions were theirs.”⁶⁶ In the process of conflating nation, ethnicity and language, House indicates that those Tejanos loyal to Texas had to sever ties to their culture in order to become loyal Texans. Perhaps this was a lesson intended for present day Mexican Americans as well. In a political climate where the interests of particular wards or barrios was overlooked in favor of growth oriented policies said to benefit the

entire city, loyalty to civic growth also meant severing ties to local districts or communities.

The contradictions in Esparza's story demonstrate that although this version of Alamo narrative rhetorically challenges previous racial hierarchies, it also encouraged them. While Anglo settlement was welcomed, Mexican immigration certainly was not, and even though Esparza "chose" American citizenship, he was still vulnerable to being treated as one of Santa Anna's soldiers.

Fiesta boosters and Anglo historians were not the only people challenging the history of the Alamo. Spokesmen of Mexican American organizations, including the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), challenged the subservient space that the city's Anglo leaders gave them in the Alamo story. During "Davy Crockett week," the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce sponsored a "Gregorio Esparza Day" on August 23, 1955. On this day, in a public address entitled "Our Place in Texas History", Jacob I. Rodriguez, manager of the Mexican Chamber of Commerce, spoke of the long-delayed recognition of this Texas patriot.⁶⁷ At the same time, he critiqued Texas historians for ignoring the much larger role Tejanos played in Texan independence. Quoting from "Viva Texas," written by Ruben R. Lozano, a "large number" of Tejanos not only participated in the Texans' fight, they initiated the call for independence. Erasmo Seguin called the first Constitutional Convention in Texas, while Stephen F. Austin was still unwilling to fight for an independent state. Other Texas patriots

like Juan Seguin, Lorenzo De Zavala and Jose Antonio Navarro played a vital role in the new Texas Republic. Seguin led the charge that defeated Santa Anna at San Jacinto. De Zavala became Vice-President of the Texas Republic, and Navarro signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. These figures were “descended from the Spaniards who [arrived] more than three hundred years before Stephen F. Austin ever thought of coming to Texas.”⁶⁸ Rodriguez challenged the prominence of the Anglo Texans in contemporary history books, as well as the notion that Anglos were the heirs to the Alamo’s legacy. The problem of [Anglo] historians, he stated, is that they

never realized that the Alamo (the Mission San Antonio de Valero) was over one hundred years old when their new friends, some no better than adventurers and soldiers of fortune, from the north, ever laid their eyes upon it. That it had served countless generations of Seguins, Navarros, Arochas, Esparzas, and a host of others, as a school and sanctuary. That generations of Spanish people, high and low, had been born, lived and died within the pale of its ancient walls; that the Alamo meant more to them than it had ever meant or could ever mean to the newcomers and that the liberation and the future of Texas embodied to them their hopes, their aspirations; the very breath of life.⁶⁹

For Rodriguez, and for many other Mexican Americans, the Alamo was a symbol of their legacy, a tie to San Antonio that preceded any Anglo’s claim. In his address, Rodriguez used this slim opportunity for historical inclusion, offered in “Gregorio Esparza Day,” to reverse the claims of San Antonio’s heritage elite.

In his most compelling challenge, Rodriguez also turned the idea of the “Americanization” of Alamo heroes on its head. The Alamo defenders, he asserts, were naturalized Mexican citizens, not Americans. “They died in the Alamo as ‘Mexicans’,” fighting to restore “their own outraged and trampled rights as

Mexican citizens, unwilling to submit to a dictator's whims.”⁷⁰ Rodriguez had complex reasons for this particular challenge. As a prominent member of LULAC, Rodriguez fought for Mexican American civil rights for decades. He fought for their recognition as full American citizens. He struggled to separate ideas of citizenship from ethnic identity. His emphasis on the Alamo defenders' identity as Mexican citizens was part of this same logic. Ethnic Anglos could act as Mexican citizens at the Alamo, just as ethnically Spanish (his term) residents could exercise their rights as American citizens.

Through many letters to local newspapers, self-published magazines and pamphlets to history textbook committees, Rodriguez continued his struggle to revise Texas history, as did several other Mexican Americans. For the time, he was unsuccessful. Yet his challenge to prevailing Alamo narratives suggests that Alamo memory was a much more contested terrain. The DRT continued to define the battle as a racial conflict between heroic Anglos and tyrannical Mexicans. Rodriguez restored the Alamo as part of a Spanish heritage. He utilized the limited opportunities of the city's new politics of inclusion, but he had bigger revisions in mind.

Like Parakeets

Rodriguez welcomed Fiesta's new inclusiveness. He applauded the new Fiesta San Antonio Commission when the Mexican Chamber of Commerce could sponsor a “Noche Mexicana” during the festival. Some Mexican Americans embraced this celebration of San Antonio's “Old World flavor” as an

acknowledgement of the positive aspects of Mexican culture. For the most part, though, San Antonio's Mexican American organizations and the Spanish language paper *La Prensa* did not speak of Fiesta. While describing other fiestas patrias in Laredo, Corpus Christi, and other South Texas towns, the writers of *La Prensa* understood Fiesta as an Anglo celebration. A few, however, attempted to redefine Fiesta. Delís Negrón wrote one of the few *La Prensa* columns about Fiesta in 1955.⁷¹ In this column, he defined Fiesta events as an extension of Mexican culture. He was proud of the many parades, a time when everyone leaves their houses to come together. For him, Fiesta was a time for community gatherings, not an exclusionary set of events. Negrón accentuated the fact that much Fiesta imagery borrows from Mexican culture, and described this borrowing as natural because the city was part of Mexico before it was part of Texas. Fiesta, he wrote, is a celebration of San Antonio's history as a Mexican city. Like Jacob Rodriguez, Negrón attempted to rewrite Fiesta as the legacy of San Antonio's Mexicano residents.

Negrón's article is also a critique of an article written by a visitor named Ray Duncan, who wrote a description of San Antonio for *Holliday* magazine. Duncan described San Antonio as one of the most depraved cities in the nation. He used the term "Fiesta city" as a derogatory comment on the city's high crime rate and poverty. Duncan associates the city's crime and its underdevelopment with its high percentage of Mexican Americans. Rather than critique the municipal government's poor service delivery for these problems, Duncan blamed Mexicans

themselves. Negrón defended San Antonio on the basis that although the city has poor sanitation services, it remained “a paradise for us.”

More importantly, he challenged Duncan’s paternalism. Although Duncan may have good intentions, he wrote, Duncan “praises the city as God paints a parakeet, not for its industry or intelligence, but for its innocence”.⁷² Negrón points out that Duncan’s view of a young, naïve city had a great deal to do with his criticism of its Mexican American population, who Duncan claimed have a less industrious character. Negrón also implied that to designate San Antonio as the “Fiesta City” was not always complementary. Often the celebration of the city’s festiveness led to paternalistic depictions of its Mexican American residents. Negrón was well aware of the implications this “festive” language could have for Mexicanos. He also clearly articulated the growing distinction between a commodified multicultural festival and the implications this festival might have for the city’s Mexicano residents.

Both Delis Negrón and Jacob Rodríguez fought to place Mexicanos in the center of San Antonio’s public culture. However, it was clear to both that this invention of “the Fiesta city” was a double-edged sword. While Anglos could enjoy the pleasures of playing Mexican, Mexicanos themselves would feel the continuing effects of such “festive” stereotypes of their culture. Fiesta’s postwar organizers would successfully challenge the prominence of San Antonio’s heritage elite, but their limited rhetoric of inclusion would not fulfill the hopes of most Mexicano residents of San Antonio.

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- ¹ *San Antonio Express News*, April 18, 1956.
- ² Michael Haynes, *Dressing Up Debutantes: Pageantry and Glitz in Texas* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998), 47.
- ³ FSJA charter, June 10, 1955, Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- ⁴ Most of these organizations, though, did not exist at the time of the 1905 charter. As elite organizations expanded, these organizations were added in amendments.
- ⁵ The other participating organizations, though not heritage based, had similar family ties to Fiesta's early years. The exception was the Junior Chamber of Commerce.
- ⁶ David R. Johnson, John A. Booth, and Richard J. Harris, *The Politics of San Antonio: Community, Progress and Power* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ⁹ Rodolfo Rosales, *The Illusion of Inclusion: The Untold Political Story of San Antonio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 47.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20-23.
- ¹² Heywood Sanders, "Building a New Urban Infrastructure: The Creation of Postwar San Antonio," in Char Miller and Heywood Sanders, eds. *Urban Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1990), 167.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 172.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 156, 83.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 280-1.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.
- ¹⁷ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 279.
- ¹⁸ Rosales, 51.
- ¹⁹ It is important to note, as Rosales does, that not all the Mexican American middle class followed this conservative philosophy. Political inclusion was a field of much debate during this period.
- ²⁰ In the mid-1950s, the U.S. Border Patrol initiated a program of mass deportation of Mexican nationals, which they called "operation wetback."
- ²¹ *San Antonio Express News*, March 14, 1959, 1B.
- ²² Haynes, 61.
- ²³ Reynolds Andricksto Fiesta San Jacinto Association, March 27, 1959. Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- ²⁴ *San Antonio Express*, 14 March 1959, 1B.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Reynolds Andricks to Fiesta San Jacinto Association, March 27, 1959. Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The university of Texas at San Antonio.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ *San Antonio Express*, March 27, 1959.
- ²⁹ Haynes, 12.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.
- ³¹ Haynes, 145. In 1982 the Cornyation was revived, and continues to the present day.
- ³² Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 9.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 58.
- ³⁴ Robert Lavenda. "'It's Not a Beauty Pageant!' Hybrid Ideology in Minnesota Community Queen Pageants," in *Beauty Queens on the Global Stage: Gender, Contests and Power*, ed. Colleen Ballerino Cohen, Richard Wilk and Beverly Stoeltje (New York: Routledge, 1996), 31-46.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

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- ³⁷ *San Antonio Light*, April 14, 1991, D1.
- ³⁸ FSAC letter to the press, draft. Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- ³⁹ Jack Maguire, *A Century of Fiesta In San Antonio* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1990), 44.
- ⁴⁰ *San Antonio Light*, May 3, 1959, 1A.
- ⁴¹ Spice to Allison, May 4, 1959, Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- ⁴² I am borrowing from Robert Lavendas' analysis of the role of the Jaycees in organizing small town Minnesota festivals. "Festivals and the Creation of Public Culture: Whose Voice(s)?" in *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, ed. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Levine, 76-104 (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).
- ⁴³ Miguel De Oliver, "Historical Preservation and Identity: The Alamo and the Production of a Consumer Landscape" *Antipode* 28:1, 1996, 9.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ FSJA Invitation, 1949, Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- ⁴⁶ FSJA Fiesta Invitation, 1953, Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- ⁴⁷ For more detail on this process in San Antonio's tourist development, see Miguel de Oliver, "Democratizing Consumerism: coalescing constructions of subjugation in the consumer landscape." *Gender, Place and Culture* 4 (1997) no. 2, 211-233.
- ⁴⁸ *San Antonio Express*, April 22, 1958, 10A.
- ⁴⁹ De Oliver "Democratizing Consumerism," 227.
- ⁵⁰ *San Antonio Express*, March 17, 1946, 2B.
- ⁵¹ Ellis Shapiro to Harry Jersig, March 25, 1946. Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- ⁵² *San Antonio Express*, April 7, 1946, 1B.
- ⁵³ *San Antonio Light*, March 21, 1946, 1B.
- ⁵⁴ Sylvia Rodriguez makes this observation of the gringo cowboys depicted in New Mexico's "Enchantment" tourist industry. "Tourism, Whiteness, and the Vanishing Anglo," in *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West*, ed. David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long, 194-222 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).
- ⁵⁵ "The lonely crowd" refers to sociologist David Riesman's bestseller of the same name. Riesman suggested that the United States was becoming a nation of conformity, of "other-directed" people, as opposed to "inner directed" individuals with their own ethics. Philip Deloria connects this study to the practice of playing Indian in the postwar years. *Playing Indian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).
- ⁵⁶ Deloria, 132.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 153. He applies this idea to playing Indian. I argue that in the Southwest, a very similar process happened with Mexican Americans.
- ⁵⁸ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).
- ⁵⁹ Researchers from the Institute of Texan Cultures revealed this in an exhibit for the 1991 Fiesta San Antonio.
- ⁶⁰ Richard Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity and the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 115.
- ⁶¹ *Martyrs of the Alamo, or the Birth of Texas*, directed by William Christy Cabanne, 1915. Cabanne was an assistant to D.W. Griffith, who directed *The Birth of a Nation* only a few months earlier.
- ⁶² An important note is that this change is not true of all Alamo narratives, especially not the versions endorsed by the DRT.

⁶³ FSJA Invitation 1948, Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.

⁶⁴ FSJA Invitation, 1951. Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Boyce House, *City of Flaming Adventure: the Chronicle of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Naylor publishing, 1949), 72-74.

⁶⁷ "Our Place in Texas History," address delivered by Jacob I. Rodriguez, August 23, 1955. Jacob I. Rodriguez papers, LULAC archives, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Jacob I. Rodriguez, letter to the editor, *San Antonio Light*, Feb 11, 1965. Jacob I. Rodriguez Papers, LULAC Archives, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁷¹ Delis Negrón, Editorial in *La Prensa*, April 21, 1955, 4.

⁷² My translation: "Nos pone como Dios pinto al perico, no por su ingenio, sino por su ambrosia inocencia."

Chapter 6

Rey Feo and the Politics of Multiculturalism, 1970-1990

Weeks before San Antonio's annual Battle of Flowers Parade, the Salazars claimed their space along the parade route for the 2002 celebration.¹ The middle-aged couple picked up trash, mowed the grass, and sprayed ant-killer on a small section of land at the Interstate 35 underpass at Broadway. They set up chairs, lights, and brought food and drink to last them through the week. They were not alone. Hundreds of San Antonio families annually bring their lawn chairs and pickup trucks to park along the open sections of the parade route. The Salazars, like many Mexican American families in the city, were domesticating the public grasses and sidewalks of Broadway. For one week, they claimed space by creating a series of lawns. Like the women of the Battle of Flowers Association and the San Antonio Conservation Society, these families transform the city's downtown urban environment through these temporary, home-like dwellings. Yet unlike San Antonio's elite women, whose ethnic identities and class positions enabled them to take such domestic practices into public culture, the Salazars were enacting a different form of claiming space.

One can only understand the significance of these temporary dwellings if one appreciates the monitoring of public space, especially for people of color, in San Antonio. In the decades after World War II, and accelerating after 1970, San Antonio's Mexican American community made a place for itself in the city's public culture. Throughout the twentieth century the city's Mexican American

community has enacted public festivals and parades in their local neighborhoods. But their role in Fiesta was more difficult to achieve. Since Fiesta's inception, Mexican American families have lined the routes of its Battle of Flowers Parade. Yet until World War II, they were only spectators of the biggest event of the city's public culture. Though "mexicanness" was celebrated in ambivalent Anglo performances, Mexican Americans themselves occupied a very tenuous position on the margins of the city's public life.

As I described in the previous chapter, in the immediate decades after World War II, a new "politics of inclusion" signaled a dramatic shift in Fiesta. Like millions of Americans, San Antonians struggled with the contradictions between the fight for democracy abroad and racism at home. Nonetheless, even as late as the 1970s, Mexican Americans continued to play a minimal role in the festival. Mexican Americans had their own feeling of ambivalence—Fiesta was largely seen as the "gringo's party." Andy Hernandez, who was president of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project and columnist for the *San Antonio Light*, expressed this sentiment well. He wrote that he personally "harbored a good amount of ambivalence about Fiesta." While he was attracted to the parades and the festivities, he felt like "an uninvited guest." He detailed his experience of being Mexican American in San Antonio, going to schools where he was spanked for speaking Spanish and reading Texas history books that celebrated the defeat of "bad Mexicans" at the Battle of San Jacinto:

To be Mexican was to be less than every one else. Except for one week of the year. During Fiesta week, San Antonio would embrace and celebrate

all things Mexican. Our language would be spoken without apologies, our food elevated to gourmet status, Mexican American celebrations and decorations would liven up the entire city. For one week out of the year, San Antonio would put on its Mexican clothes. The irony in this was that the only week when it was not bad to be associated with Mexican culture and heritage, Mexican Americans were conspicuously absent. All that was us was present during Fiesta week, except us. I guess we were not even good enough to be ourselves when it was good to be who we were.²

Hernandez expressed a common sentiment among many of the “Alamo city’s” Mexican Americans. However, he also noted that Fiesta has changed. The main symbol for that change was the inclusion of the League of United Latin American Citizen’s (LULAC) role of Rey Feo into Fiesta in 1980. For Hernandez, and others, “El Rey Feo came to signify their own place and their piece of Fiesta in San Antonio.” Rey Feo’s role was “a place where [Mexican Americans] existed not as someone else’s costume but as their own affirmation.”³ For many Mexican Americans, Rey Feo verified the long-awaited success of the politics of inclusion. In this chapter, I evaluate the reasons for Rey Feo’s prominence, and the limits of his success.

Although Rey Feo gets the credit for the festival’s new multiculturalism, he was actually the last in a series of new royal additions to Fiesta. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, several more royal representatives became part of Fiesta. After Miss Fiesta assumed her reign, many other organizations wanted to bring in their own roles to the celebration as well. These organizations’ “queens”, unlike Miss Fiesta, represented specific ethnoracial communities. One of the first organizations to join was LULAC, who already had a “Reina” of their own

fundraiser, La Feria de las Flores. When LULAC became a participating organization in Fiesta in the 1970s, “La Reina de la Feria” joined the festival’s royal ranks. The San Antonio Charro Association, another Mexican American organization, also included their “Miss Charro” in Fiesta in 1972, and in 1969 Gracie Poe Griffin created a position for the African American community, the Queen of Soul. However, these roles were never given the same public attention as King Antonio and the Coronation Queen.

Despite the Fiesta Commission’s egalitarian pronouncement that Fiesta had no “official” royalty, these two figures were popularly understood as the reigning monarchs of the festival. These new women’s roles occupied a marginal symbolic space. Though they were increasingly interviewed by local newspapers and made appearances at schools and community centers, these women served as quiet (if not silent) Fiesta representatives. In terms of their presentation, they remained within a gendered private sphere, even as they marked its boundaries. However, it is important to recognize the roles of the first women of color to challenge the Coronation Queen’s prominence. While given scant attention in the local press, these women were the first to bring the politics of cultural identity into Fiesta. Unlike Miss Fiesta, these new roles highlighted distinct cultural pride for San Antonio’s Mexicano and African American communities. These new royal roles also indicated a shift from having a single figure represent the entire city to multiple figures representing several distinct communities within the city. Fiesta’s royalty would no longer make claims to represent the city as a whole.

Instead, multiple representatives of particular communities would portray the city's unblended diversity.

The Queen of Soul

Fiesta's Queen of Soul most clearly expressed this new combination of middle class mobility and cultural pride. While Mexican American young women had sometimes won the coveted role of Miss Fiesta, blackness marked the boundaries of the role. No African American woman had played the part of Miss Fiesta from the 1950s through the 1970s. While Mexican Americans could make tenuous claims to whiteness through this role, African Americans were relegated to the margins. Gracie Poe Griffin remembers many Fiesta parades as a young girl in San Antonio. One of her most positive, and negative, memories were of watching the Fiesta queens and duchesses. As an African American woman who grew up on the west side, in one of the city's poorest school districts in the 1950s, she knew she would never wear one of those gowns.⁴ During this decade, most of the city's facilities were legally segregated, and the only Fiesta events she felt welcomed to were the carnival and the parade sidelines.

As she watched Fiesta change, though, Griffin was encouraged by the greater openness of the festival, so much so that she saw the possibility of an African American Fiesta queen. In 1969, she helped found the Queen of Soul Pageant. In a city where the issues of African American representation are often "upstaged" by the conflicts between Anglos and Mexican Americans, Griffin's pageant offered a rare visibility to black women, a chance to demonstrate, in her

words, the “intelligence and poise” of young black women. Because the Queen of Soul had the purpose of representing a specific ethnic community, the pageant can also be analyzed as a means to explore ethnic identity within San Antonio’s African American community.⁵ In these “ethnic beauty pageants” idealized versions of femininity were combined with concerns about power and culture. In addition, the Queen of Soul contest incorporated similar concerns as the Miss Fiesta position, in that it emphasized its accessibility to any member of San Antonio’s black community. The Queen of Soul’s purpose was to provide role models for the community itself, as well as display a cultural pride to the larger citywide audience.

Although the Queen of Soul expressed middle class virtues of individual accomplishment, she also had the stated goal to represent the African American community. While the role participated in the discourses of upward mobility, it also claimed ties to a specific racial community. The Queen of Soul was a hybrid performance of individual achievement and community obligation. While the wearer of the crown was set apart from her peers, honored for her accomplishments and presented to the upward gaze of the audience, she was also reaching across this boundary, protruding out of her individual body to demonstrate her connections to community.

Often, the conflicts between these dual goals have been the sources of great criticism. In addition, because the pageant was founded in the years after feminist critiques of beauty pageants, including the protest of the Miss America

pageant in 1968, the Queen of Soul has had an ambivalent position within ethnic and feminist political movements since its inception. According to beauty pageant critics, the glorification of the individual, not to mention limited ideals of feminine beauty, debilitate any attempts at community empowerment. Griffin deliberately sought to mend these contradictions. She conceded that physical attributes are part of contest, including a swimsuit section, but she also emphasized the pageant winners' devotion to social concerns. For her, the most important qualification for participation is community involvement. Griffin also stressed the pride and confidence of each individual pageant participant. Such emphasis on public presentation pervaded Griffin's statements about the pageant. Her belief was similar to the shifts in other ethnic pageants in the United States, which stressed political activism alongside physical beauty.⁶ Griffin's opening message in the 1974 pageant brochure expressed this compromise:

The Queen of Soul is not only selected for particular beauty, but whose charm, poise and intellectual ability is a credit to her community. We feel that our pageant provides the necessary experience of beauty pageant styled competition, and instills more self-confidence for our Queen and Court.⁷

Each queen won a scholarship, and no outside organization sponsored her entry, providing a "fair chance for any young lady, from any economic or social background...to be a participant."⁸ During the week preceding the pageant, all the contestants were given free lessons in make-up application, wardrobe advice, and lessons in formal dinner rituals, offering a sort of finishing school for the participants. Although these are lessons in social graces, these are also methods of

demonstrating fitness for the white-collar world. The display of “charm” and “poise” is designed to provide access into the middle class.

The outfits of the pageant contestants intertwine the ideals of Anglo beauty pageants with distinctly African physical attributes. For much of American history, discourses of blackness itself have been linked to labor. As John Fiske argues, for white audiences “the black body intextuates social meanings in ways similar to the grotesque white one.”⁹ The classical body of the Miss America pageant is marked not only as middle class, but white as well. However, as the Queen of Soul mixes these categories, and destabilizes them as well. In this pageant, the black body takes a classical form, but with clear markers of a non-white cultural identity as well. The Pageant’s emblem demonstrated such a hybrid construction. In the 1970s pageant brochures featured the outline of a crowned young woman’s face. The crown, as in other beauty pageants, distinguished her from the crowd. However, the most prominent feature of the emblem is the “afro” hairstyle. The disproportionately large hair dwarfs the image of the crown. This oversized feature is the one that most clearly connects the Queen as a member of the African American community. (Later designs altered the particular hairstyle, but replaced this emblem with another distinctly African American style.) Certainly, the logo was influenced by the predominance of African characteristics and designs that were popular during a historic period of Black pride and cultural empowerment.

However, the continuing criticism of beauty pageants have taken their toll on the Queen of Soul pageant. For many black women, these contests were not appropriate ways of expressing their aspirations. In the early 1980s, pageant participation was particularly low, and many feared the contest would not survive. Griffin attributes this decline to the increased openness of other beauty pageants, so that the Queen of Soul was not the only option for young black women. In the 1990s, though, Griffin saw a renewed interest in the pageant. She guessed that the growing popularity of “multiculturalism” has made these ethnically themed pageants more attractive. Another possibility is that within Fiesta representation, the almost exclusively Anglo Coronation continues in its prominence. The Queen of Soul reserves the only specific space for African American representation in Fiesta.

As Griffin talks about the years of Queen of Soul pageants, what also becomes clear is that the contest has developed an alternative tradition within Fiesta. Interestingly, the motives of the 1990s’ participants are rather similar to the members of the Order of the Alamo’s court. As generations of soul queens follow their mothers’ steps, the contest becomes another Fiesta tradition to uphold. Like the Order’s Coronation, the pageant offers an opportunity to demonstrate prominence within the city’s black community. Unlike the family dynasties represented at the Coronation, though, the Queen of Soul contestants do not tell stories of superiority, but of continuing to meet and overcome the challenges of living in a racially divided society.

The Queen of Soul's new role in Fiesta is similar to other new roles within San Antonio's Mexican American community. La Reina de la Feria de las Flores and Miss Charro, are also hybrid constructions of individual attributes and community responsibility. In other efforts to diversify Fiesta royalty, each of San Antonio's five military bases added their own representatives to ride in parade floats and visit parts of the city. Each of these roles would also mediate between the goals of upward mobility and community representation. The Queen of Soul's entry to Fiesta was a preview of the possibilities and dilemmas that other ethnically based roles would face.

Fiesta Kings

The first Fiesta kings in the early twentieth century were named "Alegría" and "Selemat." In 1915, festival organizers decided on the more formal "King Antonio." As I previously described in chapter two, this Fiesta king became more sober, wearing a military style jacket and riding breeches instead of long robes and gaudy medallions by the 1930s. Throughout the later part of the twentieth century, King Antonio's role continued to follow the cavalier myth of the Old South. Like the Queen of the Coronation, King Antonio maintained the boundaries of elite patronage of Fiesta. On the other hand, King Antonio has been a more public figure than any of the queens.¹⁰ As a middle aged man, upper class and socially prominent, King Antonio is the host of the party. Only the king is said to "preside" over Fiesta events. He has taken over the symbolic space once occupied by the women of the Battle of Flowers Association and then the San

Antonio Conservation Society. As these upper-class women lost their visibility in Fiesta, King Antonio's presence grew. The crowning of King Antonio began Fiesta week, when he declared the initiation of Fiesta merriment in front of the Alamo. He awarded honor students at local schools, gave hundreds of gifts and souvenir medals to local citizens, visited hospitals and charity functions, television and radio stations. He was the most public of these public representatives. For middle-class Mexican Americans, the inclusion of Rey Feo represented the first true challenge to Anglo hegemony in Fiesta. For Mexican Americans and Anglos both accepted (at this moment) that the Fiesta leadership was male. Thus, these new battles for inclusion were not only about ethnicity, but about manhood.

In 1947, LULAC created the only king who would eventually rival King Antonio's prominence, "El Rey Feo." LULAC claimed that the character of Rey Feo was taken from an ancient Roman tradition of crowning a slave as king during carnival. In medieval Europe, this tradition took the form of a ceremony where people elected their own king, called the "Ugly King" because he was a representative of the "ugly common people."¹¹ LULAC's invented tradition had no official relationship to Fiesta royalty, until Logan Stewart, a local radio personality and the reigning Rey Feo, decided to campaign for Rey Feo's inclusion in Fiesta in 1979. He also proposed that Rey Feo be given his own parade during Fiesta week. His brief campaign was successful, and Rey Feo was integrated into Fiesta activities.

This change was not simply a benevolent act of friendship, of course, but an accommodation to pressures from a Mexican American middle class that had been growing in population and in political power for the past forty years. The 1980 inclusion of Rey Feo was a new interethnic negotiation. Rey Feo represented the last half century of Mexicanos' struggle for political inclusion. If the first two decades after World War II brought about some limited integration of the Mexican American community, the next twenty years signaled deeper changes. Within this time of political inclusion, Mexicanos moved from "recognition" to a "institutionalized power."¹²

Mexican Americans, Chicanos and Hispanics

The League of United Latin American Citizens was a predominant force in Mexican American political organization through the 1950s. As part of what has been termed the "Mexican American generation," these leaders were predominantly native-born and educated in American schools, though segregated. Some had fought in World War I, and many others had participated in World War II. Returning from the war, they were anxious to enjoy the benefits of full American citizenship, while they also aimed to protect the Mexican American community from discrimination. According to LULAC, and other similar organizations of the time, learning English and entering the American mainstream was the key to upward mobility.¹³ They maintained pride in their Mexican heritage but advocated absolute loyalty to the United States and its political institutions. They were also "economic conservatives" who saw racial

discrimination as the primary cause of Mexican American problems, not class domination.¹⁴ Using the federal courts, they fought many legal battles to end segregation in schools and in other public facilities. In the late 1950s and 1960s, they had some success in electoral politics. They elected a mayor in El Paso, congressmen in California and Texas, and helped President Kennedy win a slim majority in Texas.

The first serious challenge to their moderate approach came in the 1960s and 1970s with the more radical Chicano Movimiento.¹⁵ Though the Mexican American generation had much success in court battles against segregation and in electoral politics, the majority of Mexican Americans still struggled with poverty, substandard housing, low education and police brutality. Some reformers felt that middle-class groups such as LULAC could not adequately respond to the needs of working class Chicanos. Although Chicano activists continued the battles for civil rights and against institutional discrimination, the Movimiento also changed the focus of reform. Rather than following the form of traditional civil rights activism, new Chicano activists spoke of cultural and racial conflict. Chicanos sought cultural respect instead of integration.¹⁶

The divisions between LULAC and other, more radical Chicano groups would also make LULAC more palatable to the Anglo community. While middle-class activist organizations of this time period experienced a decline in membership and status within their own communities, they also gained political benefits from their acceptance by the dominant society. Faced with increasing

pressures to adopt changes, Anglo leaders would seek out leaders within the Mexican American community who were less threatening, more interested in assimilation than resistance. Texas state authorities and politicians also played a role in debilitating the Chicano Movement. The Texas Rangers beat and arrested many in farm worker strikes, and the Department of Public Safety routinely harassed members of the Raza Unida Party, and independent national political party organized by Texas Chicanos. Investigations into misuse of funds and an arrest on marijuana smuggling charges of key party leaders debilitated the party beyond recovery.¹⁷

In addition, by the late 1970s the Chicano Movimiento lost some of its fervency within the Mexicano community. Tensions between middle-class and working-class activists continued, and the philosophy of cultural nationalism failed to provide strategies for community empowerment within the American system. However, another reason for the demise of the confrontational strategies of the Chicanos was their success. Many of the goals of this movement were accomplished and institutionalized. In San Antonio, organizations such as MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) had a strong branch in the city, and community development agencies such as the Mexican American Unity Council, neighborhood citizen groups such as San Antonio's COPS (Communities Organized for Public Service), and cultural centers such as the Centro Cultural Guadalupe and Centro Aztlan were established. Some activists went to rejuvenate groups such as LULAC.¹⁸

Beginning in the late 1970s, but accelerating after 1980, a new generation of leaders have established themselves within the Mexican American community. What historian Ignacio M. Garcia refers to as the Mexican American/Hispanic generation, represents a more widely distributed geographically and more politically and socially diverse Mexicano population. This generation had much to gain from participating in the mainstream, and yet it was also “more anxious to flaunt its ethnicity” than the Mexican American generation.¹⁹ Like the middle class reformers of the Mexican American generation, Hispanic leaders sought inclusion, but like Chicano activists, they also promoted their distinct cultural identity and “reserve the right to have a viewpoint buttressed by historical experience.” However, unlike these activists, they sought a more conservative agenda, and tended to shy away from discussing conflicts that divide Mexican Americans from Anglo America.²⁰

The “Hispanic” generation also reflects a changing landscape of interethnic relations in South Texas, what historian David Montejano calls the “politics of negotiation and compromise.”²¹ The struggles that the Mexican American generation fought for the full rights of citizenship, and the battles for cultural autonomy fought by Chicanos, has promoted a successful form of reconciliation, for some. Montejano cautions that this new social understanding is the product of an alliance between Mexican American middle class organizations and Anglo urban business interests. The Chicano generation won an acceptance of cultural identity, but did not achieve a broader “populist multicultural movement”

that could include working class or immigrant Mexicanos.²² This new political inclusion provided only limited social benefits to these other groups.

San Antonio's changes in municipal government signalled some of the first signs of this new alignment. Before 1976, San Antonio's local government was dominated by the Good Government League (GGL), which was controlled by a group of Anglo businessmen. The GGL maintained its power partly by at-large elections, in which all members of the city council were elected by the entire city, and the mayor was appointed by the council. Mexican Americans in the city were strongly against the GGL, and displayed this antipathy in their support of anti-GGL candidates and in low percentages of voter registration and turnout rates.²³

In the late 1970s, the GGL disintegrated. When the Voting Rights Act was extended to Mexican Americans in the Southwest in 1975, the Texas state legislature enacted a number of reforms so that nearly any US citizen eighteen years or older who resides in Texas can vote. These changes in federal and state law encouraged changes in the election of city council members in San Antonio. The following year, the Justice Department, acting on a MALDEF brief, objected to San Antonio's annexation of nine north side (predominantly Anglo) precincts into the city in 1972. With a majority of city council members already coming from the northside, MALDEF, and other Chicano advocacy groups, feared that the annexation of these communities would accelerate the neglect and isolation of Mexicanos in the west and south sides of the city. The Justice Department mandated that either the city de-annex these new precincts, or alter its method of

electing city council members. Rather than take the Justice Department to court, the city council proposed, and voters adopted, changes in the city charter that replaced at-large elections with a council of ten members elected from single-member districts and a mayor elected at large.²⁴ As a result, the 1977 elections produced a city council with one African American and five Mexican American members. These changes represented a fundamental shift in San Antonio politics.

The changes in city council elections, as well as the rising political and economic power of Mexican Americans in general, had a direct impact upon Fiesta. Although members of the Mexican American community had long resented this celebration of Anglo hegemony, educational and political leaders within the community began to make their criticisms more public, and they focused their critique on King Antonio and the Texas Cavaliers. In 1971, José Cárdenas, superintendent of the Edgewood School District (located on the city's west side) refused King Antonio's annual invitation to visit the schools. Cárdenas called King Antonio a "persona non grata." Joe Bernal, a former state senator, adds, "King Antonio was telling Mexican American children they could be whoever they wanted to be, when they couldn't even be King Antonio. He was a farce."²⁵ Other Mexican American organizations also spoke out against the Texas Cavaliers. MALDEF stated that because the Cavaliers was a private organization that was so selective in its membership, it should not be supported by public facilities.

Members of the newly diverse city council also criticized the Cavaliers. As Henry Cisneros, from District One, was quoted in the *San Antonio Express*: “I think the Cavaliers would be well-served if they would loosen up and widen access to the community to that particular event and honor.” In the same article, Bernardo Eureste, a fellow council member from District Five, stated things more bluntly, calling King Antonio a “joke,” and threatening that “the council committee will check out organizations that aren’t really representative, such as the Cavaliers.”²⁶ Although these criticisms did not change the structure of the Cavaliers, the Fiesta San Antonio Commission did declare that neither King Antonio nor the Queen of the Order of the Alamo were the official royalty of Fiesta.²⁷

Charros

During this period of marked Fiesta criticism, Socrates Ramirez, a longstanding member of the San Antonio Charro Association, invited King Antonio to ride in their annual charreada. He also suggested that their event become a part of Fiesta. Seeing the city council’s challenges to the Texas Cavaliers, Ramirez envisioned another way to integrate Mexicanos into the city’s public life. He knew the executive director of the Fiesta Association, retired Colonel Davis Barnett, and at a breakfast meeting at the downtown Menger Hotel, they negotiated the inclusion of this new event. King Antonio would ride at the head of the Charros, along with their Charro Queen, and would present them with

a gift. The following year, King Antonio returned the favor, inviting the Charro Queen to ride in his River Parade.

Ramirez' gesture was an alternative strategy to the councilmens' criticisms of the Texas Cavaliers. While he agreed that Mexicanos deserved an equal place in Fiesta, he utilized the politics of negotiation, rather than confrontation, to bring the charros into Fiesta. His efforts were also a prelude to Rey Feo's eventual inclusion, because the charro, unlike the multiple Fiesta queens, was a distinct symbol of Mexicano manhood. In the post World War II era, when many Anglos were dressing as campesinos, the Mexican Chamber of Commerce and other Mexican American businessmen were dressing as the charro.²⁸ To counter the image of the campesino, who would present Mexicanos as rural peasants, the charro had become a figure of the Mexicano elite.

Olga Najera-Ramirez describes the charro as "the master symbol of lo mexicano (mexicanness) on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border."²⁹ In the discourses of film, music, literature and performance of greater Mexico, the charro represents both mexicanness and manhood. Since the Spanish introduced the horse in the sixteenth century, horseriding represented an elite privilege and power. Indians, mestizos and blacks were prohibited from owning or riding horses.³⁰ However, by the late sixteenth century, the rise of cattle ranching and haciendas required skilled vaqueros, or cowhands, particularly in northern Mexico. Mestizos and Indians had opportunities to learn the skills of horsemanship. These riding and roping techniques were the foundational qualities

of the charro, the Mexican horseman. Early charreadas were performances of these skills. For the wealthy, they were opportunities to display their ability to run the hacienda. For the common vaquero (cowboy), the charreada offered a chance to show that they were as skilled as the elite. Najera-Ramirez continues:

In all cases the point was to display their abilities of strength, independence, and bravery. Consequently, charreadas were a means by which men of any social class might prove themselves to be worthy charros and thus greatly enhance their status as real men.³¹

For men of lesser means, the charro was a symbol of the self-made man, an egalitarian ideal quite different from the socially stratified life at the hacienda. Thus, the charro acted as a symbol of unity and blurred the hierarchical structure of social life. By the nineteenth century, the charro took on a new significance. A newly independent Mexico was marked by civil strife, with armed bandits defied political leaders and sought social advancement. They forced wealthy landowners and politicians to meet their demands. The plateados, “silvered ones,” were bandits well known for the silver that adorned their clothing. Dressed as silver adorned charros, they were both feared and admired.³² In the mid-century, President Juarez used this charro outfit to establish order, creating a mounted police force to enforce national laws. The rurales created an image of tough, skilled horsemen who were also loyal to Mexican nationhood.³³ By the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz at the end of the century, the charro had become a prominent symbol of manhood and nation. After Mexico’s Revolution of 1910, the charro image would be rejuvenated. The charrería became a way to promote

and to sell Mexican culture to tourists and natives alike.³⁴ In the 1920s, the charrería was becoming the first national Mexican sport. In 1921, the national charro association was formed, and in 1933 the Federación Nacional de Charros gave official status to the sport, standardized public performances and specified charro ideals through a code of ethics. This code included rules of behavior. Charros could not drink excessively, or use foul language while in charro costume. These rules were intended to protect the status of the charro. Costumes could not be in bright colors, like royal blue, yellow, purple or pink, which was considered “too ranchero” and “insufficiently masculine.” Somber colors were considered more elegant and manly, and followed upper class aesthetics.³⁵ Although charro associations did not officially restrict membership, the time and money needed to purchase and train horses and riding gear effectively limited membership to wealthier individuals.

The San Antonio Charro Association was the first such group organized in the United States. Founded in 1947, the Association followed the rules of the code of the Federación, and participated in many competitions with associations on both sides of the border. In the Charro Association’s official history, former president Maximo Virgil offers a narrative of the Mexican charro that emphasizes the figure’s elite origins. First he clarifies that the charro is not a vaquero or a cowboy. He is “a gentleman horseman” who might be equated with “a polo player, in expense and character of membership.”³⁶ The Association had about twenty active members at any one time, and membership included monthly dues,

stable fees for the feeding and grooming of their horses, and several expensive trajes (suits) that run two or three hundred dollars each, all custom made in Mexico. The elaborate sombrero could cost more than \$500.³⁷

For members of the San Antonio association, the charreada was the performance of a Mexicano upper class. Their history, though, omits the legacy of the charro as an egalitarian figure, and ignores the common vaqueros who showed their skills in the charreadas over the centuries. These San Antonio charros perform a very similar nostalgia to the Texas Cavaliers. Anglo gentlemen of the New South demonstrated their superiority by invoking the English cavalier, and summoning the social order of an antebellum planter society. The charros drew from the Spanish caballero, imagining a return to the hacienda society of Greater Mexico.

Yet the charro's nostalgia was more poignant than the cavalier's. While King Antonio invoked a Southern chivalric code, he was also deeply invested in modernity. He did not usually ride a horse; he arrived in San Antonio on the train, and then, in a car. The Kings Antonio were active agents in shaping the New South. The charros, on the other hand, represented a cattle ranching tradition that was violently replaced by this new social order by the end of the nineteenth century. In the context of twentieth-century south Texas, these two figures were clearly not social equals. Though the members of the San Antonio charros were frequently successful middle-class men, they were not part of the city's economic elite. In the beginning, the San Antonio Charro Association rented the land they

used to practice their skills. After years of saving, they bought ten acres of land next to Mission County Park, on the city's South side in 1959. Ten years later they were able to put in new stands and clear most of the brush to create a park like setting.³⁸ Members made a significant investment, yet they struggled for years to create and maintain both their organization and their ranch. In San Antonio they were not upper class noblemen, yet their crafted image of the gentleman charro countered the derogatory stereotypes of the disorderly, indulgent Mexican. Like other charros in the Federacion, charro members were not allowed to drink at any time they were representing the organization. Their code emphasized discipline and skill, the antithesis of the "degenerate" Mexican. They performed as social equals to counter the reality of their marginality.

In mid-twentieth-century Texas, their position was much more like those vaqueros centuries earlier, and their gesture of reconciliation was also a challenge to King Antonio. The San Antonio Charros demonstrated that they were as skilled as their "superiors." In the context of other Mexican Americans' more vocal criticism of the Texas Cavaliers, these charros responded by positioning themselves as equals. Ramirez used social and physical space to make his point. The charros could bring King Antonio to their remote ranch on the South side of the city, their imagined hacienda on the margins. At the same time, they could also bring the charros into Fiesta, a downtown festival in the center of San Antonio's public culture. In this performance, the charro could be a symbol of both the nobleman and the vaquero. He could unify the parallel heritage of the

cavalier and the caballero. Yet he could also demonstrate his equal skills, and make a place for himself at the gringo's party.

Masculinity is deeply intertwined with both the charro and the cavalier. The Federacion has rigid regulations about women's participation in the charro events. Women can not compete, they can only exhibit their riding skills in escaramusas, a female precision riding team.³⁹ They ride side saddle in elaborate full skirts. Though their events require great skill, they also reinforce the view of women as objects of display. In San Antonio, the leader of the escaramusa team becomes Miss Charro, the queen of the Association.⁴⁰ The criteria for her role is that she be between the ages of 16 and 21, unmarried, bilingual, and an accomplished side saddle rider and Mexican folklorico dancer. She is supposed to refrain from drinking alcohol, and agrees not to act in a way that "discredits" her role. She demonstrated the same loyalties to Mexican culture and language as the charros. As a Fiesta participant, she joined King Antonio on many public appearances. Yet like the other Fiesta queens, she was unable to participate as his equal. The San Antonio charros were the first men to intrude on the Cavalier's masculine space in the 1970s, but they did not offer a parallel role within Fiesta. While King Antonio would come to the charreada, the charros played a much smaller role in the festival as a whole. The charro did not provide a role that could adequately respond to Mexicanos such as Andy Hernandez, who wanted a figure that would assure Mexicanos an equal place on the Fiesta stage.

The Reign of the Ugly King

After a decade of public criticism of Fiesta, Rey Feo would become the symbol of Anglo- Mexicano reconciliation. Hernandez, and others, looked to Rey Feo to assure that Mexicanos were more than “invited guests” to the city’s party. Whether or not this was actually the case, this was how the event was promoted in the *San Antonio Light*. Radio talk show personality Logan Stewart became Rey Feo in 1979, and he immediately began his campaign for the roles’ inclusion in Fiesta. Stewart called his success, “an historic occasion...It is the first time the Rey Feo has become a full Fiesta participant and the first time he’s been accorded the king of the Hispanics.”⁴¹

Obviously the event had one glaring contradiction. The man who claimed to bring a greater Hispanic presence in Fiesta, who named himself “king of the Hispanics” (LULAC itself did not make this claim) was Anglo. This irony was not entirely missed by the local newspapers, or by Stewart, who admitted “while I may be an Anglo Rey Feo, I have purposely pioneered Rey Feo into Fiesta so it will evolve as a benefit for all succeeding Reyes Feo—whether they be Anglo, black or Hispanic.”⁴² Stewart’s comment highlighted a key part of the Rey Feo role. Previous Rey Feos were often Mexican American, but some Anglo businessmen who catered to the Mexican-American community played the role as well. LULAC gave the title to any middle-class man who could fund their scholarships. According to Joe Bernal, the ugly king was often “some friendly gringo who could raise a lot of money.”⁴³ Rey Feo was not considered “king of

the Hispanics.” However, given the exclusively Anglo role of the Texas Cavaliers, and Rey Feo’s connection to LULAC, he symbolically became the Hispanic king when he joined Fiesta.

To the writers of the *Light*, the appointment of an Anglo Rey Feo was part of the “topsy-turviness” of Fiesta and San Antonio, where a Scottish Frenchman was “king of a Hispanic parade in an Anglo-dominated Fiesta in front of an old Spanish mission.” This was explained away as simply the product of San Antonio’s “special mix of people, cultures, and values.”⁴⁴ For Fiesta organizers, the ethnic interchangeability of the Rey Feo role was part of its appeal. Following the rhetoric of middle class inclusion, “every man” could become Rey Feo. As a figure that could be either Anglo or Mexican American, he truly represented the union of the Anglo and Mexican American urban-business class. At the same time, he would be marked with “mexicanness,” like Fiesta itself. Stewart, however, had broader ideas about Rey Feo’s inclusion:

New doors are being opened...We’re not just talking about just having a party or a parade. The whole Hispanic issues addresses itself to the roots of an eco-cultural-socio-problem...Certainly the cause of equality and of equal opportunity requires more jobs and a higher pay scale. It requires progress. And you can’t push San Antonio forward without taking the Mexican American with you.⁴⁵

Stewart never gets more specific about this “eco-cultural-socio problem,” or how Rey Feo’s inclusion benefits the cause of equality, only that the spirit of love that pervades Fiesta be extended among all the city’s ethnic communities throughout the year. For Stewart, and for many other cross-dressing gringos, Rey Feo was a

figure of Anglo-Mexican reconciliation. For many Mexican Americans, Rey Feo was a symbol of both reconciliation and equal status in the city's public culture.

However, Stewart's dreams of enlightenment contained more than a dash of paternalism. In this statement about San Antonio's progress, the Mexican American was given a passive role. Stewart created an image of taking his Mexican American subjects by the hand, leading them through the stages of progress. Not much information about Logan Stewart's personal interests in diversifying Fiesta royalty is available, but printed sources indicate that he used his radio commentary as a pulpit for berating the Mexican American community's lack of Fiesta participation.⁴⁶ Interestingly, newspaper accounts imply that Stewart blamed the Mexican American community itself. Perhaps he was invoking a familiar paternalism, that Mexican Americans needed the skills and organization of an Anglo to get them involved in Fiesta events.

Yet Stewart was not the one to initiate Rey Feo's inclusion. In the early 1970s, Davis Burnett, executive vice president of the Fiesta Commission, was part of an effort to recruit royal roles from the Hispanic organizations already involved in Fiesta— including the Mexican Chamber of Commerce and the San Antonio Charros—but he was unsuccessful. When Stewart became Rey Feo in 1979, Burnett saw an opportunity. He invited Stewart, his longtime friend, and LULAC president Ray Doria to lunch, where they started talking about a Rey Feo parade.⁴⁷ Later, they approached the Cavaliers and the Battle of Flowers Association for approval. Although the Cavaliers now deny any apprehension,

Burnett claimed that they were initially wary of Rey Feo's role. After all, the Fiesta Commission had already declared that King Antonio wasn't the official king of Fiesta, and their river parade had changed from "King Antonio's River Parade" to the more inclusive "Fiesta River Parade."⁴⁸ The Cavaliers were not eager to further diminish King Antonio's prominence in Fiesta. Many "marathon" meetings later, though, the relationship between the two kings was determined, with the agreement that Rey Feo would never upstage King Antonio. In fact, because King Antonio was the "senior king" of Fiesta, Rey Feo would officially defer to him.

While the Cavaliers may have been a bit apprehensive, they were not openly hostile to the creation of the Rey Feo parade. Fiesta had already grown to include over one hundred events and several new queens, and the ceremonies of the Anglo elite were relatively undisturbed. As anthropologist Michael Haynes comments, Rey Feo allowed the Texas Cavaliers to continue their own organization and their Anglo kings with less criticism.⁴⁹ A photograph in the *Light* makes this remarkably clear. The photo's caption reads: "In a historic toast, King Antonio LVIII, Ricks Wilson, and Rey Feo XXXII, Logan Stewart, saluted their Fiesta city's cultural diversity Saturday night as 'a mosaic of hearts and colors.'"⁵⁰ Here we see two upper-middle-class Anglo men celebrating cultural diversity. The image also reflects a context of friendly compromise. Rey Feo's inclusion came through a process of lunch meetings between the city's Anglo and

Mexican American middle class and the city's elite. Rey Feo powerfully expressed a new politics of negotiation, rather than confrontation.

The first year of Rey Feo's inclusion, with its depiction of Anglo-Mexican unity was uniquely that of the *San Antonio Light*, and was not advocated quite as wholeheartedly by San Antonio's more conservative other newspaper, the *San Antonio Express News*. In fact, the parade is only briefly mentioned in the paper's daily list of Fiesta events. While the *Express* does tell of Stewart's campaign, it does not picture the "historic toast" or promoted the new royal "diversity."⁵¹ For the editors of the *Light*, who had criticized Fiesta elitism decades earlier, this was the culmination of a long public campaign to challenge Fiesta's upper class organizers. The *Express-News* took a less enthusiastic view. Yet following years demonstrated that Rey Feo would represent a powerful sentiment among both Anglo and Mexican American middle-class residents. In following years, this middle-class Anglo-Mexican reconciliation would become the dominant narrative of Rey Feo. Even the *Express* was acknowledging Rey Feo's increasing prominence by 1981.

Henry I

A year after Rey Feo became a Fiesta king, Henry Cisneros became San Antonio's first Hispanic mayor since U.S. annexation in 1845, and the first Hispanic mayor of a major U.S. city. As Rey Feo represented a festive handshake between middle-class Anglos and Mexican Americans, Henry Cisneros' campaign unified voters from San Antonio's Mexicano West Side with its Anglo

North side. In the 1980 mayoral race Cisneros, a young Mexican American city council member with a moderate political agenda, was pitted against John Steen, who was “a card carrying member of San Antonio’s upper class.”⁵² Steen was also a Texas Cavalier, and had been crowned King Antonio in 1967. The local media portrayed their political race as a battle between the old guard and a new era of Mexican American political power in the city. By this time, San Antonio’s Mexican American population was in the majority. Cisneros’ landslide victory on April 4, 1981, was the product of an incredibly high rate of Mexican American voter turnout, the support of the grassroots political group Citizens Organized for Public Service (COPS), and the support of liberal and moderate Anglo voters. He won because he had almost the complete support of the Mexican American community (although this did not come without conflict) and enough of the Anglo community to secure 61.8% of the overall vote. If Logan Stewart claimed that Rey Feo formed a symbolic bridge between the Anglo and Mexican American communities, Cisneros formed a political bridge.

Steen was clearly surprised by the election results, as was the local press, who had been predicting a close race.⁵³ After the campaign, Steen only commented: “Obviously, I didn’t draw enough West Side votes.”⁵⁴ However, Cisneros’ victory had more to do with his ability to draw Anglo support. Cisneros was more popular with the Anglo community because he represented more moderate viewpoints than some of his Mexican American colleagues. Cisneros was initially elected to the city council as part of the GGL in 1975; however, he

quickly became part of the successful campaign to create single-member districts, which led to the demise of the GGL. As a city councilman from 1975 to 1979, Cisneros continued to reach out to both the pro-growth business interests and an underrepresented Mexican American community. He “enjoyed the resources and visibility of the GGL establishment without being confined to its agenda,” and “built an image of an articulate, smooth, Harvard and MIT educated man.” Cisneros also crafted a public persona who “cared about the problems of the common person.”⁵⁵ In 1975 he emptied garbage cans to learn the problems of the sanitation department, walked a beat with a police officer and administered first aid with ambulance attendants. He visited families in public housing units, and promised that their problems would no longer be ignored. At the same time, he carefully distinguished his politics from any “radical tinge.”⁵⁶ He placed a priority on economic growth, which gave him the support of pro-development groups. Cisneros made political compromises that cast him as a leader committed to both community and profit.

Cisneros’ win represented a new alliance between Anglo and Mexican American middle-class leaders. However, when Cisneros became mayor, his supporters expected him to mediate between two different forces. Business leaders wanted Cisneros to control the more radical Chicano members of the city council. In an interview with the Express News, reporter Rick Casey asks Cisneros if he can “improve decorum” at city council meetings, specifically referring to the outspoken Bernardo Euseste.⁵⁷ For the next six years, city council

politics would revolve around the different styles of Eureste and Cisneros.⁵⁸

Bernardo Eureste grew up in southside San Antonio. He completed his education at the University of Michigan and then returned to San Antonio as a professor at Our Lady of the Lake University. In 1977 he became one of the city councilmen in the city's new single member districts. Eureste's District Five was the poorest district of San Antonio's south and west sides. Overwhelmingly Mexicano, District Five reflected the interests of those who were left out of this new politics of inclusion. Eureste brought a more confrontational political style to city council meetings, and frequently challenged the growth policies of the business class. By 1978, Eureste became known as the "Champion of the Underdog."⁵⁹ He became a powerful political force, re-elected by large majorities in his district. For some political observers, he represented a long neglected community. His constituents, as well as many middle class Mexican Americans and Anglo liberals, supported his efforts to call attention to urban barrios and inner city development.⁶⁰

After Cisneros became mayor, Eureste became his "alter ego."⁶¹ Although the two leaders agreed on several issues, their contrasting political styles, and their differing goals concerning urban development, led to frequent conflicts. Their split not only reflected a conflict between the suburb and the barrio, it also reflected a split within the Mexican American middle class. Some, like Cisneros, believed that an alliance with the Anglo upper and middle classes would benefit the city as a whole. Other activists, like Eureste, wanted to use their political position to advocate for the specific needs of the barrio. Unfortunately, Eureste's

efforts were short lived. In 1983, personal scandal devastated Eureste's political career.⁶² His behavior became more erratic, and his concern for personal control over his district led to conflicts with many former supporters. In 1985, he came head to head with Cisneros again, this time over the issue of Sea World's plan to build a park in San Antonio. He embarrassed Cisneros, as local headlines published Eureste's charges. Sea World backed out of its initial plan, and Eureste was blamed for chasing away San Antonio's biggest investment opportunity in years.⁶³ This incident severed any alliance he had with Cisneros, who refused to endorse his bid for re-election. After Eureste's defeat, Cisneros no longer had any vocal opposition in the city council. Cisneros continued to attract new investments to the city, including plans for a biotechnology research park, a semiconductor plant and a major golf tournament. Once again, "the business of the city council was about business."⁶⁴

For many Anglo and Mexican American businessmen, Henry Cisneros was a symbol of interethnic reconciliation. In this new political context, a moderate, middle class organization like LULAC, with the support of an Anglo Rey, could convince the Fiesta commission to include a new king. Like Cisneros, Rey Feo formed a political bridge. To some, he also challenged King Antonio's prominence in Fiesta. Long before Rey Feo became part of Fiesta, he was compared to King Antonio.

The Grotesque King

LULAC strongly denies that the Rey Feo role ever had anything to do with King Antonio. Yet many continue to note the similarities between the roles. In 1983, *Texas Monthly* featured an article on Fiesta that claimed Rey Feo mocked King Antonio, despite statements to the contrary. “I told them again and again Rey Feo does not poke fun at King Antonio” said Stewart.⁶⁵ In order to continue their friendly relationship to the Texas Cavaliers, LULAC probably needed to make these refutations. Those who invented Rey Feo in 1947 claim that he was based on a Roman carnival tradition of crowning a slave king. As a symbolic inversion of the king, these crowned slaves could temporarily poke fun at royalty. However, even as LULAC representatives explain the role’s medieval origins, contemporary parallels are clear. Former LULAC President Sam Doria explains, “the legend is that the royalty became so segregated from the people that they were no longer representative. They were the wealthy, beautiful people. So the common people had a ceremony and selected their own king, the Ugly king of the Ugly people.”⁶⁶ Doria’s description was a thinly veiled description of Mexican American experiences in San Antonio. In the context of a segregated southern state, electing an “Ugly king” to represent one of the city’s largest Mexican American civic organizations was clearly a comment on the social conditions of postwar interethnic relations.

Rey Feo, like the Charro, was also a symbol of Mexican American manhood. During the late-nineteen sixties, LULAC produced a film to describe

the purpose of their Feria de las Flores festival, where Rey Feo is crowned. In the film script, the narrator announced that at the end of the evening, the LULAC committee would present “the male ‘divine’ as he really is—the ugly brute—calling him the Ugly King- and his symbol of authority is a Baby Goat.”⁶⁷ A common Mexican folk saying defines the ideal man as “fuerte, feo, y formal.” (strength, rugged, and upstanding) Although feo’s literal translation is “ugly,” in this context, it had an additional connotation of “ruggedness.”⁶⁸ In the Feria script, the Ugly King was described as a “brute.” He was an exaggerated image of masculine power. Like the charro, Rey Feo was created to portray a “common man’s” king who was not only an inversion of King Antonio, but an affirmation of Mexican American manhood.

When Rey Feo became a part of Fiesta, comparisons to King Antonio only increased. Rey Feo’s significance soon grew beyond Stewart’s initial campaign. Through the 1980s, prominent Mexican Americans publicly embraced his inclusion. Father Virgil Elizondo, rector at San Antonio’s San Fernando Cathedral, wrote this as “a festive breakthrough.” Rey Feo “is beginning to outdo King Antonio,” and has made Fiesta a celebration about “desegregating San Antonio.”⁶⁹ While the original Rey Feo represented a segregated social order, these new Reyes Feo represented political and social inclusion. He also, indirectly, challenged King Antonio’s authority to represent the city. Although King Antonio had been dethroned from his official position as ruler of all Fiesta ceremonies in the early 1970s, he was still referred to as the “King of Fiesta” as

late as 1979, simply because there were no other kings to challenge him.⁷⁰ The dual reign with Rey Feo, however, made this claim impossible. In the 1981 newspaper coverage of Fiesta royalty, the newly crowned King Antonio, David P. Steves, Jr., was quoted as saying that “it’s really not important who the king is, but that we have one...There should be more kings.” He also states that he was grateful for the presence of Rey Feo: “There certainly is no rivalry. We could use more kings. I am king for 400 men [the Texas Cavaliers], that’s all...any organization can elect a king.”⁷¹ His statements were decidedly more humble than 1979’s King Antonio, Paul McSween, who frequently referred to the Cavaliers’ central role in Fiesta history and pointed admirably to the rows of medallions on his uniform.⁷² While these differences may have something to do with the differing personalities of the two kings, the 1981 account seemed to place great emphasis on this new king’s “unpompousness.” The official inclusion of Rey Feo made any subsequent king’s royal claims more tenuous. Rey Feo’s mockery of King Antonio “reminds us of the arbitrary condition of imposing an order on our environment and experience, even while they enable us to see certain features of that order more simply because they have turned it inside out.”⁷³ The royal title was revealed as an arbitrary designation of political and social organizations, not the divine right of the Texas Cavaliers.

The “People’s Parade”

Rey Feo’s first parade further demonstrated his image as “the common man’s king”. LULAC had difficulty finding applications for its parade, because so

many organizations and schools were either already committed to the Battle of Flowers or could not afford \$3000 floats.⁷⁴ The 116 entries of the Rey Feo parade consisted mostly of pickup trucks hauling flat-bed trailers and out of town high school bands. The crowd was also significantly smaller than at the Battle of Flowers' parade. However, the *Light* celebrated the smallness of the parade as a milestone in itself. The parade was said to be more personal. The paper quoted one viewer as noting that "the people in the parade talk to you and wave to you as an individual."⁷⁵ The parade itself was named "the People's Parade," with the explicit goal of creating a spectacle that "people can actually take part in and be able to feel that they're participating in, not just watching." The *Light* published an interview with parade organizer Sam Doria, who helped define the parade on these terms. The article also implied that "people" was another name for the Mexican American community. Rey Feo's parade was the "Hispanic parade." The *San Antonio Light* interviewer even asked if "Anglos would feel comfortable" there. Much could be said about this question, but here it is sufficient to note that the *Light* hinted at a continuing anxiety within the Anglo community about any event organized and predominantly attended by Mexican Americans. This question may also indicate that the actual relationship between the Anglo and Mexican American communities was not quite as unified as the Fiesta royalty would wish to portray.

Logan Stewart was disappointed in his "Paseo del Rey Feo" parade. He wanted it to be an equal spectacle to the Battle of Flowers and the Fiesta

Flambeau. Stewart wanted an equal position to King Antonio. Rey Feo, and his new parade, received ambivalent reactions from Anglos. This “people’s parade,” with its flat bed trucks and cheap decorations, expressed a desire, among many San Antonians, for a parade where the spectators could also be participants. On the other hand, Rey Feo could also represent some Anglos’ continuing fears about Mexican American power and social proximity. For Mexican Americans, though, Rey Feo represented the hope of an equal, integrated community.

After six years, though, Rey Feo lost his parade because of LULAC’s internal disputes and continued lack of funding. As a result, the most “popular” element of Rey Feo’s inclusion was discarded. At the same time, Rey Feo became a bigger part of Fiesta, and his role changed. He assumed the year-long duties of hospital and school visits and charity functions. One observer, Ruben Mungia, believed that something was lost when Rey Feo became a citywide figure. He was not seen as accessible to “the people” he initially represented. Rey Feo “used to be something that was supposed to be fun. Now it’s so dogmatic and ritualistic.”⁷⁶

When the Rey Feo role began, his “royal clothing” was an inexpensive faux-velvet cloak and oversized medieval crown. His new “uniform” cost \$600, and he had to buy three of them. His new headdress, a metal crown with fake jewels, was ordered from London.⁷⁷ This new uniform was also more similar to King Antonio’s. King Antonio wore a paramilitary uniform covered with medallions (civic service awards), a red plumed hat and a ceremonial sword. Rey Feo’s outfit was less military in style, a white suit and a broad, brightly colored

sash. He also included an array of medals on his chest, though. Along with Rey Feo's traditional award of a cabrito (baby goat), he also invented the new "Royal Order of the Cabrito," an honorary title given to his friends and associates, which was explicitly patterned after the Cavaliers' "Royal Order of the Red Plume". He also joined King Antonio in Fiesta's opening ceremonies.

However, Rey Feo did not become exactly like King Antonio. King Antonio maintained his connection to the heritage elite. His coronation was the only Fiesta ceremony to occur within the Alamo walls. After a solemn initiation within the Alamo chapel, King Antonio emerged before the larger public. Rey Feo continued to have his coronation during La Feria de Las Flores. His Order of the Cabrito included a wider variety of Anglo, Mexican American and African American businessmen, local tv newscasters and other civic who did not find a place within the Texas Cavaliers.

One can also trace another shift in the public meanings attached to the two kings. In 1981, a minor, yet significant change, occurred in newspaper coverage of the Rey Feo parade. What had previously been referred to as "the people's parade" became the "fun people's parade."⁷⁸ Additionally, while in earlier years King Antonio had occasionally been called the King of Merriment, this label seems to have transferred to Rey Feo in 1981.⁷⁹ These contrasting roles also seem to be directly related to Rey Feo's proposed position as "king of the Hispanics" and King Antonio's role as "king of the Anglos." Rey Feo was continually marked with "Mexicanness." In this sense, Rey Feo did eclipse King Antonio as

Fiesta king. Rey Feo represented Fiesta's new leadership, an interethnic business class committed to selling Mexicanness in the Fiesta city.

The political changes during the 1970s, and the criticisms Mexican American leaders made of Fiesta traditions, helped force open a space for the integration of Rey Feo into the largest event in San Antonio's public culture. However, this new king's position in relation to the larger Mexican American community, always questionable, was further complicated by his integration into the Fiesta ranks. While it would be misleading to lament Rey Feo's fall from an idealized "popular representative" of the Mexican American community, the shift in this ugly king's persona points to the limitations of inclusion in Fiesta's royal ranks. Rey Feo is the culmination of decades of struggle for political inclusion, yet he also marks the boundaries of this alliance. For many Mexican American civic leaders, Rey Feo symbolized a victory against the heritage elite. However, Rey Feo did not necessarily lessen the social distance between himself and families like the Salazars, sitting in their lawn chairs waiting for the parade. Instead, he demonstrated a widening gap between a Mexican American middle class that gained from these new political alliances, and a larger population of poor and working class Mexicanos that were excluded from these benefits. Rey Feo moved from the margins into the center of the city's public culture, but his success did not extend to all of "his subjects." In the following chapter, I will look at the limitations of the rhetoric of inclusion, to those who are continually "out of place" in Fiesta.

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- ¹ Names of informants have been changed at their request.
- ² Andy Hernandez, "Mexican Americans are becoming part of Fiesta," *San Antonio Light*, April 26, 1990, C11.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Gracie Poe Griffin, personal interview, November 6, 1998.
- ⁵ I am utilizing Judy Wu's approach to the Miss Chinatown pageant, *Journal of Social History*, Fall 1997.
- ⁶ Ibid, 16.
- ⁷ Queen of Soul Pageant invitation, April 9, 1974, Personal Collection.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Fiske, 97.
- ¹⁰ Michaele Haynes, *Dressing Up Debutantes: Pageantry and Glitz in Texas* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998), 59.
- ¹¹ Christi Phelps, "A Tale of Two Kings," *San Antonio Monthly*, April 1986, 61.
- ¹² Christine Marie Sierra makes this argument in her article "In Search of National Power: Chicanos Working the System on Immigration Reform, 1976-1986," in *Chicano Politics and Society In the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. David Montejano, 131-153 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).
- ¹³ Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans*, 1-24. For a summary of the Mexican American generation's ideology, see also Ignacio M. Garcia, "Backwards from Aztlan: Politics in the Age of Hispanics" in *Chicanas and Chicanos in Contemporary Society*, ed. Roberto M. De Anda (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996).
- ¹⁴ Marquez, 2.
- ¹⁵ Although each "generation"- Mexican American, Chicano and Hispanic- represents a particular historic and cultural movement, these terms do not describe the goals and values of all Mexicanos during each period. These terms can not adequately account for the complexity and range of ideas and opinions of the Mexicano population. However, they do represent shifts in the guiding ideologies of significant numbers of political and social leaders and organizations.
- ¹⁶ De Anda, 196.
- ¹⁷ Montejano, 289-90.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, 290.
- ¹⁹ Ignacio García, 199.
- ²⁰ Ibid. Again, I would add that the Hispanic generation does not refer to the attitudes of all Mexicanos of this generation.
- ²¹ Montejano, 306.
- ²² Montejano, "On the Future of Anglo-Mexican Relations" in *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century*, David Montejano, ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 238.
- ²³ David R. Johnson, John A. Booth and Richard J. Harris, *The Politics of San Antonio: Community, Progress, and Power* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 78-87.
- ²⁴ Rodolfo Rosales, *The Illusion of Inclusion: The Untold Political Story of San Antonio* (Austin: University of Texas Press 2000), 143-44.
- ²⁵ Bernal, as quoted in Phelps, 60.
- ²⁶ *San Antonio Express*, September 15, 1977, 1B.
- ²⁷ Phelps, 61.
- ²⁸ In several of the post World War II Fiesta articles in the local press, prominent city representatives would describe their Fiesta costumes (as I detailed in Chapter Five). The members of such organizations as the Mexican Chamber of Commerce often wore the charro outfit. *San Antonio Light*, April 20, 1953.
- ²⁹ Olga Najera-Ramirez, "Engendering Nationalism: Identity, Discourse, and the Mexican Charro." *Anthropological Quarterly* 1.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 2.
- ³¹ Ibid., 3.

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- ³² Ibid., 4.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 6.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 6.
- ³⁶ Virgil, Maximo, "Viva El Charro!" Fiesta San Antonio Commission Papers, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- ³⁷ Delores Carson, "Daring Charreada Riders Carry Old Traditions" *San Antonio Light*. April 24, 1988.
- ³⁸ Socrates Ramirez, personal interview August 15, 2003.
- ³⁹ Najera-Ramirez, 10.
- ⁴⁰ "Miss Charro" is now called the Queen of the San Antonio Charro Association.
- ⁴¹ *San Antonio Light*, April 19, 1980, 2A.
- ⁴² *San Antonio Express News*, April 20, 1980, 2G.
- ⁴³ Phelps, 61.
- ⁴⁴ *San Antonio Light*, April 19, 1980, 2A.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Phelps, 113.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Haynes, 65.
- ⁵⁰ *San Antonio Light*, April 20, 1980, 2A.
- ⁵¹ *San Antonio Express*, April 20, 1980, 1G.
- ⁵² Kemper Diehl and Jan Jarboe, *Cisneros: Portrait of a New American* (San Antonio: Corona Publishing Co., 1985), 71.
- ⁵³ *San Antonio Express*, April 4, 1981, 1A.
- ⁵⁴ *San Antonio Express*, April 5, 1981, 11A.
- ⁵⁵ Rosales, 144, 146.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ *San Antonio Express*, April 19, 1981, 1H.
- ⁵⁸ Rosales, 149.
- ⁵⁹ This term is taken from an article in the *San Antonio Light*. "Bernardo Eureste: He's a Champion of the Underdog" November 5, 1978.
- ⁶⁰ Rosales, 151-2.
- ⁶¹ Ibid, 152.
- ⁶² In a city park, Eureste, a married man, was attacked by muggers while in a sexually compromising position with one of his female aides. Eureste left the young woman to seek the police. Thus, he was accused not only of adultery, but of abandoning a young woman in danger. Later, he apologized to his constituents, and successfully won a runoff election to keep his seat. However, his political career never recovered.
- ⁶³ Sea World later renegotiated a deal, and the water park was built.
- ⁶⁴ Rosales, 157.
- ⁶⁵ Phelps, 113.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ From "La Feria de las Flores: A Festival with a Purpose" for Tony Benavides productions. Jacob I. Rodriguez Papers, LULAC Archives, The University of Texas at Austin.
- ⁶⁸ Olga Najera Ramirez makes this distinction in her article, 9, 13.
- ⁶⁹ Elizondo, *The Future is Mestizo*, 48, 50.
- ⁷⁰ *San Antonio Light*, April 22, 1979, 1A.
- ⁷¹ *San Antonio Express*, April 19, 1981, 1P.
- ⁷² *San Antonio Light*, April 22, 1979, 1L.
- ⁷³ Babcock, 29.
- ⁷⁴ Phelps, 56.

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- ⁷⁵ *San Antonio Light*, April 19, 1980, 4C.
⁷⁶ Ruben Mungia, as quoted in Phelps, 114.
⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
⁷⁸ *San Antonio Light*, April 17, 1981, 1A.
⁷⁹ *San Antonio Light*, April 19, 1981, 1A.

Chapter 7
Fiesta Rowdiness:
La Semana de Carnaval

For the Fiesta Flambeau parade of 2002, I sat in one of the four-dollar seats on Broadway, with one of my high school friends and her family. The “night parade”, as it is more commonly known, began with the color guard, a high school ROTC, veterans’ organizations, firefighters, and a procession of police motorcycles and cars. The University of Texas Longhorn band played, and Eva Longoria, a hometown girl who recently made it big on the *Young and the Restless*, was the grand marshal of the parade.

As innumerable floats and bands continued to process down the street, parade spectators became increasingly interested in each other. In the spaces between floats, our section of the audience started a cart wheeling contest between one side of the street and the other, encouraged by the repetitive calls of “We got spirit. Yes we do. We got spirit. How ‘bout you?” Toward the end of the parade, the more intoxicated spectators turned this into a mooning contest, and soon after several police officers moved to our section to control the crowd. One woman in front of me, whom I knew only by her San Antonio Spurs’ Tim Duncan jersey, found this suppression particularly annoying. She wanted to continue the contests, and frequently challenged both the police officers and the opposing crowd. “Duncan’s” protests represented a deeper challenge to the parade as well. The parade was more than an orderly display of civic unity or a celebration of San

Antonio's place in the nation, but a dynamic interaction of the multiple histories of the crowd. As we cheered for our respective high school bands, we marked our places in this urban landscape. As young men and women cart-wheeled in the open street spaces between floats, they competed for a place in public culture.

In this chapter, I would like to invoke "Duncan's" sense of the "Fiesta spirit" as a representation of a deeper longing for civic inclusion. Her behavior was disruptive, inappropriate, "out of place." She made others around her uncomfortable (including myself), and in doing so demonstrated a continuing tension within the politics of inclusion. The many pageants, parades and fairs that make up contemporary Fiesta are part of an amnesiac compromise between an Anglo elite who continue their private parties in honor of the Alamo heroes, and the rest of us, who collect plastic beer cups and celebrate a middle-class multicultural consumerism.

At the end of this dissertation, I feel it is necessary to address what the "democratizing" movements of the 1950s and the Anglo-Mexican middle-class politics of compromise in the 1970s have not addressed. The working class Mexicano population, which made up one third of the Texas-Mexican population in 1980, is largely overlooked in this new Anglo-Hispanic alliance, yet this population "constitutes a massive pervasive social reality" in this region.¹ Jose Limón refers to David Harvey's explanations about the breakdown of the Fordist contract by the 1970s, and the emergence of a new political-economic condition Harvey calls "flexible accumulation," which includes, among other things, the

surge in “service sector” employment.² Limón illustrates these economic shifts in terms of their particularly devastating effects on San Antonio’s Mexicano poor and lower working class.

As Miguel de Oliver argues, San Antonio’s contemporary public culture simultaneously endorses multiculturalism and practices racial discrimination. Though the city’s tourism industry celebrates and sells Mexican culture, they have spatially and economically excluded Mexicano residents from the benefits of this industry. De Oliver details the ways San Antonio’s downtown tourist spaces were built to isolate them from surrounding neighborhoods, which are predominantly poor and non-Anglo.³ At the same time, business developers make tourist space more accessible to visitors, who seek an antidote to modern life in therapeutic primitivism. However, this did not require, and in fact discouraged, the physical presence of these “Others;” all that was needed were their commodified symbols.

For minorities, despite legal equality and high-profile participation in the marketplace of representations, contemporary multiculturalism results in continued *bodily* socioeconomic marginalization, but full citizenship in the *democracy of commodities*.⁴

Fiesta certainly demonstrates these dual processes of commodified multiculturalism and racial stratification. The city’s tourist industry has continually marginalized and isolated poor and working class Mexicano communities, even as it has appropriated the benefits of their “festive” culture.

When describing the history of Fiesta and San Antonio, journalist Rick Casey writes that the city was a frontier town “until the Germans came to tame it and force progress on it. It took the Germans to get [Fiesta] organized, and it took the Mexicans to make it special.”⁵ To extend this dichotomy a bit further, in many Fiesta publicity materials, the business of the event has been credited to the city’s Anglo community, while Mexicanos contribute a festive atmosphere. In the discursive division between labor and leisure, Mexicans have often been pejoratively relegated to the latter category. Thus, when the gringos want to party, they turn to “things Mexican.” Casey states that “you don’t have to be Mexican to love to sing and dance.” Even non-Hispanics can participate in this “ambiente.”

Many in San Antonio’s Anglo community see Fiesta’s borrowing of Mexican culture as a sign of respect. Casey, once again, argues that [cultural institutions] “paid the Mexican American community the respect of taking from it, rather than ‘giving’ to it.” Casey is correct in his assessment that San Antonio has reaped the benefits of mexicanness. The “special” quality of Mexican culture is the basis for selling this Fiesta city. However, most Mexicanos themselves have not received most of the benefits of this selling of place.

In this chapter, I highlight three incidents, spanning Fiesta’s post World War II history, that demonstrate the ways San Antonio’s poor and working-class communities of color have been stigmatized during Fiesta. While the city’s middle class enjoyed a greater politics of inclusion, these communities were marginalized by the discourse of violence. These “Other” San Antonians

continued to come to Fiesta, but the events they largely attended were often described as “rowdy” and potentially dangerous by the local press. These assertions, largely unfounded, further isolated these communities from the city’s public culture.

Puro Party

Several critics have noted the limitations of Fiesta’s multicultural rhetoric. *La Voz de Esperanza*, a small newspaper published by the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, also devoted a 1993 issue to Fiesta critiques. Esperanza is a San Antonio community organization advocating a number of social justice and environmental issues, particularly within the Chicano/a and lesbian/gay communities. Laura Codina, in her article “The What, How y Qué Más of Fiesta,” writes:

There has been an ongoing struggle to incorporate [Chicana/os] representation, our continued presence in this event and in this land. It is a drive to regain lost ground, sabotaging the original intention of Fiesta. But it has become an end in itself, ‘puro party,’ dulling the repressed masses, blocking revolution and evolution.⁶

A recent documentary emphasizes this aspect of Fiesta as well. Produced by three San Antonio filmmakers for Deep Dish television, “Puro Party: Celebrating a Genocide” attacks Fiesta as a racist celebration. The theme of the thirty minute piece, as it documents several parades and street fairs, is that while the majority of working-class Mexicanos in San Antonio like to party and forget about the history of racial and class discrimination in San Antonio, the Anglo Fiesta organizers are playing a joke on them, presenting distorted parodies of

Mexican American culture for their naïve consumption. Graciela Sanchez, head of the Esperanza center, in the film defines Fiesta as “white businessmen making money off of poor Chicanos.” Her statement simplifies the event, yet it is fair to say that Fiesta makes much of its money off the working class. The Carnival, which has the highest working-class participation of the festival, also contributes more than thirty percent to Fiesta’s budget, the largest percentage of any event. The three parades, on the other hand, do not produce a profit. Instead, the Fiesta Commission funds them, and most of the money of NIOSA goes back to its sponsoring organization. Most of the celebrated events take more money to run than they contribute.

Yet there are also problems with the themes of “Puro Party.” The most frequently repeated image in the film is of the white Queen sitting on her float and “waving to the brown people” along the parade route. In the film, the Queen is supposed to represent the hegemony of the Anglo, wealthy Fiesta organizers. Yet Fiesta organizers and volunteers are no longer just this group of Anglo elites. The documentary argues that the Fiesta power structure has not changed, when it has actually changed quite significantly, as has the city’s. While the kings and queens of fiesta are still from the same families who controlled the city one hundred years ago, these families now have to share their power with many middle-class organizations that contribute most of the work of Fiesta. The city’s changes are illustrated in the film itself. One of the producers, Lizzie Martinez, went to the same high school as that year’s queen. As she is filming the queen’s float, she

calls to Katie. The Queen, Katie, sees her, and they have a brief conversation as the float rides down the parade route. Lizzie then talks in the film about her memories of their shared car pool rides as kids. The incident reflects the contradictory position of San Antonio's Mexican American upper middle class. They share rides to school and go to each other's parties, but there are moments, especially during Fiesta, when they also become a white queen waving to a brown person in the crowd. Much of the Mexican American middle-class activity in Fiesta has worked to resolve this contradiction—to finally enter the private circle of the heritage elite. What these critics have ignored is that middle-class Mexican Americans have taken over the rest of Fiesta.

De Oliver's analysis also minimizes the presence of the Mexican American middle class in the invention of the Fiesta city. Racial binaries do not adequately express the Fiestas in the later part of the twentieth century. The end of Jim Crow segregation in San Antonio and South Texas has contributed to the growth of the city's Mexican American middle class, and some of these members have made an alliance with an Anglo business elite. Today, while a group of Anglo elites continue to dominate in terms of political and economic power in the city, they do so along with an upper-middle-class Mexican American population who also benefit.⁷ Looking at the members of the board of the Fiesta San Antonio commission in 1990, which had a Mexican American president, Roger Flores, and several other Mexican American members, one can see evidence of the politics of inclusion.

David Montejano notes that this new political inclusion has not solved the social and economic problems of most Mexican Americans. In 1990, twenty-five percent of Mexican Americans lived in poverty, and high school drop out rates have actually increased to 56.4 percent. Such evidence suggests that “the Mexican American community has been split into a socially incorporated middle class and a socially segregated lower class.”⁸ As I have demonstrated, contemporary Fiestas are part of the story of this limited political inclusion. Yet many Fiesta participants are from these other sectors of the Mexicano community—poor, working class, and first generation immigrants who enjoy the food, music and merriment of Fiesta. For the most part, they cannot afford to pay the eight dollar admission cost to NIOSA, or attend the many other private fundraisers that week. Instead, they go to the Carnival or the Mercado, the two remaining free events at Fiesta, and they attend the parades. They are not just watching the royal court. Their children are in the marching bands, or on the floats of the hundreds of local businesses that participate. They often make parade visits a family tradition. Their stories, for the most part, were not included in the Fiesta archives, and Fiesta critics have simplified their experiences, but they keep attending Fiesta. The event they attend most often is the Carnival. In the following pages, I look at the scattered fragments of the Carnival’s history in Fiesta.

Carnaval

The Carnival is the second oldest Fiesta event. Within the first few years of the Battle of Flowers Parade, individual vendors were setting up booths of

carnival attractions in San Antonio's downtown plazas. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Carnival became the main Fiesta event for most San Antonians. However, when Fiesta expanded after World War II, the Carnival was one of the first events some businessmen tried to eliminate. In August 1959, the same year that the Fiesta San Antonio Commission formed, a group of about ninety merchants, the "Downtowners," threatened to file suit against the city if street permits were issued for the Fiesta Carnival. Herbert Schenker, an attorney for the group, claimed that the Carnival was "degenerate," a haven for illegal gambling and pornography.⁹ Although the Downtowners' primary concern was the amount of revenue they lost during the Carnival, carnies' corruption was used as a way to seek popular support for the suit.

Local newspapers were quite responsive to the call. Within days, a Fiesta event became the most notorious of the festival's offspring. However, the Carnival would not be easy to remove. The event was run by private contractors, and thus outside the Fiesta organization's direct control. Most importantly, Carnival revenue funded every other Fiesta event. Fiesta organizers depended upon the Carnival contractor's advance payments to run all three parades and to allocate monies to each participating organization. The Downtowners discovered that the Carnival, a marginalized event often ignored in festival promotions, was actually the center of Fiesta.

The Downtowners' official reasons for filing a suit were that the city did not have the right to lease public streets to private contractors, and that such

practices were unfair to downtown merchants.¹⁰ Actually, San Antonio's mayor Kuykendall readily acknowledged that these leasings were "not exactly legal." However, this reason alone did not seem to generate much public support, given that doing away with this system of city permits would eliminate most of Fiesta.

Although the Downtowners initiated the debate, local journalists focused on the Carnival as the site of illegal activity. "Games of chance" were targeted as the source of Carnival corruption. The district attorney quickly joined in the campaign, threatening to crack down on gambling during the following Fiesta week. The FSJA sought a compromise by promising to create a "clean carnival." Yet this did not satisfy the Downtowners, who claimed that the carnival operators would not make a profit unless gambling was permitted. Schenker stated that

The carnival operators will not put up a red dime unless the city guarantees they can operate their bingo and skin games. The only way they can make money is by taking the pennies, nickels, and dimes from poor kids and they know it.¹¹

Schenker also noted the numerous knife injuries suffered in the past year, and the added cost in police protection to the area. Carnival critiques offer an interesting combination of moral concerns. On the one hand, Schenker portrays carnival operators as manipulators, taking advantage of the young and the poor. On the other hand, some residents portray this crowd itself as inherently violent. One citizen claimed, in 1950, that the Carnival should be removed because "too many juvenile delinquents are loose in there. It's getting so you can't walk in without running into trouble."¹²

However, public opinion about the Carnival was not always consistent with such accounts. The controversy often seemed to split along class and ethnic lines. In a poll taken by the *San Antonio Express*, in 1959, the respondents who supported the Carnival were predominantly from working-class neighborhoods on the east and west sides of the city, while the majority of those who opposed the Carnival were from the newer middle class suburbs north of town.¹³ The two main organizations which came to support the Carnival were Mexican American—LULAC and the Mexican Chamber of Commerce. At this time, when both legal and de facto racial segregation was a continuing fact of social life, people of color were more unified in their support of the Carnival.

In this fight, the two city papers also took opposing sides. For the most part, the conservative *San Antonio Express* sided with the carnival critics. *The San Antonio Light* seemed to offer a different perspective. As *The Light* had defended Reynolds Andricks' attempts to "open up" Fiesta, the paper also supported the Carnival as the event most accessible to a diverse public. One columnist identified the critique of the carnival as a north side attempt to "do away with a social irritant."¹⁴ *The Light* was more concerned with the Carnival as an "everyman's" Fiesta. At the time, the Carnival was one of the only free events in the festival. A few of these divergent opinions filtered into the *Express* as well. One merchant claimed that "opponents of a downtown carnival are possibly in a financial condition where they can stage their own celebrations in one of the local country clubs...But to the average wage-earner Carnival is his fiesta."¹⁵ For people of

color, this alternative conception of carnival was particularly important. For Gracie Poe Griffin, an African American woman who grew up on the city's west side during the 1950s, the Carnival was where she felt safe. The Carnival was one of the only Fiesta events that had a long history of welcoming people of color.¹⁶ What critics defined as a dangerous space, she redefined as the only safe space for working class African Americans and Mexican Americans.

The Carnival survived because their attendance and consumption provided the economic foundation for Fiesta. However, as more diverse public events became part of Fiesta, businessmen and city officials would make periodic attempts to eliminate the Carnival. In 1968, the City Council asked the Fiesta Commission to do away with the Carnival so that it would not compete with attendance at Hemisfair. The Commission agreed, and the following year the City Council again asked for it to be cancelled. The Fiesta Commission, however, was already in a fiscal crisis, and so the Carnival was reinstated. Even as late as 1991, *Express News* columnist David Richelieu described the Carnival as "a squalid hotbed of knifings, shootings, assaults, and even live daytime sex." (Apparently, two carnival workers were discovered having intercourse on the grounds that year).¹⁷ Like his predecessors, Richelieu described corruption and debauchery as endemic to the Carnival.

As the previous incidents reveal, many businessmen have constructed the Carnival as "out of place" in Fiesta. As Fiesta has been promoted as a space of civic unity and interethnic friendship, the Carnival has been its "immoral

geography,” marking the boundaries of this evolving alliance.¹⁸ In the early twentieth century, Anglos stigmatized a treacherous Mexican Other at the Alamo, and to some extent during Fiesta as well. In the last fifty years, Carnival has been the space for a new (and yet familiar) “Other.” In the local press, postwar anxieties emerged over the Fiesta attendance of adolescent men of color. The image of the “savage” re-appeared in newspapers stories about the violent behavior of young Chicanos and African Americans.¹⁹ As the charro and Rey Feo offered positive images of Mexicano masculinity, the “juvenile delinquents” were portrayed as the most dangerous form of “machismo” and male violence.

“Rampage in the Streets”

The Carnival is the most frequent target of this “othering,” but different events in Fiesta have initiated the same concerns. A very different form of disruption occurred after the Fiesta River parade in April 1969. After the parade, between 400 and 1000 “youths” marched through downtown. Apparently, the march was organized by the local chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a predominantly African American organization committed to fighting segregation through direct action. None of the newspaper accounts made the marchers’ motivation clear. Instead, both newspapers described the event as a Fiesta disruption. The SNCC protest was probably an anti-Vietnam war demonstration, but their purpose was not mentioned in the press. The march seemed to have very little to do with Fiesta itself, but the large crowd who came to see the parade and go to downtown street fairs offered a unique opportunity for

SNCC to give their message. In this sense, the Fiesta crowd offered another opportunity for more organized forms of social protest.

However, the anxious talk that surrounded the march was more similar to the Carnival controversy. One consistent theme is that of “mob” disorderliness. In the process of reporting the march, other dissimilar “disturbances” were indiscriminately merged with these accounts.²⁰ The march loses its distinctive cause, and becomes yet another example of “juvenile delinquency.” On the other hand, what seemed most threatening about this particular event was its high level of organization. Unlike disruptions in previous years, which were not even mentioned in the press, this march was extensively covered. Although characterized as disorderly, what made the event noteworthy was actually its orderliness.

Once again, the city’s newspapers described the controversy rather differently. The *Express* and the *San Antonio News* (a smaller paper distributed on the Northside) did not make much of the event, noting that the “disturbance” failed to disrupt the parade. In this account, the “mostly Negro youths” “milled around” and looted downtown businesses for two hours until police came and “brought things under control.”²¹ Little else is said about the march. In these accounts the assembled crowd appears the most disorderly. SNCC is not even mentioned as an organization. Instead, the march becomes one of many failed attempts to disrupt the week’s festivities.

Rather than diminish the event, the *San Antonio Light* takes the opposite approach. The front page article “Rampage in Downtown S.A.” sensationalizes the march as a threatening “organized disturbance.”²² In this depiction, the protesting crowd became a mob of African Americans and “several white hippies” who broke windows and looted buildings. In contrast to this unruly group, the police did not use excessive force. “Despite the organized nature of the disturbance, police acted with restraint throughout the two hours.” Interestingly, while the article referred to the planned nature of the protest, it never referred to any particular motive. Instead, the irrationality of the incident was highlighted by this absence of a cause. The SNCC was criticized for not controlling the crowd, as it reported frantic student leaders using police megaphones saying “we’ve made our point” and encouraging the crowd to disperse.²³ Unfortunately, it seems that the point was not well communicated to the press. Instead, “black militants” were ultimately characterized as being disruptive for the sake of stealing guns and breaking windows, and the police were lauded.

The sensational tone of the *Light*’s reporting was consistent with the style used to describe other more minor Fiesta incidents that year as well. A front page headline four days later declares that “violence mars Fiesta parade.”²⁴ The actual incident, however, failed to live up to the promise of the headline. Exploding firecrackers were mistaken for gunfire, and in the confusion the Fiesta queen was taken off her float halfway through the parade. After describing the incident, the article followed with a list of other disturbances during the parade, including one

man who was “taunted into fighting with four men who ridiculed his western attire.” Although numerous fights were cited, none seemed to amount to a great disturbance, yet the list emphasizes these events. “Isolated incidents involving police and unidentified tormentors seemed to be the order of the day.” Also, although many of the “tormentors” were left unidentified in the article, a few names and descriptions were prevalent. Most importantly, while the names of the pranksters responsible for the firecracker incident were not disclosed, a “Negro youth” who somehow “attempted to interfere” with the queen’s evacuation was given a name and an address.²⁵ The few descriptions of the parade disrupters were usually identified as “militant black youths.” Thus, while the long list of fights among the crowd indicate that the “disturbances” were spread throughout the parade route, African Americans were targeted as the chief source of trouble.

While the *San Antonio Light* gave more coverage to the SNCC march, the rhetoric of this coverage does more to de-legitimize the protest than other city papers. The reports of property damage showed that this was a rather mild “rampage.” Overall, nine arrests were made, five pistols were stolen from one downtown store, some costume jewelry taken from another, and a few windows were broken. It is also never clear that the marching crowd were the persons responsible for the looting. Because the protest occurred after the River Parade, thousands of other people were “milling around” the area at the same time. However, in these newspaper stories, the protestors were defined as a “roving crowd” which was not only unresponsive to calls for order, but also distinctly

separate from parade spectators, although it is difficult to know how these distinctions could be made in the aftermath of a downtown crowd after the parade.

Because the police found that the “black militants” could not control their ranks, the cops were to “drop the soft approach” for later demonstrations.²⁶ In another article paralleling the “rampage,” Police Chief Bichsel reported that although police had previously honored requests to use restraint in restoring order after demonstrations, this disturbance demonstrated that these tactics did not work. In the future, the police should “respond more swiftly and more positively.”²⁷ In the previous article Bichsel had acknowledged that damage was minimal and that a greater disturbance occurred the previous year, but he simultaneously defined the disturbance as out of control. He used this definition to further justify the change in police tactics, even though this protest was less violent and more organized.

The most disturbing aspect of this shift in police tactics, though, is in a story reported the next day. Apparently, the night after the parade disturbance police came to the Langston Hughes Center, the SNCC headquarters, based on reports of “a rifle being displayed” outside the building.²⁸ A spokesman for the SNCC charged that the police “brutally beat” organization members, and arrested five of them afterwards. While it is uncertain whether this was a retaliation for the previous demonstration, it seems likely that this was the product of Bichsel’s new tactics.

The structure of the *Light's* narrative also discredits the SNCC march by placing it in the context of other "Fiesta disturbances." By equating this event with firecracker explosions and crowd fights, the *Light*, like the *Express*, does not distinguish social protest from social disorder. However, because the *Light* does give so much coverage to the events, these accounts also furnish a counter-narrative. One of the primary sources for this narrative is in the photographs accompanying the week's articles. While the reports claim that the "rampage" was the work of black militants, the photos were of police force. On the front page, a police officer grabs one of the protestors. On the next page of the article, the police are shown in riot formation, giving "a protestor's eye view of the police line."²⁹ Three days later, when firecrackers caused crowd panic, the photos again showed police officers drawing their guns and wielding riot sticks.³⁰ Although the articles highlight police restraint, the photos emphasized their aggression, particularly against African American youths. In one picture, the seventeen-year-old African American who was taken into custody for "interfering" is shown with a bloodied face. (The accompanying article does claim that the officer had to use force to restrain him during his arrest). Thus, although SNCC's message was never voiced in the city's papers, the photographs of police force question the accounts of their "restraint." In the photograph of "a protestor's eye view" of the police in riot formation, the newspaper also offered an interesting opportunity to identify with these youths. Although the photo's purpose may have been to offer an intimidating show of force, the picture also paradoxically invites the reader to

identify with the demonstrators. Ultimately, the accumulation of images seem to argue the possibility that in their attempts to “restore order,” the cops may have been more disruptive, and done more damage, than the “militant” protestors.

The same newspaper that defended the Carnival ten years ago as “every man’s Fiesta,” now participated in the demonization of African American youth. Perhaps the *Light*’s new narratives were part of widespread Anglo Americans’ fears about “black youth militance” during the late 1960s. Yet this rhetoric of youth violence continued into the 1990s. In a different form of Fiesta transgression, Mexicano and African American youth were once again targeted as sources of festival concern, those who “spoiled the party.” Though the SNCC protest was not part of Fiesta itself, the local press connected their march to anxieties about the participation of young men of color in the city’s public culture.

La Semana Alegre

Rules is rules, do’s and don’t’s and wont’s
Got picked up for checking some dude’s oil
At La Semana Alegre.
There I was having beers and beers
Checking out chicks in tops like tubes...
Then some dude steps on my fuckin’ shoe.³¹

In this poem about one of Fiesta’s most notorious events, La Semana Alegre (“the festive week”), Santiago Garcia takes the voice of a young Mexicano “gang” member in the 1980s, who was placed in custody for stabbing another person (“checking some dude’s oil”). Garcia expresses a common stereotype of young Mexicano men’s behavior—drinking heavily, lusting after women, and

prone to irrational violence. By the 1980s, La Semana Alegre became synonymous with these depictions of San Antonio's "gang" culture. I do not wish to ignore the problems that alcohol and violence cause for the city's youth, but the depictions of this culture, by the local press and some local poets, has been used to re-create notions of "the savage." These stereotypes also led to the discontinuation of La Semana, one of Fiesta's most popular events.

The accounts of the "irate crowd" that gave Fiesta's La Semana Alegre a bad reputation are very similar to descriptions of the Carnival and of the SNCC protest. The greater violence of the city's youth, in terms of increasing numbers of gangs and homicides, resembles Limón's description of the "post modern working class mexicano," who often turns to socially unacceptable forms of expression such as gang culture.³² These expressions are the language of today's "juvenile delinquents," and Fiesta's La Semana Alegre (along with the Carnival) was their social space.

In the late 1980s a relatively new Fiesta event attracted the local press's attention—La Semana Alegre, a festival that featured lots of food, beer, and heavy metal music. Understandably, this event attracted a younger audience. Many inner city kids looked to La Semana as their "adolescent playground"—a place to drink, party, and celebrate the temporary emancipation from parental rule.³³ As it grew, La Semana attracted bad press. In the minds of many a newspaper columnist, La Semana had replaced the Carnival as "the ugly stepchild" of Fiesta.³⁴ The event became particularly controversial after a 1990

concert. One evening, Faster Pussycat, a local metal band, and its audience began chanting obscenities at the security guards. After several unsuccessful calls to stop the chants, the police turned off the power. Afterwards, the crowd rushed the stage and the band began destroying equipment.³⁵

This incident was the beginning of the end of La Semana. Although reports indicate that this was an unusual event, and place most of the blame on the band, the stage-rushing was soon combined with other incidents. On April 24, 1990, one day after, an article about several fights was placed underneath the coverage of the concert, entitled “Fistfights mar Fiesta celebration.”³⁶ Although police officers interviewed at the event claimed that these occurrences were normal, and not greater than previous years, the press began to write about them in more detail. The following day the *San Antonio Light* ran an article about increased security at Fiesta events, due to a pro-basketball playoff game occurring that same evening. Although the article makes clear that the extra security was due to the game, the narrative soon shifts to La Semana violence. The remainder of the text displayed an interesting phenomenon: as the police officers repeated admissions that La Semana had not become more dangerous in relation to other events or to previous years, citing statistics of fights and arrests, the article’s attention to these events made them seem new or unusual. In other words, if these disturbances are normal, one wonders why they would become the focus of any newspaper article. The *Light* seemed to create its own controversy. By April 26,

the stage-rushing incident had become a criticism of heavy alcohol consumption and youth gangs.³⁷

While excessive alcohol consumption probably did have something to do with Fiesta fights and the concert incident, the target of criticism soon shifted to a more specific source, La Semana. By the next year, the local media began to focus on La Semana as the main source of Fiesta violence. Rollette Schreckenghost, the head of the San Antonio Conservation Society and NIOSA director, claimed that the event had “gotten out of control.” She stated “La Semana is giving Fiesta a bad name. They’re just different from other Fiesta events...I’m afraid to go over there.”³⁸ Schreckenghost admitted that she had never attended La Semana, but this did not seem to effect her claims. NIOSA also most directly competed with La Semana for nighttime crowds, as it occurred during the same time and was directly across the street. City Manager Alex Briseno supported La Semana, and suspected that “either the media or this NIOSA official is creating an issue.” He also stated that this was a campaign to do away with the event itself: “I think this issue is not about moving La Semana, but killing it.”³⁹ Briseno’s comment was prophetic. In 1993, La Semana was moved to an area south of downtown, where it never could attract the crowds it had in previous years. By 1995, La Semana was discontinued.

Although many people I have spoken with believe that La Semana’s demise was due to its excessive violence, it is never clear that La Semana was any “rowdier” than other Fiesta events. The police took an average of twenty people

per night off the premises, which seems minor compared to the crowd of 100,000.⁴⁰ This number is about the same as in other Fiesta events such as NIOSA itself. The only type of disruption that seemed to mark La Semana as the target of criticism was the Faster Pussycat concert incident. While NIOSA organizers and others may have wanted to do away with the event for a number of years, this stage-rushing provided the necessary catalyst. While some San Antonians spoke of La Semana as “out of control,” for others the event offered an opportunity for a level of freedom that was unavailable in other spaces. NIOSA officials wanted to define La Semana as out of place during Fiesta, but for thousands of young Mexicano and African American men, La Semana was *their* space.

NIOSA officials killed La Semana, but these youths continue to attend other Fiesta events. Many now gather in El Mercado (the “Market”), a tourist market that becomes a venue for local Tejano and conjunto bands during the weekends and during the festival. The “gringo” tourist who wanders into El Mercado during a Fiesta night might feel out of place himself. What is a daily market for San Antonio’s visitors—a commodified space for selling Mexicanness—becomes a new center for Mexicano cultural producers themselves. At El Mercado, and at the Carnival, the city’s poor and working-class communities (who still can’t afford NIOSA), walk the city. They ride ferris wheels, buy *raspas* (snow cones), and enjoy Tejano music. Young men and women flirt with each other; families try to keep their children entertained; people run into neighbors and friends. In short, they weave their daily experiences into

the city's public culture. Their pedestrian rhetoric, as distinct and banal as other Fiesta participants', is at the center of Fiesta.

¹ José Limón. *Dancing with the Devil* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 104.

² David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 148.

³ Miguel de Oliver, "Multicultural Consumerism and Racial Hierarchy: A Case Study of Market Culture and the Structural Harmonization of Contradictory Doctrines." *Antipode* March 2001, 228-259. De Oliver cites that the inner-city neighborhoods surrounding downtown have a Latino population where 52.8% live below the poverty line.

⁴ *Ibid*, 254.

⁵ *San Antonio Express News*, April, 19, 1981, 20A.

⁶ Laura Codina, "The What, How y Que Más of Fiesta" *La Voz de Esperanza*, the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, 1993, 3.

⁷ José Limón, in *Dancing with the Devil*, makes this argument from the work of Robert Lee Maril in *The Poorest of Americans: The Mexican-Americans of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1989).

⁸ David Montejano, "On the Future of Anglo-Mexican Relations in the United States." in *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 235.

⁹ *San Antonio Light*, August 17, 1959, 3A.

¹⁰ *San Antonio Express News*, August 18, 1959, 2A.

¹¹ *San Antonio Express News*. September 1, 1959, 2A.

¹² *San Antonio Express News*, August 23, 1959, 1B.

¹³ *San Antonio Express News*, August 23, 1959, 1B. At the time, respondents gave their name and their home address along with their comments.

¹⁴ *San Antonio Light*, May 3, 1959, 1B.

¹⁵ *San Antonio Express News*, August 21, 1959, 1B.

¹⁶ Jim Mendiola, personal interview. November 6, 1998.

¹⁷ *San Antonio Express News*, April 26, 1991, 1B.

¹⁸ The "out of place" metaphor is from Tim Cresswell's analysis in *In Place, Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 149.

¹⁹ José Limón, in his analysis of the film *Lone Star*, makes this observation of the newly arriving Mexican immigrant. "They, the newly arriving Mexicans with their substantial social and cultural marginality, are not part of this 'sweetheart deal' [between Anglo Texans and middle class Mexican Americans] but rather mark its boundaries, become its other...against whom both Mexican-American and Anglo Texas society must be defended." *American Encounters: Greater Mexico, the United States, and the Erotics of Culture*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 163.

²⁰ *San Antonio Light*, April 22, 1969, 1A.

²¹ *West Side Sun*, April 27, 1969, 8A.

²² *San Antonio Light*, April 22, 1969, 1A.

²³ *Ibid*, 6A.

²⁴ *San Antonio Light*. April 26, 1969, 1A.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 8A.

²⁶ *San Antonio Light*, April 22, 1969, 1A.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 4A.

²⁸ *San Antonio Light*. April 23, 1969, 1A.

²⁹ *San Antonio Light*. April 22, 1969, 6A.

³⁰ *San Antonio Light*. April 26, 1969, 8A.

³¹ Santiago Garcia, “La Semana Alegre” from *Bus Side Stories*. Unpublished poems. Personal Collection.

³² Limón, 109.

³³ Filmmaker Jim Mendiola came up with the term “adolescent playground” to describe La Semana. Personal Interview, November 6, 1998.

³⁴ *San Antonio Express News*. April 26, 1991, 1B.

³⁵ *San Antonio Light*. April 23, 1990, 1A.

³⁶ *San Antonio Light*. April 24, 1990, 12A.

³⁷ *San Antonio Light*, April 26, 1990, 1B.

³⁸ *San Antonio Light*. April 26, 1991, 1B.

³⁹ *San Antonio Express News*, April 28, 1991, 1B.

⁴⁰ *San Antonio Light*, April 27, 1991, 10A.

Conclusion

During the Fiesta celebration of 1998, I viewed the annual pilgrimage to the Alamo for the first time. The late afternoon ceremony was sparsely attended, with about two hundred visitors sitting on outside bleachers facing the Alamo. On the grounds directly in front of the chapel's entrance, empty chairs waited for the members of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Without much warning, a deep voice addressed the crowd, calling for a reverent silence as the Texans who died at the Alamo battle were named. Looking around, I could not see who was speaking. The speakers were placed around the building, but there was no visible microphone, as if the walls themselves were addressing the audience. As the steady baritone proceeded with the list of over two hundred Alamo defenders, the crowd lost interest and began to talk, so that at times the names were difficult to hear. I walked around the food booths and past the bleachers, listening to the various conversations. A few people had come to the pilgrimage with the expectation of a battle re-enactment. Others, who knew more about the ceremony, explained the fragments of Texas history that they could remember. Yet most of the conversations had nothing to do with the events at all, just the random accounts of daily life. When the procession began, the crowd quieted a little—finally there was something to watch. We witnessed the representatives of America's revolutions and foreign wars as they paid homage to the "shrine of Texas liberty." We recited the pledge of allegiance, and listened to

a short sermon about heroes and courage, but by this time, most of the crowd was gone.

The one silent pause that the party had set aside for respectful commemoration was not reverential, and not very quiet. I kept waiting for something to write down, a key phrase that would pull together the threads of conversation. Perhaps I am not so different from other Fiesta subjects who have written Fiesta as the “psalm of San Antonio.” I have investigated the controversies and the debates that continually redefine the corazón of this city’s public culture. I have found stories that challenge any attempts to define Fiesta under one unifying narrative. Yet I also look for those quiet moments of resolution, for temporary coherence within the chaos. The Alamo is not the space for these moments. Situated on a literal and metaphorical battlefield, the tiny fortress has not silenced its conflictual past.

The Fiesta crowd has moved away from the Alamo, but it has not separated itself from its tangled history. Perhaps such a complete “forgetting” is not possible, especially in the context of a tourist industry that continues to promote San Antonio as the “Alamo city.” To use a familiar Tex-Mex food analogy, I have found that Fiesta is like an elaborately layered dip. Each of Fiesta’s distinct events—the Battle of Flowers Parade, the Coronation, NIOSA, the Fiesta Flambeau, Rey Feo and the Carnival—emerge and respond to distinct historic moments, but very few disappear from the festival, and so Fiesta continues with the vestiges of each of these eras. Like any well-consumed dip,

these various performances blend into one another, and yet maintain some of their distinct tastes as well.

Fiesta not only challenges any historic periods, but also the boundaries of regional studies. The festival was certainly a product of southern culture, but also western, and that of Greater Mexico. The blending of regional traditions, as well as the sharp distinctions, are the products of larger social forces. When the Texas Cavaliers turned to the Old South in their initiation rituals, they did so to reinforce a segregated racial order of the 1920s. In the 1950s, when the Fiesta San Jacinto Commission emphasized “western” attire, they were also breaking away from these genteel southern traditions. As various organizations defined the city’s “mexicanness,” they also established links to communities across Greater Mexico. The multiple efforts to imagine Fiesta, and San Antonio as a southern place, or a western place, or a Mexican place, were part of larger negotiations about who could fully participate in the city’s public culture.

Elite Anglo women, like the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and the Battle of Flowers Association, have held to the Alamo grounds in a last stand of public domesticity. At the turn of the twentieth century, these women challenged the boundaries of the domestic sphere. As they decorated the downtown streets of San Antonio, they made a claim to civic space and articulated a distinct public identity for themselves. They used “history” for their own social power, but they also ceded this power later by isolating themselves from the “commercial realm.” Their ideology set limits to the kind of power they could exercise. Their insistence

upon maintaining a “patriotic” celebration, set apart from the burgeoning commercial culture of the festival, became almost as restrictive as the nineteenth century bonds of womanhood. As the Battle of Flowers Parade was surrounded by the Spring Carnival in the early twentieth century, these women played a much smaller role in the festival.

On the other hand, the next generation of the city’s elite women, the San Antonio Conservation Society, was more successful in their attempts to combine matters of history with matters of business. Unlike the Battle of Flowers Association, the Conservation Society did not shun the commercial realm. The SACS women managed to more successfully integrate a distinct vision of San Antonio and their role in its public culture, while also becoming part of the city’s growing tourist industry; they tried to merge their sense of preserving the city’s historical landmarks with the marketing of this preservation. In this way, they influenced many city development projects, and continue to shape the selling of the Fiesta city. Their festival event, NIOSA, has become the most dominant symbol of Fiesta itself—a sprawling street fair that combines a nostalgia for “Old San Antonio” with a vast fund-raiser for the Conservation Society’s contemporary projects.

Mexican American middle class leaders, like the members of the League of United Latin American Citizens, have transformed Fiesta from a “gringo’s party” into a symbol of interethnic cooperation. For the most part, they have been successful in the latter twentieth century. Fiesta continues to be entangled in

Alamo memory, but because it is a performance, and because its parades, carnivals, and other events almost necessitate inclusion of diverse groups, the creation of cultural meaning is multiple, ambiguous, and sometimes contradictory. Fiesta is a fundamentally different type of space than the Alamo; as a performance, rather than a physical site, the festival is a more flexible place. Because Fiesta is not anchored to a geographical site, social actors can simultaneously perform different rememberings; for this reason, the festival could embody the formation of the Texas Modern in the early twentieth century, but could also articulate its unraveling toward the end of the century.

Fiesta, more than any other civic symbol, reveals that the relationships between “Anglos” and “Mexicans” are caught up in both fear and desire, and sometimes, reconciliation. No figure represents this new negotiation better than Rey Feo. Even at its inception, as a masked parody of the elite Anglo King Antonio, Rey Feo was a role open to both Anglos and Mexicanos. Though this “ugly king” was created by LULAC, a Mexican American civil rights organization, Rey Feo opened a new site of reconciliation among the middle class. While the San Antonio Conservation Society members wore “authentic” Mexican dress, in attempts to redefine Southern womanhood, and the men of the Charro Association defined their manhood through the Mexican charro, Rey Feo remains ethnically unmarked. Unlike the SACS and the Charros, who consciously utilized markers of nationality and ethnicity to define themselves, Rey Feo projects a

more ambiguous, and yet also more open, image. In the process, he has symbolically invited a unified civic public.

Yet this public has also participated in the creation of another “enemy”—the poor and working class youth who also make this city their home. In the same year that Rey Feo became part of Fiesta, a young student named Damian Garcia and other members of the “Maoist Revolutionary May Day Brigade” climbed to the top of the Alamo. They removed the Texas flag and replaced it with their own, while dropping leaflets to protest the “vicious oppression of Chicano people.”¹ The members were subsequently arrested, but Garcia did not make it to court the next month. On April 22, he was knifed to death during a fight between members of the brigade and other young men in a Los Angeles housing project.² The Los Angeles police said that the brigade was trying to garner support for a May Day demonstration. No other details of the fight were given.

Ten years later, three protestors from the “Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade” approached the Alamo, minutes before the DRT’s annual pilgrimage. They carried flowers in Damian Garcia’s memory, stopped in front of the Alamo and made a speech in English and Spanish decrying the racism they associated with this historic battlefield. As they finished, they went to lay flowers in front of the Alamo chapel, but were stopped by an Alamo Ranger, who refused to allow them to set foot on state property.³ During the same moment, a tourist was allowed to go up to the Alamo chapel to take a picture. Clearly, the Alamo

does not welcome all. These protestors, transgressing the boundaries of acceptable behavior, were kept off the grounds.

At the end of this study, as I turned to Fiesta's "rowdy" participants, I found that Carnival has always been the center of Fiesta—as the event that made the most money, attracted the biggest crowds, and had the longest history in the festival. However, the enthusiastic accounts of Carnival shows that once dominated San Antonio's local press in the first decades of the festival have largely disappeared. As the post World War II Fiesta organizers began to emphasize middle class inclusion, the Carnival was increasingly stigmatized by the local press. Once "every man's Fiesta," the Carnival has become its "ugly stepchild," and the not-so-veiled verbal attacks on young men of color have been one of the products of the middle class takeover of festival.

At the same time, the Carnival participants also offer the greatest visions for changing Fiesta once again. In another Fiesta "pilgrimage," I went downtown with my father to attend the Thursday night celebration of NIOSA. We took a city bus, especially chartered for Fiesta participants, from my parents' northwest suburban neighborhood into the center of town. As the bus took us straight to downtown, we passed several young Mexicanos walking to the Carnival, which was situated just east of the highway. The bus did not make a Carnival stop, but continued straight to NIOSA's front gates. As we exited the bus, we noticed that NIOSA was filled to capacity. Apparently, this was unofficially dubbed "college night," the most crowded time of the festival. Hundreds of people stood outside

the gates to get in. We decided to avoid the wait. Instead, we began to retrace the bus route, moving further west to El Mercado. In the process, we found the Fiesta celebrations that we had often missed. While local newspaper coverage and festival promotions had made NIOSA one of the most well known Fiesta events, thousands of other folks went to the Carnival, and to El Mercado. As my father and I walked, we passed several small restaurants and convenience stores where the owners sold raspas, hot dogs, and beer for fifty cents. We bought two cans, and proceeded to the open Mercado space. No gatekeepers demanded eight-dollar entrance fees. We could make our way through the open market for free, past taco stands and Tejano music bands, among many fellow San Antonians. This was not a utopian space of community harmony, but the Mercado came closer to the vision of Fiesta that its promoters sell to the city. At the Mercado, Fiesta was not the “psalm” of San Antonio, as Jack Maguire claimed. Instead, Fiesta was a cacophonous, noisy tune that reflected continuous struggles, negotiations and occasionally, reconciliations.

¹ *San Antonio Light*, April 23, 1980, 1A.

² *San Antonio Light*, April 24, 1980, 11A.

³ Holly Beachley-Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 110.

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